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MAN THINKING

IF anything at all is demonstrated by the present condition of the world it is that ordinary men must become thinkers on their own account. They have not felt seriously obligated to do this for at least a hundred years—ever since, that is, the popular idea of scientific truth gained ascendancy in the West. And as for religion—well, independent thinkers have always been fatal to religion in its conventionalized forms.

Why should science have had this effect upon individual thinking? The answer is now obvious enough. Scientific truth has come to mean finality, settlement, conclusions of indisputable fact. Without intending to derogate the practice of science, or to minimize the value of its achievements, it must now be admitted that the conclusions of science have not enabled men to live essentially balanced or better lives. They may some day help us to accomplish this, especially if we learn another kind of science—a science that would probably be indistinguishable from practical philosophy—but in the present they are little if any help, and have in the meantime done a great deal of harm by their preoccupying pretensions. They have made men suppose that they need not think at all about philosophical issues, since the scientists have the human situation well in hand, or did until a few years ago. Contrasting his own small abilities with the specializing intelligence of the worker in research, and with the skill in his own field of the trained technologist, the individual human usually thinks himself completely outclassed; and in fact he is, in the matter of the facts and techniques with which such men deal. So ordinary, "unspecialized" people have felt only a small obligation to "keep up," being quite content to acquire a "survey course" sort of culture in regard to scientific discovery. The Word comes down, is popularized by a lucrative form of publishing, and the sense of being a secure spectator of Progress, and even a symbolic participant, is established for all.

This situation must change—is already changing—and the help is coming from the scientists themselves. The best among them are abrogating the authority they have enjoyed for the past century or two. Certain leaders in scientific thought—we speak of men like Michael Polanyi (*Personal Knowledge*), J. Bronowski (essay in the Spring 1966 *American Scholar*), and A. H. Maslow (*The Psychology of Science*)—are making it plain that the questions that can be "settled" are not the vitally important questions; that the truths men need are not "scientific" truths, useful as these may be; that the thinking men should do is of a sort every individual is able to do, or can and must learn to do, to reach the balance and wisdom that human life requires.

This means the practice of philosophy. And what is philosophy? It is the search for truth. It involves metaphysics and ethics, the Humanities and introspective psychology. These are the fundamentals of the philosophic undertaking, but everything that has to do with man is grist for the philosophic mill.

We shall attempt to discuss this practice briefly, which means a minimum of caution and qualification.

Philosophy is rooted in the dual problem of the world and the individual, the actor and his field. It must offer some understanding of how the world and man are one and how they are not. Only as a man becomes involved in trying to answer this question does he philosophize, and he can philosophize well only as he becomes conscious that this is what he is trying to do.

The question of the highest good (sometimes called "God") or of Reality is inescapable. So is the question of the self. These are poles of an as

yet undivined reality. They are interdependent variables. Thought about the self is always pursued in relation to thought about the reality "out there." In terms of an old philosophical tradition, the question is: How is the One in the Many; how are the Many part of the One?

If we ignore the now waning disdain for metaphysical wondering, and seek first for basic consensus instead of subtle differentiation, we may find beginning-points in Lao-tse's idea of the Tao, Plato's Good, Herbert Spencer's Absolute, Plotinus' Superessential One, the Upanishadic One Self, Meister Eckhart's Godhead, and Spinoza's Pantheistic Deity. All philosophical thinking must rest upon an original spiritual Ground. The mind is drawn to this ground by its pursuit of finality, yet paradoxically, encounters here the bastions limiting what the mind is able to know. Reflection may make the impasse seem natural. What the mind can handle, define, dispose, is less than the mind. What is greater than or at least equal to the mind—perhaps mind itself—is not definable in terms the mind can manipulate. So there is this postulate of an undistributed, yet all-pervasive, and apparently unknowable Reality.

There is also the field—itself unlimited, although endlessly displaying the principle of limit—in which we move and have our identifiable being. We participate in separation by being aware of it, by thinking of ourselves in terms of limit. But we also, following Spinoza here, may attempt to think of ourselves in terms of that which has no limit. We have—are, so to speak—minds that embrace the universe, or eternally try. And we have accumulated a great deal of knowledge—which we call science—of the working of a kind of unity throughout diversity: we call it Law. Law unifies by exhibiting what differences have in common. So we have this sort of testament, also, to the human capacity to unite with the One. Besides the ability—more or less—to think *as if* we are the One, there is the ability to see how the One reaches out into the world and threads its unity throughout the Many. And we find that this is not a massive, simple operation, but involves a vast complexity of rhythms, modes, and times. To speak of the time-space continuum is to name the One as we know it spread out in time and space. And sometimes we wonder if this knowing of it may not *be* its unity; and we add the possibility that larger knowings than ours may accomplish this more surely—knowings of which we feel only the shadowed reflection.

What shall we say of ourselves? We are compelled to say that we are units of and within the One. There is hardly anything else that we can say of ourselves. Yet we are also obliged to say of ourselves that we are living embodiments of paradox and contradiction. Which is to say that an aspect of the One is filled with paradox and contradiction. To be in some sense both the one and the many—to share in both diversity and unity, appearance and reality; to embody all the tensions and possibilities of this union of opposites; to feel in our being the continuous resolutions and separations which make, within and without, the panorama of natural reality—all this we know and are through the mind and our feelings and the innumerable collaborations possible between the two.

How could we think about this in another way? The monads of Leibniz serve remarkably well. The monads are loaded with enough paradox to accommodate all our own. Let us say that the monads are made of the stuff of the One and can therefore *be* the One. But there is another side of anything that is an expression of the Many—the side of limit, definable movement, development, change. Like men, the monads are centers of awareness, sometimes absorbed in the stillness of eternity, and sometimes the captives of circumstance and time. There is both glory and bitterness in living in time! And there is the wonder of the imperfect which adores its perfect—yet knows that without the imperfect there could be no becoming, no delighting wonders of the world. So the imperfect is both

fled from and embraced; both cherished and transformed.

There are fissions which create and unions which defeat; and also unions which beatify and fissions which are wombs of pain. There is nothing we can see or name which is not a *double entendre,* and this makes all the mystery and all the subtle truth; and it makes all the liars, hypocrites, and failures in love and life. And the heroes, too. We should like to have rules and labels and an end to all this dissimulation, but only an echoing silence responds to avid and desperate questioning about such things. To ask is to betray ourselves, and to pretend an answer would be to betray the world.

Then, in the world of our awareness—which may be the seed of the only reality we shall ever know—there are history and myth, epic and literature, works of memory and imagination, versions of fact and ideal. There are the static segments of experience that have been frozen with fear, rouged falsifications, and partisan utopias rounded into a similitude of life by the fire of longing. Hopes are shredded and visions fail, patriots die and tyrants triumph, and all the dark prophecies of all the Cassandras come true, as though mockery were the style of nature and dreams but the jest of a Mysterious Stranger. But what we have thought makes the drama of all this consuming destiny—not what is, and which continues on and on.

It comes to us to wonder about what may endure. Shall we ask again about eternal life? Is it possible that we have been deceived; that the myth to be exposed and rejected is the myth of *mortality?* Is it that our proud skepticism has its justification only in denial of faiths that were too easily gained? That the coarse rind of controversy never affects the meat of the matter, the passionate *yeas* and *nays* of history signifying only the vulgar, changing appetite for salvations that can be bought and sold? That a truth is never a truth without deep perception of the ground of its negation?

How often the mood comes over us that it is time for second thoughts about what men vaguely and too sentimentally call the soul. To go behind the bargainings of theologians, the pert challenges of unearned unbelief, the clichéd sagacity of journalism, and to feel within ourselves the original texture of questions that have not been pawed and handled by concessionaires.

There must have been men who have done all this before. We know we must do it for ourselves, yet it is good to have the example of others. The light of a man's mind, by which he must learn to see, is not only his own. It is his, but it belongs to others, too. The sense of community with other minds is not a delusion, and there is a great, an immeasurable difference between feeling with and copying after the thoughts of other men. To know, sure-footed, this difference may be a crucial parting in the path to self-knowledge, at which a man learns the landmarks on his long walk home.

When we think of these things, it is natural to wonder why better records have not been kept of the thought of other men. We have libraries, of course, but one could spend his life wandering through intellectual thickets and undergrowth. And the truth that can be labelled is not the real truth, as Lao-tse warned ages ago. The labelers and classifiers of books may not be liars, but neither, we find from experience, are they wise. By a process kept a careful secret from hungering men, truth withers and dies in the hands of professional caretakers, the guardians of certainties that need no further attention. It helps to find this secret out, but like any other secret that gets disclosed, its capital soon finds shareholders who make a calling out of grading the papers of everyone else, according to relativist canons which retain meaning only so long as energy survives in uninspected faiths.

A man wants help in these matters, but he can only help himself. So he resigns himself to risk-taking, starts out lonely and afraid. He has, however, an impregnable logic to guide him.

There have been other risk-takers before him and he can seek them out. They must have left some comment on their inability to trust their philosophical bookkeeping to others. They must have written books which help a man to turn to himself, and since all men are brothers, united in being, although separate in becoming, there will be correspondences in their findings, family resemblances in their trials.

Well, what are the clues in books? They are not uniform, which should inspire a certain confidence. How could they be? But while there is no concert in them, certain resonances are heard again and again. Even the lack of pretense brings unity. The books agree that life is hard, that becoming a man exacts its price. And of truth, save for dark sayings, we get mainly behavioral definition—a kind of form-follows-function account of the lives of men whom we find ourselves unable to forget. There are brave attempts, of course. Will you have Plotinus or Shakespeare? Essences as essences, or in the grain of tragedy? The tender *Upanishads*, the sit-down-near books of the East, or the austerities of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus?

It seems well to choose books which have had a long life. The Ariadne's thread of certainty is never separated from the windings of honorable doubt, and the selection of these is never in books, but depends upon the integrity of the man. *He* is the code, the cipher, the always essential key. And so it is that in any choice of books an act of faith is required. Thinking is a love affair of the mind. It needs its privacy. And you have to believe in the alchemy of reading just as you respect the temple of another man's mind. The reading is not knowing, nor the book a deposit of unalloyed knowledge—no more than breathing and having a body make a life. A child fills with astonishment simply because he *is*. A man fills with wonder and anxiety at who he may be. The child delights in crying I *am!* The man, thinking, knows that being is only the doorway to becoming, and he crosses the threshhold by admitting that to act like a child is unbecoming to a man. Yet the man who forgets how to be a child never grows into a man.

Life sometimes seems an analogue of Nature multiplied by the subjective coefficient of Infinity. And if this is so, it will not be understood save as this factor becomes a conscious presence in the man. All that we know now is that it does not happen quickly. The act of faith is in being able to believe that it can happen at all.

What is belief in the service of man? We know much about belief in the disservice of man, having but lately completed an enormous catalogue of the formulas involved. Our present difficulty, because of all this iconoclastic work, is in finding sufficient reason to practice the virtues which make accomplishment as human beings possible. For the virtues, like everything else that is important, are rooted in a double ground. It is fatal to put them on display. A polished relativity is still a relativity. An advertised dignity is an offense to the spirit which can breathe no air but self-forgetfulness. So talk of virtue is a burden to the soul. A man who speaks of being virtuous is like a child imitating a man. The self-conscious discourse on virtue is the science of odious comparison.

Yet the very life of the books we come to trust is instinct with the ichor of nobility. It is man thus at his best who draws us by a tropism that seems quite embarrassing after so long a cycle of tough-minded contempt for human beings. Of course, it was not intended as contempt in the beginning, but a way of claiming defiant survival of the tooth and claw we said made both Natural History and our own. But now, with the weapons of our "evolution" grown so formidable, we are in mortal fear of any continuation of our history. A once emancipating doctrine has soured into the poison of self-contempt. Another gospel has failed. Our brave new world turns against itself, and only the blind leading the blind repeat its slogans.

Can we now agree with Plato that Ideas rule the world? Is it time to admit that men who fear themselves and each other cannot rule anything?

So, covertly, we seek nobility. Like a timid debauchee who trembles with an unfamiliar longing for reform, who wonders if he can ever abide in the same world with the pure and the good, we look for men whose dignity is a casual garb, who know what they ought to be doing, and in whom the traditional virtues are but side-effects. We avoid as well as we can the names of the virtues. They are still taboo, and doubtless should be for a time. They too easily turn into the ghosts of ancient failure. There has been so much talk, so much value-charged rhetoric on the subject. The very currency of speech has been debased by a desperate production line of counterfeit nobilities which rule out the human spirit.

Today the noble man hides his face, shamed by the endless obsequies for all that he holds dear. He is unwilling to reveal his faith lest it be called a claim. He holds it close, as a mother holds her last child during the last days of a decimating plague.

Yet the great humanist qualities must be revived—revived and revered. They are needed to make a breeding ground for truth. They foster the endurance that angry men cannot understand. The angry man understands only the righteousness of his passions, and this never includes wondering about the world that will be left after those passions pale. His righteousness may have a principle, but it knows no measure. He has not turned into an emissary of the Infinite by being on some occasion right.

The philosophizng intelligence is never entirely claimed by the events of history. The man who feels his roots in a timeless reality is only partly the captive of his times. He is able, by an inward emancipation, to change the aspect of his times. And this change, through the radius of his being, is sometimes felt by others. Men do this every day. There is a law of the cheering, reconciling presence. The man who knows some truth has some mastery of the polarizing field. Culture is the polarizing field formed by the compatibilities and harmonizing energies of wise men. Groups may not have "souls," but the generated environment of the thinking of free men about how they became free has a fluid and penetrating reality.

The abstractions of philosophy convert to moods of being when expressed in individual attitudes and acts. And these, as they grow together, create plateaus and peaks of thought. They can be lived upon and climbed. The philosopher is a man who is never heard to say, "Prove it to me," in a sit-back-in-triumph complacency. He does not feel that he has been appointed conservator of the unbelief of a tired and disappointed world. The philosopher is not dismayed by the bastions of institutionalized self-defeat. He hardly sees them. He has come to realize that the idolatry of public truth is nothing but the confession of private impotence, a funding of the common apprehensions of mankind. The social order which wholly relies on public truth is maintained by the organization of fear.

We have been too long engaged with elaborate accounts of the "human condition." Conditions are not the man, but what confine him and through which he moves. Conditions have meaning only in the light of intentions. Man is not man except in pursuit of his calling. He does not become man save in struggling awareness of the ideal.

REVIEW
PERILS OF BEING HUMAN

YEARS ago, when the Dutch controlled Java, an Indonesian patriot, Soetan Sjahrir, "cooperated" with the authorities in order to work for the education of his people. Even so, he spent a total of eight years in a concentration camp. The story of this part of his life is told in *Out of Exile* (John Day, 1949), the autobiography of a man whose grasp of the two cultures—the Eastern and Western—gave him insight into the necessities of any possible civilization of the future. The pamphlet literature written by Sjahrir at the time of the Indonesian revolution (see the early chapters of Robert Payne's *Revolt of Asia*) is filled with evidence of this. (Sjahrir, who died recently, was kept in prison by Soekarno during the last years of his life.)

Essentially an educator, Sjahrir wanted to teach his people. Later, he became an underground leader, the brains of the Indonesian revolution. He was a kind of Tom Paine of the Orient, combining the philosophical ideas of the East with the libertarian conceptions of the American Revolution. He knew Paine's writings well—better than most Americans—and the synthesis of these themes in his pamphlets has a balance and inspiration not exceeded even by Jawarharlal Nehru. But Sjahrir did not serve his country long in any important post of political leadership after the revolution. His spirit of moderation in relation to the Dutch obliged his resignation as Prime Minister in 1947. Thereafter, the best use that could be made of him by his country was as a delegate to the Lake Success UN Security Council meeting in that year. Sjahrir's own explanation of why he had been a "cooperator" with the Dutch is of interest. It was a matter of weighing means to ends. A policy of non-cooperation, he said, had meaning with an opponent whom you could respect. Non-cooperation is a form of moral appeal. But if your opponent is of a sort that makes moral appeal pragmatically useless, you may "cooperate" in order to get certain things done.

There are elements of a parallel situation in Louis Lomax's account of the ordeals of Negro educators of past generations. In *The Negro Revolt,* Lomax tells what one Negro administrator had to do to get a new library for his college. After describing the need of his institution before a group of donors in a white church, he asked if there were any questions:

> To the educator's amazement, an elderly white woman stood and said: "Professor, before we talk about the money you want, would you please sing a few verses of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'?"

He sang for his library. And whatever he felt then, he has another kind of pain now. As Lomax says:

> . . . these well-educated, determined men . . . braved insults and contempt to raise the money to keep these schools going. Many of these men are still heads of Negro colleges, but now they find themselves in a cross-fire. Today their students are involved in sit-ins and freedom rides, and the white donors are both amazed and angered to discover that schools supported by their money spawn "agitators" and "troublemakers." The philanthropists and state boards of education turn on the college administrators and demand that they call a halt to the demonstrations: the students, on the other hand, expect their college executives to stand with them whatever the consequences. . . .

Heavy-handed are the judgments of men in terms of external behavior—indifferent to motives and to decisions imposed by the obscenities of the times. What kind of a social credo could afford insight instead of condemnation in circumstances such as these? Ideologists are really unable to consider this question, since it would interfere with their being *right.*

A quite different phase of righteous pressure is revealed in a *Nation* (Nov. 21) review of contemporary Soviet poets. Simon Karlinsky, professor of slavic languages at the University of California, writes about Bulat Okudzhava, whose verses are said to have an enormous circulation on

privately made tapes in the Soviet Union. For Okudzhava, called the third most popular Russian poet today, "freedom from the compulsory cliché has become *the* crucial freedom within the context of Soviet literature." Prof. Karlinsky makes this perceptive summary of his work:

> His [Okudzhava's] *Paper Soldier* treats the whole notion of military heroics, Soviet or otherwise, as absurd. . . . Another Okodzhava song tells of waterfront prostitutes and of some Soviet sailors who are afraid to go out to sea. Prostitution is not indicted, the sailors' cowardice is neither defended nor condemned—there is an implied presumption of an adult audience that has outgrown Sunday school. *The Midnight Trolley* has particularly irked the orthodox Soviet mentality. The hero of this song tells of his remedy against loneliness and acute depression: take the midnight trolley in Moscow and sit in it next to others who have also experienced shipwreck in the night. Neither Lenin nor the great Russian people are evoked. Instead:
>
> *Who would have thought that there is so much kindness*
>
> *In silence. In silence.*
>
> Quietly, unobtrusively, Okudzhava brings back the things that are most inimical to the Soviet brand of Socialist-Realistic aesthetics: a detached irony, freedom to be either optimistic or pessimistic, depending on the subject at hand, and, at times, a genuine sense of human tragedy. His refusal to take out insurance in the form of occasional reiteration of official clichés is apparently what makes some of his most popular work unpublishable in the Soviet Union to this day.

So, we might say to ourselves, that is fine for *Russia*, and what a Soviet poet ought to do. But should *anyone* tell a poet how to respond to his times? Or, to frame the question differently, is it ever right to let the presumed "necessities" of the times frame such judgments? Consider, for example, this first paragraph of a review of *Prison Notes* by Barbara Deming (Grossman):

> In 1846 Thoreau spent a night in jail for failure to pay his poll tax to a government which, he felt, collaborated in keeping Negroes enslaved. Rarely have fame and influence been more cheaply won, since nearly all subsequent practitioners of civil disobedience have paid tribute to the inspiration he gave them. Yet his ideas about the state, moral commitment, and the individual seem childish compared to his successors and his emotional tone is entirely different. Thoreau was lighthearted, indifferent to the effect of his actions on other people, so little committed to moral principle that he let a friend pay his fine, and he left jail after a single night—a night, incidentally, which he hugely relished in his nicely white-washed cell with the "fine fellow" who was his cell mate. He put no value on suffering in itself and surely would not have understood the notion that it might be redemptive.

Alas for Thoreau, who lacked instruction from both the circumstances and the Puritan certainties of a century later! How clearly his critic seems to read the dictates of a maturer righteousness. And how neglectful of any weighing of Thoreau's own expression: "I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do everything, it is not necessary that he should do *something* wrong." We might of course find here some evidence of Thoreau's indifference to his fellows, but only a great certainty would press this criticism far, in consideration of the entire body of Thoreau's work and the example of his life. The "something" he insisted upon doing was no negligible matter and not to be ignored because we think that *we* have at last found out what is truly the best way to help our fellows. Fashions play a large part in all such opinions.

What is at issue here is the question of how one ought to balance his life in respect to the entire spectrum of action. The "good" society, one might say, is the society in which each one is not only free, but can also be "trusted," to decide this balance entirely for himself. While we work in this direction, we get a great many directives from people who think they know what others ought to do next. There is a contradiction of ends-and-means philosophy here, one that it may be impossible to avoid. But there is at least the obligation to temper every judgment we make by awareness of this contradiction.

COMMENTARY
THE HEALTH OF "MANAS"

MANAS begins its twentieth year with reasonable expectation of being able to continue indefinitely. This measured optimism is not the result of any big windfall in the way of financial support, but grows from the simple fact of having survived thus far. Somehow or other, we keep going.

We speak of our hopes and problems rarely, and from the position, adopted from the first, that we would never put on any fund-raising campaigns, harassing the susceptibilities of our readers with appeals for help. While it may be fitting to make known the fact—obvious to some—that MANAS has a deficit economy, we decided not to do this frequently, and never in a "last gasp" mood. We would simply say that a magazine of this sort is not self-supporting and may never be.

The thinking has been that in a healthy society, such an effort, if it is good, will have adequate support from the society. And if the society is not healthy—well, the tab must be picked up, and it ought to be picked up by those who choose to make the effort. This should assure a lean seriousness in whatever is done, and complete freedom to do it. The kind of thing that needs to be done, these days, will not be accomplished by hired men.

If these matters are kept clear, we thought—kept clear not so much by advertising them as by attempts at consistent practice the paper may be expected to receive the help that is necessary when times are lean indeed. This help, we assumed, would be "organic" to our purposes, an evidence of the kind of health that is possible now. It would not come as some kind of "conscience money," which is hardly a true support, but as a voluntary watering of the spot of soil in which the paper grows. This help has come; not a great deal of it, although enough.

But it has never been easy. Appropriate, then, to our original idea of making our circumstances known, we are now able to announce that MANAS, as of June 21, 1966, is recognized as an institution to which tax-deductible contributions may be given, and holds a certificate of exemption from the Treasury Department to that effect.

We make no big "hurrahs" because of this change in our status. There has been no change in the paper, and will not be. It is simply that this recognition may be a part of the "health" we need to continue during these intermediate days between a sick society and a future in which an altered taste and cultural endowment will make such mechanisms of the community spirit a thing of the past. Meanwhile, to deny their "tension-relieving" function in the present would be less than candid.

One last word: We owe this recognition to the testimony of our readers.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
LIGHT AND SHADOW IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

BECAUSE of the popular stress on institutional improvement and legislative reform, this Department endeavors to give its space to fertile ideas, individual educational achievement, and the accomplishments of small, experimental schools—the kinds of things people can undertake without winning an election. Repeating fundamentals and redressing balances seem the most important things to do. Yet occasional recognition of the other side of the picture is also in order. Notice of Terry Sanford's book, *But What About the People?* (Harper & Row, 1966), which tells how Mr. Sanford was elected governor of North Carolina on a platform of better public education, and what he did after taking office, serves this purpose.

It is not easy to show that the good done by men endowed with power is really accomplished by means other than power, but this book helps to reveal the fact. There was not a phase of the entire program put into action by Governor Sanford which did not make its way first as an expression of moral energy involving vision, perception of need, and voluntary acceptance of responsibility. What such a book may do for the reader is to give him fresh touch with the old-fashioned ideal of public service. We cannot remember a book so restorative of this ideal since reading about the founding of the Forest Service in the autobiography of Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground* (Harcourt, Brace, 1948—reviewed in MANAS for Feb. 23, 1949),

We quote from James B. Conant's foreword to *But What About the People?:*

> Here is a book by a governor who at the outset of his career as a public servant squarely faced the fact that better public schools cost money. He campaigned on the issue, he was elected and then at once persuaded the legislature to make good on his promises, even though this involved a substantial increase in state taxes.
>
> Those readers who have some knowledge of the archaic and chaotic way we raise money for our public schools will recognize that North Carolina is almost unique among the states. In this state a very large proportion of the costs of elementary and secondary education is paid from state funds. To my mind the pattern might well be copied by those states in which the public schools are largely financed by local real estate taxes, with the result that there are gross irregularities in the qualities of education among the different school districts. It in no way diminishes admiration for what Governor Sanford accomplished to note that the structure of education in his state gives to the legislature and to the governor, as the political leader, crucial roles in improving education.

In contrast to the strong humanist current in Governor Sanford's book is the statement quoted from the president of a community (junior) college in Middletown, New York, in a *Harper's* article on education by Russell Lynes, and made the subject of comment by Robert M. Hutchins in his Dec. 5 column in the Los Angeles *Times.* Describing the policy of his institution, this junior college president said:

> We watch, we listen, we talk to businessmen and professional men, and when we have found a kind of training we are convinced the community needs and will use, we set up a curriculum in it.

Mr. Hutchins' choice of an adjective to characterize this view of curriculum-planning is the same as Mr. Conant's word for the way money is raised for public education—*archaic*. In the first place, as Mr. Hutchins points out, the sort of technical instruction a junior college makes available cannot possibly keep pace with industry, and the present rate of technological change would invalidate a great deal of even far better training, anyway. Further, the young in this small New York city—which has experienced practically no growth in population during the past sixteen years—are not likely to stay there. The town itself is in decline, for reasons that can hardly be reversed. However, the junior college president said there was a shortage of draftsmen in

the area, and that he planned "to do something about that." Mr. Hutchins' comment is the following:

> We can only hope that he did not get around to doing anything about that; for without visiting Middletown we can be sure of one thing, and that is that there is not much building going on in the area now.
>
> Middletown does not need draftsmen at the moment. But now Middletown and all the other cities, town and villages in the country need intelligent citizens and always will.
>
> The community colleges might try doing something about that.

Well, the junior college president might instead track down the rumor that draftsmen are needed, hoping to document the claim with signed and notarized letters from two or three architects' offices, and to send them off to Mr. Hutchins and the Los Angeles *Times* in high dudgeon and polemical triumph. He could probably also generate support from an aggrieved Chamber of Commerce. But this is the wrong way to take part in an argument about education. It is also the wrong argument, having no bearing on the real issue of what a community college can and ought to do—help to supply the country with intelligent citizens. Of course, one could say that draftsmen, if they grow up to be architects, as sometimes happens, might turn out to be pretty intelligent anyhow, since architecture is a practical art and a profession with a high quota of enlightened and publicly concerned citizens. But this is only an argument from happy accident in technical education and should not make a College President feel well defended against Mr. Hutchins' strictures. A more astute rejoinder would be to recommend the books of Clark Kerr, which tend to show that students seeking *intelligence* are likely to be trouble-making questioners of the smooth-running mechanism of our great technological society. We can't afford too many people like that.

This is plainly the view of California's Governor-Elect, Ronald Reagan, and Max Rafferty, the state's superintendant of public instruction, both of whom declared at a recent news conference that any faculty members of the University of California who take part in a teaching strike or otherwise offend against rules made by the Board of Regents should be fired from their jobs.

Perhaps they are right. Perhaps, that is, the University of California will turn out to be a lost cause for higher education, anyway, and should become a technical institute for drafting and other practical skills, serving notice on the rebellious young (along with trouble-making teachers) seriously interested in getting intelligence that they will have to seek elsewhere.

Worse things could happen. As observed by Lewis Feuer, a professor of philosophy who recently left the University of California in a less than kindly mood, the really epoch-making expressions of intelligence are commonly made *outside* the current of academic life. (*New York Times Magazine*, April 24, 1966.) A general understanding that higher education must now become a grassroots phenomenon—something like the way revolutions were born, back in the days when revolutions could do some good—may be the best possible development in behalf of the kind of intelligence we need. There is only one real requirement—you have to want the intelligence for its own sake, and give up hope of getting a ticket, a license, or a degree. Signs and symbols to the contrary, this is not such a horrifying thought.

FRONTIERS

Change and Changing Things

As a means of drawing attention to the kind of a world we live in, and its implications for architecture and design, Michael Blee remarks that primitive man regarded his practical utensils as virtually part of himself. His wooden bowl was "fingered, felt, and known" and his spoon was "a prehensile projection of his own anatomy." The contrast, for us, is between such a man's relationship to all his manmade possessions, each of which "has a similar intense reality," and our own attitudes toward "the trivia of materialistic society, the paper plate, the plastic spoon." This comparison sets many of the problems of the modern designer. Mr. Blee generalizes:

> If identity [of the sort contributed by such functional and treasured possessions] depends wholly on scarcity, slowness, familiarization, frequent contact, then the contemporary urban environment denies all possibility of such experience. It is here in particular that modes of relationship are extended to new conditions of meeting—the new space-time conjunction dictated by movement. The contemporary environment, the rich assembly of man-made objects that structures it, has then a collective image generated by a bombardment of experience, an intensity created by sheer pressure and repetition, and by lack of individual definition due to movement. Here most surely are radically different problems of identity, different categories of creative responsibility.

To the architect this situation is of direct concern, since it obliges him to define his responsibilities. Mr. Blee says:

> For the architect is involved in the creation of man-made objects comprising a shaped environment that must articulate collective and individual needs unfounded on traditional social patterns and traditional qualities of identity. He can be neither traditional—indulging in pseudo-folk vernacular and craft methods—nor individualistic—indulging in whims and gimmicks that appeal to a craving for change in itself, or satisfy inflated egos. The scale of his concern alone demands a collective creativity in which individualism is dangerous. The solution is not to be found simply in group design. But if an agreed experiential basis is achieved which takes precedence over style or construction, and if the primary concern lies in relationship, then the climate of creativity will be automatically altered and a unity of purpose ensured.

This essay by Mr. Blee is one of sixteen contributions to *The Man-Made Object*, another of the volumes of the Vision + Value series (George Braziller, 1966, $12.50). The books of this series associate the imaginative intelligence of the scientist with that of the artist in an effort to reach a level of synthesis, and while no attempt is made to force a premature unity, the quality of the contributors provides at least a unity of spirit, since emancipation from routine thinking and a certain daring seem common to them all.

The Man-Made Object ranges over a wide area. Architects like Marcel Breuer and Leonardo Ricci write out of the grain of their practice; Christopher Alexander shows how a planning architect may give all the variable factors of need and limitation the right weight in his design. Kazuhiko Egawa writes on Japanese design and architecture, exploring the currents of thought which have animated the making and building activities of Japan. (The pictures illustrating these and the other articles are exceptionally fine, making the book almost unique in its effective combination of visual with intellectual communication.)

In a generally introductory article, Gillo Dorfles speaks of the enormously accelerated consumption of mass-produced objects, leading to instability and the rule of fashion in design. "Thus," he says, "the transformation, even very marked transformation, in the forms of the industrially produced products which surround us, can be completely gratuitous and due excessively to the phenomena of competition, advertising or sales." Mr. Dorfles traces the celebration by artists of the "thing," from the beginnings of still-life painting to the ambiguous "glorification" of objects by the Surrealists, finally coming to "junk art," of which he says ". . . it happens that in direct contrast with the impulse to *throw away the*

ordinary object there is being established an acute need to *treasure the ephemeral,* to collect and value the transitory, and in this case not for practical-economic reasons, but rather for symbolic-allegorical ones." Françoise Choay picks up this theme in her account of the work of Marcel Duchamp:

> In reality Duchamp's intention is twofold, derision and exaltation at the same time, and this ambiguity constitutes the fertile core of his work. On one hand, the industrial product is denounced in all its anonymity, its banality, its essential poverty which deprives it of human and poetic qualities. On the other hand, it still remains an object which a simple decision on the part of the spectator can extract from its context to give it mystery and opacity.

A rationale for these activities in the name of art appears in a passage in A *Season in Hell.* Rimbaud wrote:

> I found the famous figures in modern painting and poetry ridiculous. I preferred stupid paintings, the panels over doors stage sets circus booths, signs, cheap colored prints. . . .

As Miss Choay says, "The whole arsenal of art brut is already invoked here: the touching ponderousness of the human project in its most naïve or maladroit materializations." A similar note is struck by Dore Ashton, discussing more recent trends:

> The artist today often suspects that he is engaged in a losing battle with the effects of mass production, and above all, with the bourgeoisie and its materialism. . . . The Dadas had left a few things undone, among them, the total destruction of the notion of Art. Ever since the late nineteenth century there has been an irascible nucleus of artists who associated art with decadence and materialism. That a work of art is purchased, fondled, and viewed as a symbol of status is taken to mean that there is something fundamentally wrong with a work of art. Faulty as this logic may be, a great many serious young artists operate within it.

So today there are artists who use materials that "wilt," declaring that they will never be debased by any collector. The writer sees these mock heroics as an impoverishment of the artist, reducing the choices available to him: "More and more the artist relinquishes the proud role of master of his material; more and more he gives way to those very techniques he opposes."

With relief, one returns to the architects, who are at least deterred from such "protests" by their hope of building places to house human beings. The architects have their pain, arising from the same general causes, but some of them find a way to use it. Mr. Blee writes:

> The contemporary architect, in common with all those whose concern is with problems of form, is most painfully aware that there is no longer a single architectural construct for man's image of his world, no single embodiment of his relationship with the world. The confined and defined local statement which comprised a regional or geographic tradition is no longer possible or valid in a world where communication physically and intellectually has made an anachronism of the closed society. In the inevitable ambivalence that results there can be no consistency or maintenance of direction; the scale and intensity of the bombardment of influences which is characteristic of an open society must continually deny that reasonably static condition from which a reasoned statement—a tradition—can emerge.
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> For the majority of architects the problem is never stated in these terms; preoccupation with new materials, techniques, planning problems, etc., tends to obscure or crowd out such considerations. Else recourse to such thinking is regarded as appropriate in the region of pure theory from which only unrealistic or utopian conclusion remote from life and pressing problems can emerge. Nevertheless, it is realized that the work of those few who are guided by a particular estimate of man and his relationship with his world—both natural and man-made—and who seek a construct for this image, is marked by that lack of superficial form-gimmicks which is typical of all true and total architecture. The work of such "masters" may provoke one of two reactions: either copying without understanding and therefore a misapplication of the forms which embody their individual estimate of man and his relationship with the world, or an attempt to discover the nature and quality of this equation in order to arrive at an equivalent conviction. The former represents the familiar methods of architectural plagiarism, of fashion, stylism, etc.; the latter the more difficult path of seeking a design philosophy embodying a coherent

personal estimate of the right relationship between man and his world.

Well, where did all the trouble begin? It won't do, however tempting, to blame it all on technology. More than from anything else, probably, the trouble comes from the identification of people with *things,* far beyond those practical identifications with personal tools Mr. Blee spoke of earlier, discussing pre-industrial man. Now, he says, we must learn how to see the important framework of man's surroundings in *relationships,* not in things. The things have dissolved into the anonymous, all-too-abundant products of technology, and humans are in danger of becoming as ephemeral and dispensable as they are. But where shall we seek identity, if not in "things"?

That is what we need to find out. Can the artists do more than hold a mirror up to the follies and false starts of the times? Mr. Blee, for one, thinks they can:

> True artists are as rare as saints, but there can and must be a corpus of the creatively committed as well as of the faithful. Development lies in the lines of experience, the ability to enter into a live and meaningful relationship, a humanity where true living is meeting. Such a condition is not fanciful, it is found in the intuitive and unaware folk community where a level of unconscious perfection is achieved through total commitment to direct experience, where all things are an "instant reality." Development does not, however, imply a reversion to the state of the primitive—though the thought and work of certain architects and theorists may suggest this—but rather a progression to a state of "superconsciousness", not a denial of the rational but the harnessing of increasing knowledge to truly human ends.