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THE SUBTLE ART

WHEN you start out reading a book it may happen that very soon you begin to sense the strength and direction of the author's intent. His energy of caring, of needing to speak, comes to the surface. A question may occur: Is this writer seeking converts or is he simply revealing his own feeling of discovery, declaring an obligation, or sharing a delight?

The question can be turned around. Not long ago a correspondent wrote: "In our endeavors we are often accused of being too moralistic. What is it that is considered wrong about being 'moralistic'?"

There are at least two answers. An obvious reply would be that righteousness produces pushy bias, clouding instead of exposing the facts. A fundamental contention in behalf of the scientific method is that all emotion must be eliminated from the search for truth, that unless you are dispassionate you cannot see clearly. This has to do with how you look at the external world. If you want to see things in a certain way, intent upon supporting one set of presuppositions, an emotional inclination will tend to shut out contradictory facts. And if the inclination is backed by a strong sense of righteousness, self-criticism becomes practically impossible. The scientific injunction is therefore: Leave moral purposes or questions out entirely; limit the inquiry to the identification of fact, reality, or objective truth.

A reply involving subjective values has another order of justification. It starts with the proposition that human beings need to decide for themselves what is right for them to do. Moralistic preachments ignore this fundamental requirement. The moralist seems to assume, sometimes arrogantly, that he knows more about what is right than the people he addresses. With a presumption often armed by egotism, he insists that they adopt his point of view. Usually without knowing it, he either injures or insults the dignity of others. If successful in persuasion he deprives them of the right to make their own moral discoveries. So, right from the start, he is a failure as an educator. He will be content if people are made to behave correctly without knowing why. He ignores the possibility that people *can't* behave correctly without knowing why. Needless to say, these tendencies in the moralist are resisted with various degrees of distaste or resentment. We feel imposed upon or invaded. The obvious or aggressive moralist has no popularity among those who have the habit of independent decision.

Yet there is a portion of the population—perhaps a large one—made up of people who *like* being told what to do. Some of them seem to grow desperate when no ready authority can be found to assure them of what is right and good. In their eyes, the person who confidently declares moral certainties achieves the stature of an indispensable leader and guide. This complicates the issue, since the moralizing role can be claimed to fulfill a manifest social or human need. Yet people of independent mind will still regard moralizing with distrust, since they feel that the manipulation of what is sometimes termed the "religious instinct" produces serious disorders such as the political witch-hunting of Sen. McCarthy in the 1950s. A. H. Maslow subjected this sort of "leadership" to analysis in *Eupsychian Management:*

> In a nation in which most people do not have an identity, or a real self, in which they are all confused about right and wrong, about good and evil, in which they are basically uncertain about what they want and what they don't want then they are apt to admire and succumb to and look for leadership to any person who seems to know definitely what he wants. Since the democratic leader, the non-authoritarian person in

> general, is apt to be marked by tolerance and by admission of ignorance, by willingness to admit that he doesn't know everything, sometimes for less educated people the decisive paranoid authoritarian then can look very attractive and relieve the follower of all anxiety. . . .
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> The person who is able to be decisive, who is able to make a decision and then stick to it, who is able to know definitely what he wants to know, to know that he likes this and dislikes that and no uncertainty about it, who is less apt to be changeable, who is more likely to be predictable, to be counted on, who is less suggestible, less influenced by contradiction—such a person is in general more apt to be selected out by others as a leader.

It might still be argued on the basis of such evidence that people obviously require moralists to tell them what to do, to reassure them when they are on the right track and to warn them when they start going wrong. Maslow is speaking of people who seem to lack "identity," or the capacity for independent decision. If we admit that this applies to a great many—call them "immature"—people, what reply might be made to the claim that they really need moralists to guide them?

Well, apart from the question of whether the moralists are good authorities—whether they are right—the claim implies that we know how to distinguish between people who are able to manage their own lives and those who will hardly survive without external direction. From the days of the ancient Romans, individuals charged with social administration have insisted that "the masses" need the rule of religious authority. Are they right?

In *The Soul of a People,* a book first published in 1898 by Macmillan of London, the author, Fielding Hall, described his experiences as a local magistrate in Burmese communities. It seems fair to say that the Burmese villagers were quite simple people, yet they were not so immature as to be unable to make their own moral decisions. Hall wrote:

> All villages were not alike, of course, in their enforcement of good manners and good morals, but, still, in every village they were enforced more or less. The opinion of the people was very decided, and made itself felt, and the influence of the monastery without the gate was strong upon the people.

Aha! These good people had their moral guides!

But Fielding Hall continues:

> Yet the monks never interfered with village affairs. As they abstained from state government, so they did from local government. You never could imagine a Buddhist monk being a magistrate for his village, taking any part at all in municipal affairs. The same reasons that held them from affairs of the state held them from affairs of the commune. I need not repeat them. The monastery was outside the village, and the monk outside the community. I do not think he was ever consulted about any village matters. I know that, though I have many a time asked the monks for their opinion to aid me in deciding little village disputes, I have never got an answer out of them. "These are not our affairs," they will answer always. "Go to the people; they will tell you what you want." Their influence is by example and precept, by teaching the laws of the great teacher, by living a life blameless before men, by preparing their souls for rest. It is a general influence, never a particular one. If anyone came to a monk for counsel, the monk would only repeat to him the sacred teaching, and leave him to apply it.
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> So each village managed its own affairs, untroubled by squire or priest, very little troubled by the state. That with their little means they did it well, no one can doubt. They taxed themselves without friction, they built their own monastery schools by voluntary effort, they maintained a very high, a very simple code of morals, entirely of their own initiative.

What is the general subject under discussion? It is the capacity of people—ordinary people—to govern their lives without the intrusions of moralizing. But the Burmese had the influence of the monastery, didn't they? Yes, but to be referred to the rule of Karma, or moral law, is not the same as being told what to do, or even what is "right." The monks reminded the people of the canons of right decision but made no decisions for them.

So we have this distinction to consider. There can be moral suggestion without

"moralizing." It is possible to present a conception of moral order without being moralistic.

What do we mean by "moral"? If we rely mainly on usage, moral behavior means action consistent with some conception or rule of the common good. The morality is derivative, it depends upon a general rule. The rule, you could say, is an ethical first principle, held to be an aspect of the nature of things. Ethics declares what is right by reason of the nature of things. Brotherhood is an ethical rule because human beings are in some real sense parts of one another. If both unity and separation together make the nature of things, then acts confirming the unity, despite partial or apparent separation, satisfy ethical obligation. Allowing freedom to others satisfies the ethical obligation of recognizing each one's moral independence. Morality is the particular mode through which these ethical obligations are fulfilled. A lot of the time, morality and ethics seem virtually identical, yet the distinction remains important.

Morality divorced from ethical principles—action without justifying derivation from ethical principles—soon loses its virtue. For without the support of reason morality lapses into conventionally acceptable behavior. This is the notorious weakness of "moral codes," and moralizing contributes to this weakness since it advocates righteous acts instead of referring to ethical principles. It caters to the weakness of conformity instead of appealing to the latent resources of moral independence.

But it may be said that moral or ethical decision in a complex industrial society is much more difficult than the ordering of life in a small village. This is probably true, but in this case true morality might mean simply the rejection or reduction of complexity. Conceivably, a society with a strongly self-reliant moral life would not have allowed the complexity to develop.

It is of particular interest that even the technical specialists of our time seem less and less able to meet the problems growing out of the complexity they have created (with our support), and the best criticism of the present seems to come very largely from those who sense ethical breakdown in practically all the major relationships of the societies of modern nation-states. The effective warnings and criticisms do not come from moralizers, but from those who argue from the realities of man's nature in relation to the realities of the world which is our host.

It must be admitted that the traditional moralizers have exercised virtually no authority at all, during recent centuries. For the most part, the churches seem to be followers, rather than leaders, in the movements for change which have an implicit moral vision, such as the rejection of ruthless industrialism by many of the young, the campaigns for restoration of the natural environment, the concern for food which is health-giving and for agriculture which is harmonious with the needs of the soil. Consistent with all these objectives is the social theory of decentralization, advocating development of autonomous regions whose goals and problems are within the natural competence of local government, and the revival of town and community life as the source of vitality, self-discipline, and functional independence. The impetus for such movements has really come from the people themselves; individuals with specialized training may have supplied some of the rationale for the activities that have come into being, but moralizers had little to do with their inspiration. Some sort of sanctified common sense is behind them all.

Yet these movements are undoubtedly suffused with a moral atmosphere. It would be foolish to ignore the fact that in many if not all of these campaigns there is an inward sense of doing something that is right as well as practical.

So we go back to what was suggested at the beginning of this discussion. When you start reading a book, you may notice that the writer gives the impression of *caring* about what he says.

This doesn't make him a moralist. He becomes a moralist only if he seems to want you to accept his conclusions without taking his stance and seeing for yourself what he sees. To invite you to take a position and then to look around is virtually the same as offering a hypothesis for consideration. The appeal is to reason, and it may be ardent, poetic, or even humorous, while wholly lacking in the oppressive qualities of moralistic persuasion.

There is a sense in which we are asking: What kind of a universe do we live in? Has it a moral as well as a physical order? Is it reasonable to say that moral (ethical) reality is the very substance of human life and choice, just as motion makes the stuff of atoms and molecules?

Ortega, who was animated by profound moral purpose, yet no moralist, has set this question with great clarity. He wrote in *Man and Crisis:*

> If history, which is the science of human lives, were or could be exact, it would mean that men were flints, stones physiochemical bodies, and nothing else. But then one would have neither history nor physics; for stones, more fortunate, if you like, than men, do not have to create science in order to be what they are, namely stones. On the other hand man is a most strange entity, who, in order to be what he is needs first to find out what he is; needs, whether he will or no, to ask himself what are the things around him and what, there in the midst of them, is he. For it is this which really differentiates man from a stone, and not that man has understanding while the stone lacks it. We can imagine a very intelligent stone; but the inner being of the stone is given it already made, once and for all, and it is required to make no decision on the subject, it has no need, in order to go on being a stone, to pose and pose again the problem of self, asking itself "What must I do now?" or, which is the same thing, "What must I be?" Tossed into the air, without need to ask itself anything, and therefore without having to exercise its understanding, the stone which we are imagining will fall toward the center of the earth. Its intelligence, even if existent, forms no part of its being, does not intervene in it, but would be an extrinsic and superfluous addition.
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> The essence of man, on the other hand, lies in the fact that he has no choice but to force himself to know . . . to resolve the problem of his own being and toward this the problem of what are the things among which he must inexorably have that being. This—that he needs to know, that whether he likes it or not, he needs to work to the best of his intellectual means—is undoubtedly what constitutes the human condition.

Now the moralist—in the sense we have been using the term (there may be others)—interrupts the human process of asking oneself, "What must I do now?" He can't wait for the person to answer the question for himself; he doesn't trust the native ability of others to find out what is right. He goes about *telling* people what to do.

Naturally, they resist.

There is another way of getting at this problem which involves postulating that there are two ways in which a human being may go in a certain direction. First, he may go that way because he *wants* to, because only by doing this does he find delight and fulfillment. Or, he may go because he feels he *ought* to. From this duality of motivation, which is a common fact of experience, we might conclude that human beings have two components or "selves." There is the self that will act only spontaneously, pursuing a course of self-consistency, and there is another self which responds only to the pressure of "ought." The visionary, the poet, the dreamer or the prophet speaks for and to the spontaneously-acting self, while the moralist has become convinced that man is a creature that has to be whipped into action by the pressure of "ought." The two appeals are of course often mixed, as, for example, in Tolstoy, who sometimes writes with the vision seen only on mountain tops, crying out, "Look, come stand where I stand, and perhaps you will see all I see, or even more." But he also writes as a militant preacher, reproaching the world for its moral indifference and laggard behavior.

Is there further evidence for the idea that there are these two selves in man?

Well, the being in him who responds only to self-generated inspiration is the artist, the lover, the creative spirit attracted by untrodden paths. It

is the being in the child who waits impatiently until his teacher stops "teaching" and he is allowed to do whatever is to be done by himself. Everyone has this being in him, sometimes dominant and unafraid, sometimes caged and made passive by oppression, moralizing, and fear.

The being responsive only to a sense of "ought" is the counterpart of the independent and creative self, its reflection in matter, so to speak, whose awareness gives the "creature" aspect of the human being its sense of identity. This lesser self is the inviting target of all moralizing. It lives on hope and longing, and is the natural copyist of the external forms of what it admires. Both its vices and its virtues are obtained by borrowing. Anxiously it awaits instruction in what it ought to do.

This shadow self, so much in evidence these days, is the cross and Promethean burden of the creative spirit in man. No human being is without a lesser self, a sort of offspring by projection whose faltering deeds and vacillations create the arena of everyday action. The spontaneously acting man, drawn by aspiration, holds private dialogue with his shadow self, urging him on, giving instructions which are heard as the "oughts" of conscience and the stern compulsions of duty and obligation. The shadow self, by nature an imitator, constructs coarse images of the creative life, making facsimile after facsimile of what he longs to become, but only after a kind of death is the shadow self reconstituted in the primary stuff of self-moving being. And then, at last, there is a man who agrees with himself, who knows himself. The dual nature has been forged into a unity.

The relation between these two selves, one might say, makes the ordeal of human existence. The only reformer that the creature self can listen to with legitimate compliance is his own inner monitor. When others talk of what he "ought" to do, he hears an alien voice. The salvation of this weaker self does not begin until there is realization that no act is truly moral unless it is first made one's own. In short, each human being can preach to himself with no offense, but to no one else.

Of all the arts of communication, the subtlest is this capacity to speak to oneself of what one ought to do, yet in such articulate and generous terms that friendly echoes and resonances are heard and sometimes shared by others. We hardly ever mind instruction gained in this way.

REVIEW
ARABS AT THEIR BEST

A BOOK we shall want to spend more time with is Ilse Lichtenstadter's *Introduction to Classical Arabic Literature* (Schocken, $6.50). It would be hard to find an area of culture of which Americans are more ignorant, yet Arabic science and learning were major factors in the awakening of the Western mind from its long sleep of the dark ages. Not until John W. Draper published his *Conflict Between Religion and Science* in the last century did the general reader have any idea of the heights of civilization reached by the Islamic peoples; and who, today, knows anything of Arabic literature beyond an acquaintance with Fitzgerald's translation of Omar? The Akbars are few in number. Setting an example to all the world, this extraordinary Mogul emperor (1542-1605) *wanted* to know about the learning and philosophy of other peoples. While himself a Mussulman, he allowed his Hindu subjects complete freedom of worship, invited Portuguese missionaries to visit him, and is said to have requested a Jesuit scholar to translate the Christian Gospels into Persian. Exclusiveness and intolerance were foreign to this man who sought accurate information about all religions, hoping to devise an eclectic system of belief for his people.

For Europeans and Americans, it usually takes a war to excite their interest in the thought, literature and religion of others. Knowing his countrymen, Sir William Jones, who began translating the *Institutes of Manu* in 1788, urged them to study this Sanskrit classic, arguing that an understanding of the laws and customs of India might help to "add largely to the wealth of Britain." Most Americans knew little or nothing about the Far East until World War II sent many thousands of troops to India and other distant places, finally to Japan, after which books and articles began coming out on the religions and philosophies of the East. Who would know of Gandhi and his heroic determination to forge national history without acts of violence, had there been no war? See, for example, Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia*.

Other wars and social disturbances are now wearing away the ethnocentricism of Americans. As a perceptive journalist remarked some years ago, today the Blacks are having their day in the public forums, and white Americans are slowly learning to think of them as active members of the social community. Africa, too, is emerging on the stage of history, and white peoples everywhere are finding it necessary, and sometimes pleasurable, to take instruction in the realities of other cultures. Industry and commerce play a large part in this progressive education. For generations, starting with the clipper ships of New England, America has been the teacher of far-off peoples, carrying the gospel of machines and soft drinks and candy bars around the world. Now it is turn-about. American market places are flooded with Japanese products, while the highways are increasingly crowded with small and efficient vehicles made in Japan. American businessmen are learning how the Japanese organize their industry, treat their employees, and meet their labor problems, and at the same time there is renewed interest in the writings of Lafcadio Hearn, perhaps the best interpreter to the rest of the world of the culture of Japan. A vast merger of all cultures seems to be taking place, with literature and the arts becoming truly international. So it is time that we learn more about the Arabs.

The situation is well described in the opening paragraph of Professor Lichtenstadter's Preface:

> The close political and economic interdependence between East and West of recent times demands a deeper mutual understanding of each other's thought patterns and culture. In particular, the Western-educated person must become better acquainted with the intellectual stimuli, the artistic creativity, and the emotions that moved the Arab/Muslim mind since the appearance of Islam. In the Middle Ages the two worlds had many contacts, not always friendly (*vide* the Crusades) but always mutually fertilizing. Medieval Muslim philosophy, especially, was deeply inspired by ancient Greek thought; in turn, medieval Western philosophy was

stimulated by the Muslim philosophy to whose preservation of much of the Greek heritage the West was greatly indebted.

This book has two parts, a long essay on religious, secular, and poetic literature, and a large section made up of selections from Arabic classics. Except for interesting bits here and there, nothing would be gained by quoting from the essay. The subject is too vast, too complicated, and even reading it entire would be only the merest beginning for readers with no previous knowledge of the subject. Here it will be better simply to dip into the selections.

We quote from al-Ghazali (d. 1111 A.D.), said by Professor Lichtenstadter to have done more than any other Muslim thinker to restore "vitality to philosophic thought combined with religious emotion in Islam." He brought the leaven of Sufism—the mystical side of Islamic religion—to "tradition-bound, lifeless orthodoxy." Like other earnest thinkers, he went from devoted belief to skepticism, then gradually returned to a purified version of his original conviction. His autobiographical *Deliverance from Error* begins:

> You have asked me, my brother in religion, to show you the aims and inmost nature of the sciences and the perplexing depths of the religious systems. You have begged me to relate the difficulties I encountered in my attempt to extricate the truth from the confusion of contending sects and to distinguish the different ways and methods, and the venture I made in climbing from the plain of naive and second-hand belief to the peak of direct vision. You want me to describe firstly, what profit I derived from the science of theology, secondly, what I disapprove of in the methods of the party of *talim* (authoritative instruction), who restrict the apprehension of truth to the blind following of the Imam, thirdly, what I rejected of the methods of philosophy, and lastly, what I approved in the Sufi way of life. You would know, too, what essential truths became clear to me in my manifold investigations into the doctrines held by men, why I gave up teaching at Baghdad although I had many students, and why I returned to it at Nishapur after a long interval.

The independent mind of this philosopher was apparently a natural endowment:

> To thirst after a comprehension of things as they really are was my habit and custom from a very early age. It was instinctive with me, a part of my God-given nature, a matter of temperament and not of my choice and contriving. Consequently as I drew near the age of adolescence the bonds of mere authority ceased to hold me and inherited beliefs lost their grip on me, for I saw that Christian youths always grew up to be Christians, Jewish youths to be Jews and Muslim youths to be Muslims. I heard, too, the Tradition related of the Prophet of God according to which he said: "Everyone who is born is born with a sound nature, it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian." My inmost being was moved to discover what this original nature really was and what the beliefs derived from authority of parents and teachers really were. The attempt to distinguish between these authority-based opinions and their principles developed the mind, for in distinguishing the true in them from the false differences appeared.
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> I therefore said within myself: "To begin with, what I am looking for is knowledge of what things really are, so I must undoubtedly try to find what knowledge really is."

He found elements of truth in the works of heretics and decided that it was foolish to ignore them because of the risk of encountering error:

> The educated man does not loathe honey even if he finds it in the surgeon's cupping glass; he realizes that the cupping-glass does not essentially alter the honey. The natural aversion from it in such a case rests on popular ignorance, arising from the fact that the cupping-glass is made only for impure blood. Men imagine that the blood is impure because it is in the cupping-glass, and are not aware that the irnpurity is due to a property of the blood itself. Since this property is absent from the honey, the fact that the honey is in such a container does not produce this property in it. Impurity, therefore, should not be attributed to the honey. To do so is fanciful and false.

Al-Ghazali was drawn to mysticism by a fundamental discovery. He mastered the intellectual version of mystical truth, but saw that "what is most distinctive of mysticism is something which cannot be apprehended by study, but only by immediate experience [tasting], by ecstasy and by a moral change."

> What a difference there is between *knowing* the definition of health and satiety, together with their

> causes and presuppositions, and *being* healthy and satisfied! . . . Similarly there is a difference between knowing the true nature and causes and conditions of the ascetic life and actually leading such a life and forsaking the world.
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> I apprehended clearly that the mystics were men who had real experiences, not men of words, and that I had already progressed as far as was possible by way of intellectual apprehension. What remained for me was not to be attained by oral instruction and study but only by immediate experience and by walking the mystic way.

A passage by Prof. Lichtenstadter on Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 A.D.), who lived in Cairo, shows the height of critical discipline achieved by classical Arabic thought:

> Though Ibn Khaldun never doubts the basic tenets of Islam, he subjects them to a searching and critical analysis, the like of which one will not find in any other work by a Muslim author (not even in modern times). To give an example: he does not tell the story of the Prophet, in the usual manner . . . he investigates what *constitutes* prophethood and what *distinguishes* the prophet—any prophet—from the ordinary human being. He examines the various religious "sciences" and the schools that propagate them and views them in the light of his findings on "man's ability to think". . . .

COMMENTARY
THE HUMAN FAMILY

THE quotation from A. H. Maslow on page 1 points to seldom-explored questions. The same sort of question is raised by comparing what Einstein said about "people"—"People are all the same" (p. 8)—with Fielding Hall's finding (p. 2), "All villages were not alike, of course."

We everywhere recognize and ourselves affirm the same human hopes and aspirations, yet we cannot fail to notice the equal presence of far-reaching differences. Many, in this democratic age, tend to keep this discovery to themselves.

Intent upon understanding certain disintegrative social phenomena, Maslow found himself obliged to speak of people who "do not have an identity." What is the "moral" way to acknowledge and consider this fact? Did the Buddhist monks described by Fielding Hall (p. 2) have an answer?

A suggestive approach to the question of differences is found in the method of the Arab philosopher, Ibn Khaldun. Ilse Lichtenstadter says of him (page 8):

> . . . he does not tell the story of the Prophet, in the usual manner . . . he investigates what *constitutes* prophethood and what distinguishes the prophet—any prophet—from the ordinary human being. He examines the various religious "sciences" and the schools that propagate them and views them in the light of his findings on "man's ability to think." . . .

How can anyone pursue such lines of investigation—Maslow's and Ibn Khaldun's—without finding that difference and hierarchy are as pervasive among human beings as they are in the rest of nature? And what then happens to Dr. Einstein's truth, a form of the eighteenth-century equalitarian verity—"People are all the same"?

Among all the social phenomena under our observation, the family alone offers a useful analogue. Here differences between childhood and maturity create no irresolvable dilemmas. Everyone *knows* that growth is going on. Could this common observation unite the adults in world community? It might, but only if we adopt the metaphysic of the Brotherhood of Man, and in a form so persuasive that humans are able to see themselves as members of a common family.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
PEOPLE ARE ALL THE SAME

FROM Canada we have *A Child in Prison Camp*, written and illustrated with watercolors by the artist author, Shizuye (Shichan) Takashima—the story of her life during the years of World War II. It is a recital of everyday happenings, some bringing pain and privation, some bringing happiness, but always against the background of the ruthless necessities of war. This was a family in which the parents had been born in Japan, the children in Canada. Birthplace didn't count. All who lived on the West Coast were to be moved inland "for security reasons."

For Californians, a book like this recalls the similar removal from the state of the Japanese, both Issei and American-born, to internment camps for the duration. We should not forget such things easily. The wrong done to the Japanese-Americans was bad enough, but the reason for remembering it is of even greater importance: Why, we must ask, do people organized into nations and states find it "necessary" to do such things?

> From March to September, 1942, my mother, my sister Yuki and I are alone in Vancouver. David, our brother, is taken away, for he is over eighteen and in good health. Our David, who is so gentle, considered an enemy of his own country. I wondered what he thought as his time came to leave us. He spoke very little, but I do remember him saying, "In a way it's better that we leave. I am fired from my job. The white people stare at me. The way things are, we'd starve to death!"
>
> Now our house is empty. What we can sell, we do for very little money. Our radio, the police came and took away. Our cousins who have acres of berry farm had to leave everything. Trucks, tractors, land, it was all taken from them. They were moved with only a few days' notice to Vancouver.
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> Strange rumors are flying. We are not supposed to own anything. The government takes our home.

People learn to trust one another, but not governments. In this case the qualities of human beings had no importance, only the accident of their birth. How is it that the rules of government have the power to erase the natural trust people feel in one another as the result of everyday contact? How is it that we have given government the power to do this?

Why does government need to arm itself by denying integrities of individual human beings? Could it not exercise some other kind of authority? Or better, perhaps we could have a government that does not need authority. But that would mean having people who really rule themselves, who absorb into their lives all but the almost trivial functions of government, leaving it little to do. Government seems best thought of as an institution that goes about filling up vacuums, performing duties and accepting responsibilities that people no longer think of taking on themselves. Such impersonal cruelties will doubtless go on and on until people make government—*sovereign* government—unnecessary. Until then, these things will continue to happen to children, almost randomly, bringing to them the bitter realization that their parents have been made helpless by a blind force which knows nothing of the quality of human beings.

> I often wonder about this war. The Japanese are my father's and mother's people. Strange to be fighting them. My father's nephews are all in the army. We do not receive any letters from our uncles and aunts in Japan and we do not know if they are alive or not. Father does not speak of them much.
>
> I ask father, "Why are we fighting?" "For land and other things," father replies. "This is why we are here." "But I'm not Japanese like you. I was born here. So were you." I look at Yuki. "That's nothing—a Jap is a Jap, whether you're born here or not." "Even if I change my name?" "Yes, you look oriental, you're a threat." "A threat? Why?" "God only knows!" Yuki replies. "It's mostly racial prejudice, and jealousy. Remember we had cleared the best land along the Fraser Valley. Good fishermen. This causes envy, so better kick us out. The damn war is just an excuse. Dad knows. The West Coast people never liked the orientals. 'Yellow Peril' is what they called us."
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> I look at father. "Yuki is speaking the truth," he says. "This is why we had better return to Japan when we can." Yuki looked surprised. "Return to Japan? I don't want to go. What would I do there?"

Well, it's over now, and in Canadian cities and throughout the West Coast of the U.S., people of Japanese descent are not felt to be so "different" any more. You keep on meeting them everywhere, realizing with a perhaps shy pleasure that "race" is

becoming less and less important, seeing excellence and distinction instead of alien oddity.

Nineteen years after the war the Canadian Prime Minister said of the internment:

> . . . The action of the Canadian Government of the day—though taken under the strains and fears and pressures and irrationalities of war—was a black mark against Canada's traditional fairness and devotion to principles of human rights. We have no reason to be proud of this episode, nor are we. . . .

"I'm glad the Prime Minister said that," Shichan's father said. And you could say that the internment was at last over for the Takashima family.

Looking back on that time with embarrassment and shame is not good enough, of course. But to keep such things from happening again—what is required?

What sort of people would not rely on government to keep them safe from harm?

What sort of people would never need social security programs to take care of old people, but would honor and cherish the last years of parents and grandparents, not as a "duty" but as the natural and gracious thing to do?

To ask such questions is to relapse into embarrassed silence. How far back would we have to go, not in history, but into ourselves, to find the roots for such a new beginning?

One hardly knows. Yet there are steps to be taken. It is better, Socrates said, to suffer than to do wrong. Only people ready to try out this idea would dare to dispense with mindless military necessity.

There are other, less heroic steps. In *Talks to Writers,* Lafcadio Hearn told his Japanese students in the University of Tokyo that it was not until the English read writers like Dostoevski, with his extraordinary understanding of human nature, his compassion for all, including the weak and evil-doers, did they begin to realize that the Russians were not "barbarians." Produce a great literature, Hearn told his students, and you will be appreciated and understood.

But no one can write like Dostoevski to order! No, but anyone can choose the great for company, and some day . . . who knows? . . . out of the ferment produced by encounters with greatness a wonderful fertilization might take place.

The story of Shinichi Suzuki, who has probably taught more children to play the violin well than anyone else in the world, seems to fit here. Suzuki was brought up in his father's violin factory in Japan—the largest in the world. He learned how to make the instruments as a child, then taught himself how to play. A recording of Schubert's *Ave Maria* by Mischa Elman was his first inspiration. As a young man, Suzuki was helped by his father to study in Germany. This was in 1920. There, through his teacher, he became a friend of Albert Einstein, also a lover of the violin. Einstein would often take the young Japanese student to concerts. Suzuki tells of a dinner party at which he was asked to play:

> I was not very good, but they insisted, so I submitted and played a piece I liked—a Bruch concerto I was studying. . . . When we were drinking tea afterward, there was a quiet conversation. "I really can't understand it," began an elderly lady of about seventy who was sitting right in front of Dr. Einstein. "Suzuki grew up in Japan in a completely different environment to ours. But in spite of that his performance clearly expressed to me the Germanness of Bruch. Tell me, is such a thing possible?" After a brief interval Dr. Einstein, young enough to be her son, said quietly "People are all the same, Madame."

It used to be thought that children couldn't begin to study the violin until they were eight or nine. But Suzuki put on a concert in which eight hundred Japanese children, some only three to five years old, played Bach's Double Violin Concerto. Now there are Suzuki music schools in many parts of the world. Suzuki's theory and practice in teaching the violin to children are described in three books: *Nurtured by Love,* by Suzuki (Exposition Press, 1969); *The Suzuki Concert,* by Suzuki and collaborators (Diablo Press, 1973); and *In the Suzuki Style,* by Elizabeth Mills and the parents of children who have learned to play by the Suzuki method (Diablo Press, 1974).

FRONTIERS

"On the Side of Life"

WHEN, five years ago, a poorly constructed dam thrown together by a coal mining company fell apart, releasing millions of gallons of black mud into Buffalo Creek in West Virginia, sixteen mountain villages were flooded and the homes of the people inundated or destroyed. The survivors brought suit against the coal company and their attorneys asked Kai Erikson, a professor of sociology a' Yale, to survey the after-effects of the flood. His testimony won the litigants a judgment of over thirteen million dollars. The money was no doubt useful to them, but of more general service, a writer in the *New York Times* (Feb. 7) suggests, is the book Prof. Erikson wrote about the people of the Appalachian mountains, telling how, over more than a century, the attacks of brute circumstance have affected their lives. His report describes "the pillaging of the timber reserves, the opening of the coal fields, the emergence of the Depression, and the introduction of welfare as a way of life." (The book is *Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood.*)

The *Times* reviewer, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, comments:

> Thus, Dr. Erikson concludes, the highest psychic price paid by the people of Buffalo Creek for the flood of 1972 was not the individual traumas that shocked and numbed them, but the collective trauma of the "loss of communality," from which, as far as Dr. Erikson can see—and that is far indeed—they have not recovered to this day.
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> Do Dr. Erikson's observations serve any theoretical useful purpose? No doubt they do. For he has persuasively demonstrated that disasters ought not to be measured by their outer dimensions, but rather according to their inner consequences; and that relatively slow-developing events, such as plague, famine or the spoilage of natural resources, can have a far more devastating effect on people than nature s more violent upheavals. Indeed Dr. Erikson may have redefined our very notion of what disaster really is.

This idea of measuring human events and social processes, not by their outer dimensions, but according to their inner effect, seems of crucial importance. For example, turned about and applied to the slow-developing, small-scale changes now going on across the country—in some degree throughout the world—this attention to "inner consequences" reveals formative trends that may not become noticeable in terms of "outer dimensions')' for a number of years. But when they do emerge they may prove virtually irreversible.

The signs of these small-scale changes are now so numerous that keeping track of them is hardly possible. But now and then the "inner consequences" of such efforts display tangible evidence of their strength—as for example the record-breaking crowds that flocked to Dr. E. F. Schumacher's talks during his recent tour of the United States. During the past five years dozens of new magazines and newsletters have appeared, all devoted to some practical aspect of "communality," dealing with such subjects as wind power, solar heating, ingenious technologies for small-scale organic agriculture, plans for neighborhood autonomy in decaying urban areas, cooperative economic ventures, non-acquisitive business enterprise, and new methods of distributing of goods with emphasis on local production and less dependence on food products brought from distant areas. Even the contents of the daily newspapers are undergoing some change. Every week or two stories on solar heating and related topics are appearing in papers throughout the country. Editors with their finger on the pulse of popular interests are recognizing that features on such subjects are more in demand than hackneyed articles on Hollywood starlets or the scandalous doings of the wealthy.

Capable young men and women who started out in conventional activities are turning to pioneer roles, learning how to survive on modest incomes, devoting their talents to small ad hoc organizations concerned with public education.

For example, Peter Barnes, for years the West Coast editor of the *New Republic*, has organized the Solar Center in San Francisco (432 28th St.—Calif. 94131) to help people in the Bay Area to convert to "decentralized solarization" and to promote cooperative-type business ventures in the service of this goal. He asks:

> How can we begin to steer our economic system away from its self-devouring course, and toward a path designed for permanence? One way is to begin using renewable sources of energy in place of finite ones. Another is to use production processes that do not threaten the "tolerance margins of nature"—i.e., do not degrade the delicate ecosystems upon which our long-term survival depends. A third is to develop patterns of work and ownership that are not degrading of the human spirit; that add, rather than detract meaning and satisfaction to work and life.
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> Fortunately, it is possible to translate these principles into action *now* through the development of a decentralized solar energy industry.

So many new magazines—some small, some large—have been started in recent years to encourage emerging new attitudes and activities that an enterprising group, Sunspark Press, Box 6341, St. Petersburg Beach, Florida 33736, has issued a directory—*Guide to Alternative Periodicals* (postpaid for $2.00). The listings (with brief description of each journal) occupy fifty-two pages. Among the classes of magazines included are papers devoted to environmental conservation, health and natural foods, homesteading and natural living, alternative energy and appropriate technology, and community cooperation.

An idea of the extent of longer-term thinking about social and moral change is obtained by looking at a larger directory, *Societal Directions and Alternatives* (published by Information for Policy Design, Lafayette, N.Y., 1976, $16.50), edited by Michael Marien, which lists more than a thousand books. Mr. Marien writes a brief critical evaluation of each entry. Most of these books deal with some aspect of the urgent need for far-reaching reform. For example, authors recommended under the heading of "Civic Curriculum" are John Platt, Bertram Gross, Aldous Huxley, Garrett Hardin, Edward Goldsmith, Richard Falk, E. F. Schumacher, James Burns, Richard Barnet, Ronald Muller, Herbert Gans, Michael Harrington, F. A. Hayek, and Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

All these human activities, new magazines, and books are examples of the "slow-developing events" on the constructive side of the ledger, indicating the gathering strength of inner determinants of change. Virtually every level of human thought and activity is represented: Philosophers, psychologists, people in all the areas of science, essayists, journalists, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and practical reformers of every sort. All these people, once so divided in their undertakings, are gradually uniting in support of a common purpose—to live and act, in Henry Beston's richly descriptive phrase, "on the side of life."