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THE REVIVAL OF "MORALITY"

THE difficulties which attend any attempt to discuss what is known as "morality" are probably greater, today, than at any other time in human history. One perceives this wryly in trying to understand the inner pain recorded in Tolstoy's *Last Diaries* (Putnam, 1960), with more than the feeling that the old man was torturing and castigating himself beyond the call of duty. One may sense, however, that Tolstoy's exacting conscience and the demands he made upon himself had a connection with the greatness of his art, even though it is generally conceded that *Resurrec*tion, the last of his novels, written when the full weight of his sense of guilt was upon him, is an inferior work. We cannot say that an aroused sense of moral obligation is destructive of art, although we may conclude that a distorting response to the pangs of conscience may be a disorganizing influence on any work that is undertaken. We are hardly well enough informed about the calls men feel to "morality" to be able to make firm judgments one way or the other.

Yet we know a great deal, critically, about the dehumanizing effects of moralizing, and of the rebellion generated, in time, against dictated codes of behavior. We have learned about the close connection between religious guilt-feelings and insanity; we observe the emasculating effects of remorse, and see the uselessness of general condemnation of men as "sinners" and the once popular identification of all things "natural" as somehow evil and wrong. But, on the other hand, we know almost nothing of the role, in the lives of human beings, of secret reticences, of shy and silent determinations of personal discipline—qualities in life which could easily lose their value if they are publicized and made objects of contention. There is a sense, almost a "moral" instinct, which tells us that a codified morality is no morality at all, but a restriction of human potentiality. Yet this is not the same as saying that the idea of a life regulated by moral fitness has no meaning, although it may come close to implying that morality loses any real fitness when it ceases to be an individual determination.

The obscurity of this sort of thinking seems traceable to the enormous emphasis, in recent generations, on "social" philosophy. The growing sensibilities of mankind to considerations of social justice have gradually established the view that the only veto power on human behavior that need be respected arises from a background of social values. Simply because ideas of personal morality or goodness were for so long isolated from the typical offenses of status and power, these ideas became virtually *symbols* of indifference to social justice—mere distractions from the cruelties of class and the abuses of power which were practiced by the few. A new standard of moral acceptability grew out of this polemic—the claim that there could be no right or wrong that did not spring from social judgment—and in time a great many people found their way to salvation by association: they took the correct political position and achieved all the "morality" required of any man.

Today, however, this view is experiencing a slow decline. It is questioned on at least two counts. First, the idea of personal truthfulness and of respect for one's opponent in social issues—both basic considerations in the Gandhian approach to conflict resolution—has led to a slowly emerging constellation of ideas about personal morality, which become the basis of social morality as their radius is increased to include wider community relations. A second questioning of the moral vacuum in individual or personal life grows out of various findings of psychotherapy—a branch of medicine which threatens to replace religion as the source of moral ideas. There is an unmistakable personal discipline which arises from growing regard for the subjective reality of other human beings. It is now becoming evident that a "healthy" human being does not treat others as "things," and out of such recognitions may come an empirically determined

code of personal behavior by no means alien to the counsels of the high religions of the past. We avoid identifying the restraints so instituted upon ourselves with the oppressions of codified morality by not using the word "morality" at all, and by seeking, instead, a personally experienced ethical reference for whatever we do. This, doubtless, is as it should be; codification of an individually achieved sense of ethical obligation would be the same as saying that this freshly forged insight was somehow wasted effort, since all we needed was a few "rules."

Now it is obvious that guiding ideas in interpersonal relations may be regarded as the simplest form of principles of *social* relations—the raw data, so to speak, which may be extrapolated into a fresh approach to social problems. Yet it is precisely the passage from the private and individual to the statistical and social that remains obscure. To let go of the statistical approach, affording legislative-manipulative solutions of human problems on a mass scale, seems utter folly, until we actually know a great deal more about the transfer of individual morality to the modes of action which seem required by the community at large.

And yet, from a broad historical point of view, we are not ignorant of the social role of the distinguished individual. Extraordinary men have been able to polarize the very temper of culture, drawing out unexpected elements of heroic resolve. Even though the metabolic processes of these influences upon populations remain obscure, we know they exist. And we know, too, that groups of unusual men are able to create powerful foci of cultural vision. Men with ideas are catalysts of human development. What puzzles us is the frequent lack of conformity between the ascending curves of such high human influence and the historical phenomena which accompany them. Plato's Athens was Athens in decline. Cicero's Rome gives little promise of social miracles from moral exhortation. The transcendentalists enriched us all, but New England did not really respond to their satisfaction.

So there is a strong tendency to insist that we must see how we can *win* with these ideas before we adopt them. The argument for the social veto power seems strongly supported by history. Yet this argument commonly overlooks the fact that no social action which proves of lasting benefit is unattended by the less visible dynamics of individual moral attitude. We have here no either-or situation, although abstracting polemics almost invariably make it seem so. We ought to take as a general principle that legislative reform or achievement is one means of releasing and channeling the moral energies of human beings, but that if the moral energy does not pre-exist, no amount of insisting on legislative extremes or anxious demand for guarantees can make it appear. And when the reforms fail, or father unexpected dislocations, we enter a cycle of fractional partisanships in which all the guilts of the most censorious religions are revived in the controversies of political self-righteousness.

Now this would be an endless vicious circle were it not for the fact that men begin to see that something is profoundly wrong with their calculations. They begin to see that the claim that man is not a "thing" has widely multiplying ramifications. They begin to notice and declare that the key realities in human life lie in attitudes, not conditions. They begin to acknowledge that the design of conditions embodying utopian perfection is not only impossible, but also a project which leads to uncontrolled divisiveness and animosity among the planners who compete for confidence and authority. Once the project is aimed at a level of conditions, the men who set their hearts upon reform in these terms acquire an uncompromising certainty. Any self-doubt would destroy the whole elaborate structure of their monumental intentions. What else but passionate division can result?

Now what, exactly, is at issue in the choice between conditions and attitudes as the source of human good? At issue is the nature of man. At issue is whether man is a product of conditions or the maker of them.

These generalizations are obviously too big to gain settlement by abstract criterion. Men are both, of course—they are both products and makers of conditions. Whole libraries of demonstrations for both views could be assembled. And the division between the more responsible and the less

responsible among men is a crucial qualifier of all such arguments. The past three hundred years are full of the dramatic contentions of those who, feeling responsible for the plight of men who are, on the face of it, victims, mere objects of history, have proposed plans for conditions that will give these men more opportunity to become subjects—to become, as we say, *free.* The arguments are persuasive; they involve deep moral emotions, although, under the provocations of conflict, certain other emotions appear which on any hypothesis are not moral at all.

During the past three hundred years we have tried out a number of these proposals. They have brought what we now recognize as a very mixed progress. Revolutions have been betrayed. The plans were not properly executed. Self-seeking men gained power. Perverters of dreams exploited human weakness. The very freedom achieved was turned into opportunities for systematic deception. Why, we are compelled to ask, must men be "liberated" again and again?

Yet in these repetitions of history we have had little awareness of the host of every change—the private moralities of private individuals. There are theories about this, of course. We have Machiavelli and we have Hitler, both of whom composed astute doctrines on how to manipulate human feelings *en masse.* But how to foster the development of autonomous moral units—where are the treatises on this, composed in the social interest?

In any event, we are told that there is no *time.* So there is resort to precisely those methods that the scholars of social manipulation have described, it being claimed that in a good cause the people will surely benefit. At the same time, it must be admitted that the credibility gap is widening in relation to this view, which has an unpleasant resemblance to the doctrines of the Grand Inquisitor. The Grand Inquisitor was, as we all know, an exceedingly righteous man. He had the true interests of the people at heart, as he explained with full indignation toward any amateurish interference by advocates of "autonomy" and independent moral decision.

It is not that there can be no statistics, no political rearrangements, no compromises with human frailty. We shall have all these, no matter what. But we can do no good for human beings if these are the *only* means by which we attempt to improve the common life. And we shall *see* no other means unless we first take into account the independent wholeness and symmetries of the individual moral life.

Now this is a revolutionary idea. It implies that Jesus was not a failure. It suggests that Socrates led a blameless and worthy life—an example to be followed by any man without apprehension or regret—and a life whose excellence was unaffected by a death he chose as surely as he breathed and taught the young Athenians who were willing to learn. It is an idea implying some deep flaw in our insistence upon historical perfections as the only significant measure of human achievement.

It is plain enough that we do not lack ingenious methods or technical capacities for historical achievement. We have ironists aplenty to point out how quickly we could replace bombs with universities, world starvation with ample food supply, rivalry with cooperation, suspicion with trust. It is *obvious* that the trouble lies in our ideas of ourselves, in the view of how we progress, and how we need to prove ourselves and demonstrate our human qualities. The very intentions we pursue disintegrate the processes of their actual achievement because they separate man from man and create categories of evil out of men with different opinions. . . . Such criticisms are held to be the clichés of the ages; yet that we have never taken them seriously may have made them into clichés.

So it is indeed attitudes and not conditions with which we must concern ourselves. Who must do this? Those who see its necessity. Who else can do it? But since being concerned with attitudes is a non-manipulative activity, in recognition of human beings as primarily subjects, although they have an object-side as well, the adoption of this view may at first have little or no effect upon those who talk about human freedom but do not really believe in it. How do we know that they do not really believe in it? Because they display no confidence in it. They are not willing to risk their lives, their fortune, and their

sacred honor in behalf of it. They place their confidence in manipulation.

There are two ways to fail in the human enterprise. You can fail in doing the right thing or you can fail in doing the wrong thing. Is it possible that failing in doing the right thing is not really failure?

This question turns on our estimate of a human life. All the countless millions who lived in forgotten civilizations—what did their lives *mean?* To what did they contribute? Have we a theory about this? How might thinking about this affect our day-to-day decisions now? Should it affect us? Those myriads of men of times long past—had the moral reality of their being any enduring value? Did they live to any end? Was nobility, then, when achieved, less than nobility achieved now? Are there any cosmic deposits of such human achievement? The quality of striving for the good, of longing for justice, of seeking a way of life that upholds one's sense of being a man—what *are* these things, that we can say we have no *time* to give them attention?

Well, we have had some answers in the intuitions of the great. Are not the intuitions of the great and the large body of reasoning about them the content of what we call a general education? Are they not what we esteem as necessary to the education of a man?

A man is not a society. A man is a unit of moral independence and decision. He cannot be what he is without devoting himself to independent moral decision. He devotes himself to it with great difficulty when the world around him conspires to be a vast distraction from this task. If learning to make independent decisions is the business of human life, nothing else comes close to it in importance. And if distractions are practiced, to dissuade man from the pursuit of those attitudes toward self and the world which result in dignity and growth, then they are distractions from being human.

Being human is not an expression empty of content, although it has very nearly been made so by the distractions of our time. It has become almost a naked abstraction, a hollow echo in ideological contention. This idea gains garb, riches, and exhilarating atmosphere by the practice of self-devised moral disciplines which enable a man to feel joy in responsibility, release in self-restraint. A moral man is a man who refuses to let himself be victimized by moralists—who will not delegate his decisions to those who claim to know what he *ought* to do. He will not be an object, and neither will he submit to classification as a metaphysical "thing." Moral codes are the procrustean consolidations of hearsay about self-discipline. They are the escape from individual choice for men who have been indoctrinated in the belief that they are not human enough to choose for themselves.

For we do have this power over one another. We are able to exploit one another's fears. Seduction and exploitation, imperialism and colonizing are personal activities before they become affairs of state or prerogatives of class. We talk of progress, it is true, and there is certainly a sense in which the people of the present have a heightened moral awareness; yet, at the same time, the sense of being impotent to fulfill the mandates of that awareness has never been so great. We speak the language of immeasurable technical possibility while practicing the credo of personal defeat.

We cannot live as men by moral codes, but neither can we live without morality. But all morality, or its parent in sustained ethical temper, is a projection of meaning by the vision of human beings. Sometimes we feel the need of adding to the authority of this vision by asserting its accord with "nature," and sometimes we seek other mandates to support what we feel to be true in our hearts. But the vision is really helped by no external support; it needs no rationalizing sanction. Reliance on the vision itself is the only way to preserve it from corruption. The nobility of being men is sufficient to our needs, when we are able to see it so.

REVIEW
RELIEF FOR CITIES

IT would be a good thing to read Paul Goodman's article, "Urbanization and Rural Reconstruction," in *Liberation* for November, without any preparation, but it would be better to read first, say, three books—*A City Destroying Itself* (Morrow, 1965) by Richard Whalen; *The Emerging City* (Free Press, 1969) by Scott Greer; and *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Random House, 1961) by Jane Jacobs.

Goodman's brief account of the dehumanizing trends in modern cities, and of their apparently irreversible momentum, is clear enough, but the impact of what he says will be greatly increased by such preparatory reading. Yet Goodman's contribution seems the most important, since what he says is more than a recital of impossible dilemmas. The hopelessness implicit in formal studies becomes evident in a brief passage by Mr. Greer:

> The argument for city planning is the desire to control and foresee the consequences of the necessary housekeeping tasks of the urban populace.
>
> To foresee the results of alternatives, however, requires an organization that has the information. To act with foresight on area-wide problems requires an organization whose sanctions apply across the urban complex as a whole. In the absence of a single polity for the metropolis, growth is uncoordinated and unplanned, with the transport system tending to follow, willy-nilly, the development of new areas controlled by tiny municipalities or not controlled at all, while improved roads precipitate further building and settling. The lack of coordinated policy produces a lack of foresight, perpetuating the tendency to act first and think later that has left the American city continually in arrears on its civic agenda. And, as new development progresses, it represents massive capital investments, not easily to be ignored when future decisions are made. The city of the future loses freedom of choice and becomes a captive of the unplanned commitments of today. Its problems, like those pressing most severely now, will be problems of "redevelopment."

This is an abstract statement of the unsolvable problems of modern cities. Mr. Whalen's book, *A City Destroying Itself,* is a blow-by-blow account of how these frustrations work in operation. Loss of community, in a city, is loss of people who *care* about community. In New York, as Mr. Whalen shows, the people who might be expected to care practice insulation instead of participation.

Mrs. Jacobs is important to read because she loves and appreciates what is good about city life, making the reader aware of the vital human processes which go on in even the worst slum neighborhoods.

Goodman does not write about cities alone, but about cities and their surrounding rural areas, since in the latter lies the only hope for reclamation of a good life for all.

From a descriptive point of view, the accumulating troubles of modern cities come from the fact that cities seem more attractive than present-day rural life and acquire more population than they can accommodate; meanwhile, the rural areas decay. Only six per cent of the population of the United States is today listed as "rural," whereas the Scandinavian countries show a much more favorable rural ratio, and Canada has an enviable fifteen or twenty per cent of its population living in the country. As a result, Canadian cities are at least "manageable," Goodman thinks.

The argument for industrialized farming and the elimination from the economy of the small farm is of course that large-scale farming is more "efficient." But efficiency is determined by what you are trying to accomplish. As Goodman says:

> It has certainly not been technically efficient to bulldoze the garden land of the missions of Southern California into freeways, aircraft factories, and suburbs choked by smog, and then to spend billions of public money to irrigate deserts, robbing water from neighboring regions. The destruction of California is probably our worst example of bad ecology, but it is all of a piece with the destruction of the fish and trees, the excessive use of pesticides, the pollution of the streams, the strip-mining of the land.

> Of course, the galloping urbanization has been world-wide and it is most devastating in the so-called under-developed countries which cannot afford such blunders. Here the method of enclosure is more brutal. Typically, the United States or some other advanced nation introduces a wildly inflationary standard, *e.g.,* a few jobs at $70 a week when the average cash income of a peon is $70 a year. If only to maintain their self-respect, peasants flock to the city where there are no jobs for them; they settle around it in shanty towns, and die of cholera. They used to be poor but dignified and fed, now they are urbanized, degraded, and dead. Indeed, a striking contrast between the eighteenth-century enclosures and our own is that the dark Satanic mills needed the displaced hands, whereas we do not need unskilled labor. So along with our foreign aid, we will have to bring literacy and other parts of the Great Society.
>
> In the United States, though we collect the refugees in the slums, we do not permit them to die of starvation or cholera. But I am bemused at the economics of the welfare procedure. For instance, first, for 60 years we destroyed Puerto Rican agriculture by a mercantile system similar to George the Third's; then in the past 20 years we have allowed 800,000 Puerto Ricans—a majority with some rural background—to settle in New York City, the most expensive and morally strange possible environment, rather than bribing them to disperse. The result at present is that every week 1,000 come to New York to make a living, and another 1,000 flee back to Puerto Rico to save their children from heroin. When sharecropping failed in the South, rather than subsidizing subsistence farming and making a try at community development, we give relief-money and social-work in Chicago and Los Angeles. Take it at its crudest level: if the cheapest urban public housing costs $20,000 a unit to build, and every city has a housing shortage, would it not be better to give farmers $1,000 a year for 20 years, just for rent, to stay home and drink their own water?

This is but one of several lines of critical analysis in Mr. Goodman's discussion. To reinforce what he says about the Puerto Ricans in New York, the reader would do well to look at *The Inhabitants* by Julius Horwitz (Signet, 1961) for a vivid portrayal of this problem. Goodman continues:

> Radical liberals believe, of course, that all troubles can be immensely helped if urban areas get more money from national and state governments, and they set store by the re-apportionment of the State legislatures as ordered by the Supreme Court. In my opinion, if the money is spent for the usual liberal social-engineering, for more freeways, bureaucratic welfare and schooling, bulldozing Urban Renewal, subsidized suburbanization, and police, it will not only fail to solve the problems but will aggravate them, it will increase the anomie and the crowding. . .
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> The basic error is to take the present urbanization for granted, both in style and extent, rather than to rethink it.
>
> (1) to alleviate anomie, we must, however "inefficient" and hard to administer it may be, avoid the present massification and social engineering; we must experiment with new forms of democracy, so that the urban areas can become cities again and the people citizens. This is, of course, the line of S.D.S., S.N.C.C., Saul Alinsky, and so forth, though of course each in a different style and perhaps with different philosophies. But (2) to relieve the absolute overcrowding that has already occurred or is imminent, nothing else will do but a certain amount of dispersal, which is unlikely in this generation in the United States. It involves rural reconstruction and the building up of the country towns that are their regional capitals.

Since this proposal now seems utopian, Goodman makes some practical suggestions for "thinning out" urban populations. One is to board slum children in rural homes where they will attend country schools. Another is to apprentice city adolescents to country community enterprises such as newspapers, small broadcasting stations, little theaters. Funds for this, he points out, ought not to be difficult to obtain, since in New York "it costs up to $1400 a year to keep an adolescent in a blackboard jungle." He also proposes the restoration of the land-grant college to its original function, instead of its present activity of being an inadequate imitation of academic institutions. As he points out, "the more its best young are trained to be personnel of the urban system, the more the country is depleted of brains and spirit." He also recommends a serious study of the economy of the small farm, to see what it may be able to produce as well or better than large agriculture operations. "If," he says, "there were a premium on small intensive cultivation, as in Holland,

technology would develop to make *it* the 'most efficient'." (Ralph Borsodi made this point about the possibilities of small industrial production units some forty years ago.)

In this article in *Liberation* (single copies, 75 cents, 5 Beekman St., New York City), Paul Goodman has looked at the scene of urban problems and made some practical suggestions which could be immediately carried out without great difficulty. His final statement is this:

> To sum up, in the United States the excessive urbanization certainly cannot be thinned out in this generation and we are certainly in for more trouble. In some urban functions, perhaps, like schooling, housing, and the care of mental disease thinning out by even a few per cent would be useful; and the country could help in this and regain some importance in the big society. Nevertheless, the chief advantage of rural reconstruction is for its own sake, as an alternative way of life. It could develop a real countervailing power because it is relatively independent. . . .

COMMENTARY
EVALUATIONS OF BUSINESS

NEARLY ten years ago, in *The Affluent Society*, John Kenneth Galbraith issued a challenge to the business community. More in the mood of E. F. Schumacher than that of Peter Drucker (see Frontiers), he maintained that the prevailing notions of "good business" are irrelevant to the economic and social problems besetting the country. While cities decay and both urban and rural areas are starved for schools, hospitals, health and recreational facilities, business is obsessed by the drive to produce and sell more goods. This desire for goods, Mr. Galbraith said, is "imposed on the consumer." The old economic relationship has been reversed: "Production is no longer urgent to satisfy wants but wants are urgent to provide employment." Mr. Galbraith found this a wholly unsatisfactory situation and proposed: "Evaluation of the opportunities that the modern corporation affords the people who comprise it for dignity, individuality, and full development of personality should be as important as estimates of its economic efficiency."

His judgment is now confirmed by widespread rejection of business careers by the intelligent young. A scatter of surveys reported by David R. Francis in the *Christian Science Monitor* for last Nov. 7 show a clear antipathy toward business. The brightest students are the least drawn to it. Of 594 companies seeking to hire students during a recent semester at Syracuse University, 116 "did not get a single applicant, let alone a recruit." Only three per cent of the men and practically none of the women who won National Merit Scholarships in 1964 expressed a preference for business as a career. A study of attitudes toward business among 386 students and 56 fellow members at the Bernard M. Baruch School of Business and Public Administration in New York—where, naturally enough, more than 80 per cent of the students look forward to business careers—reveals strongly critical views. Following are some passages in the *Monitor* summary of this survey (conducted by Prof. Kenn Rogers):

> . . . they [the students] think business unconcerned with "helping to take care of workers displaced by automation" and "keeping the cost of living down." Nor is it "helping to wipe out poverty here or around the world," according to the student view. To them, it is also failing in "rebuilding the cities" and in "controlling air and stream pollution." It is not "cutting down accidents on the highways." It isn't "improving collegiate business education."
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> The list goes on. Business, the students say, doesn't care for the struggle of ethnic minorities. It stifles "people's creative abilities" and does not really care about the individual. . . .Perhaps the most unkindest cut of all is their belief that "most business men will do anything, honest or not, for a buck." And the opinion that business offers those who are ruthless a chance to "start a business and become a millionaire," provided they accept a dog-eat-dog motto.
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> With such a gloomy view of business, it seems surprising that they have chosen careers in this field. Prof. Rogers concludes that they have sold out to business for a better-than-average standard of living. Many of those interviewed believe they will eventually earn from $30,000 to $50,000 per year.

In a concluding paragraph, Mr. Francis quoted Antonie T. Knoppers, president of Merck, Sharp & Dohme, as saying that the prospect of relatively easy affluence makes students place a higher value on social contributions in their careers, and business, he added, "has done little to indicate that fulfillment of this kind is possible in some degree in a business career."

It seems clear that businessmen generally have felt quite secure in accepting merely traditional views of their identity and purposes. That these views are no longer functional is a necessary discovery for businessmen, and the lonely few who have made it are finding out, with Mr. Schumacher, how it feels to be prophets crying in the wilderness. All such men need to find strength by getting together.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

AGAINST THE SPIRIT PREVAILING

IN a paper titled "Education: Aid or Bar to the Developmental Process," published in *Child Study* for the spring of 1966 (a bulletin of the Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto), A. Schermann renews what is already a familiar theme:

> The aim of education is *not* to teach a child to memorize facts. In our present-day society, such an approach would invite disaster, for many of the facts taught today may turn out to be old wives' tales tomorrow, and it is disconcerting, to say the least, to find out that what one had always believed, is no longer to be regarded as the best possible explanation of a particular phenomenon. If a teacher recognizes that he has goals other than providing information, he will need to know something of the characteristics or main dimensions of development; this will enable him to formulate his aims in broader terms. . . .
>
> The use of such an approach would require considerable change on the part of many educators. . . It is far easier to speak and write against the spirit prevailing at any time, than it is to proceed contrary to it.

Mr. Schermann speaks of the vast difference between theory and practice in educational psychology and notes that much of contemporary theory affords "such a fragmented view of behavior that it has been said that one would have to be clairvoyant to integrate the findings of present-day research in the field of child study." Yet for the practitioner, "the time for action is the present." His paper goes on to discuss the characteristics of development in terms of learning, activity, growth, openness, mechanization, and selectivity. Here we should like to illustrate the musing criticism of the predetermined curriculum of the technological society as increasingly made by those who are aware of its dangers and are resolved to proceed contrary to the prevailing spirit. The following is the opening essay in the November 1966 *Parents' Bulletin* issued by the School in Rose Valley, Moylan, Pennsylvania:

> Long ago Quintillian expressed the Roman educational ideal in moral and educational terms when he wrote in his *Institutio Oratoria* that "It is the perfect orator that we are training and he cannot even exist unless he is a good man." A pedagogical realist, he accepted the curriculum as it stood and the practical goals shared by the Roman aristocracy. Contemporary pedagogical realism also accepts that the educational "product" of our schools be morally correct and equipped with the kind of learning that will fit him for success in our technocracy. Where vocational success in the Roman Empire meant speaking in the law courts, today's vocational imperative for the new, managerial, technical, professional classes is associated with the precision of scientific technology.
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> A report from the Ford Foundation's Fund for the Advancement of Education entitled *The Changing School Curriculum* and issued just two months ago underlines today's vocational emphasis. The curriculum is spoken of as "discipline-centered," and as "pre-collegiate." There is a no-nonsense briskness about the report which lends authority to its implicit premise that the school is society's instrument. Since social survival more than ever depends on educating a class of technicians and theoreticians, the school must reflect the national interest. Our product will be an efficient man skilled in calculating, *pace* Quintillian.
>
> It is of some sociological interest that the spokesmen of contemporary curriculum reform are drawn from the class of the administrative intellectuals serving private foundations and Academia. The critical factor in an advanced technological society is the capacities and qualities of people, and no one is better suited to understand this than the administrative intellectual. Since educational status conditions entrée into the upper echelons of corporate organization, the curricular prescriptions of the administrative intellectual fit in admirably with the vocational ambitions for their children of today's new class. The race is on for educational advantage, and of course it must be run in the schools.

"Nameless pressures" do not haunt Norman Roseman, who wrote the foregoing, since he recognizes clearly the operation of what Rollo May called the "technological myth," and rejects its terms and values. Mr. Roseman continues this

discussion of educational objectives for the parents of the School in Rose Valley:

> Only an educational Luddite would question the efficacy of SMSG, UNICSM, GCMP, UMMaP, BSCS, CBA, PSSC, MINNEMAST, ESS, HSGP, DEEP, SRSS, and other acronymic packages of curriculum reform. (The SMSG program alone cost eight million dollars to develop, yet its probable value to the nation in bringing budding mathematicians to earlier and earlier specializations will be incalculable.) These programs cannot be faulted in their thorough and systematic efforts to "upgrade" the curriculum of the nation's schools. The course of Empire is most easily deflected by soft pedagogy, hence the discipline-centered school becomes the pervasive pedagogical metaphor. Today's whole child is all cortex.
>
> History teaches us that the curriculum of any period is conditioned by the political and economic imperatives of its ruling classes, but the saving grace of the classical period was its happy response to æsthetic norms as also guiding the nature and content of education. It is discouraging that contemporary educational norms conceive of knowledge as a product, the pupil as a product, and the school as an input-output device to maximize production (*sic*). One university president writes that "the production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge" accounts for "29 per cent of the gross national product." Recent mergers between publishing houses and Xerox, AT&T, General Electric, and other corporate giants emphasize the utilitarianism of what has become the knowledge industry. One may expect that in future decades the elementary school curriculum will be so cunningly articulated with higher education that specialization will begin in the primary grades.
>
> What is so discouraging about the Ford Foundation's *The Changing School Curriculum* is its tacit acceptance of growing and learning as being all one with technological progress. In our quest for rational efficiency, which in itself is an inevitable and materially fruitful consequence of the advance of technology, we are in danger of burying human personality under the dead weight of a dispiriting material culture. The goals of early schooling are intrinsic to childhood, and are not instrumental to national purpose. If *The Changing School Curriculum* is a portent, the elementary school will soon become a junior partner in the national knowledge factory.
>
> One day, when our educational ideal does become the efficient man skilled in calculating, we will have solved all the problems of production, but none of the problems of life.

A teacher is not a hired man; he is someone to whom children are *entrusted*. So it is that teachers, when they think large thoughts about the society in which they live, become breakers of moulds, gentle if outspoken revolutionaries, and finders of new-old ways of looking at life. Because they understand the fragile sensibilities of the young, and because they know that this very fragility, when nurtured, eventually turns into the lithe and supple strength of a free human being, teachers are often the most uncompromising of crusaders for children's rights.

Yet the values for which such teachers declare are not easily defined. They are concealed and lost when materialized—put into the language of a cash-in, product-dominated culture. To understand the contentions of the true teacher, it is necessary to believe and *feel* that being and becoming are ends in themselves, to which all other ends must be made subordinate and instrumental. The true values in education cannot be defined except in terms of themselves. It is for this reason that "æsthetic norms" become important to the teacher, since with them he can illustrate values which are ends-in-themselves.

FRONTIERS

Drifting into Serious Trouble

A THOUGHTFUL review of a practical book, *Managing for Results,* by Peter Drucker (Harper & Row), appears in *Etc.* for December. The reviewer, Edward A. Murray, remarks that Mr. Drucker takes "the first halting step toward a discipline of economic performance in business enterprise." It amounts to a convincing argument, he says, for "a much more rigorous analysis of business in economic areas than it usually receives." Mr. Drucker's common sense becomes obvious from Mr. Murray's summary:

> Such an analysis is always a rough undertaking. Decisions about the immediate and the distant future are more likely than not to develop conflicts in the allocation of resources that must be reconciled if survival chances are to be maximized. The business that avoids the resolution of these conflicts may be drifting into serious trouble. No company can do everything, and "the only 'universal' accomplishment open to a company (or to an individual) is universal incompetence." Drucker's main message seems to be, "If you are going to do a better job of managing, stop fighting fires in your business and start planning things so that fewer of them will occur. You spend ten per cent of your efforts in bringing about ninety per cent of the productive results; the remaining ninety per cent of your time is going into work that is of marginal value, if not actually wasteful."
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> The executive must work harder to discover not "how to do things right, but how to find the right things to do." The central job is to focus not on "problems," but on "opportunities." Too many business executives, he argues, are flying by the seat of their pants and must thus spend virtually full time in navigating through the stormy weather in their immediate vicinity. The underlying cause for this form of managerial behavior is the lack of a foundation of knowledge and a system for tackling the economic tasks of the businessman. Most managers are competent enough in things like production, sales, and accounting; the missing ingredient is an understanding of some of the economic variables (distribution channels, for example) that can spell the difference between success and failure.

Now what Mr. Drucker is doing here, it seems plain, is suggesting that businessmen become generally intelligent. He is not really advocating expertise peculiar to "business," but the broad principle of seeing the entire field in relation to the purposes of the undertaking. To become highly involved in limited skills while ignoring the larger purposes such efficiencies are intended to serve is a romance with self-defeat.

But how far do you go in looking for "larger purposes"? Will the businessman who accepts Mr. Drucker's analysis as sound and constructive entertain even wider aspects of the role of the manager of industrial enterprise?

A few years ago, in England, a group of young Christians studying industrial problems asked E. F. Schumacher, who is presently economic adviser to the British Coal Board, to examine industrial society in the light of the Gospels. The result was not quite the stuffy affair you might suppose. Mr. Schumacher did no more than take into consideration certain widespread consequences of commercial activity that its individual managers are seldom moved to inspect. His logic is but an extension of Mr. Drucker's, who questions the virtue of narrow efficiencies if these permit the larger involvements of business to be ignored. Mr. Schumacher rests his case on a similar inquiry: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Answering the question of the young men, Mr. Schumacher said:

> Modern industrial society is immensely complicated, immensely involved, making immense claims on man's time and attention. This, I think, must be accounted its greatest evil. Paradoxical as it may seem, modern industrial society, in spite of an incredible proliferation of labor-saving devices, has not given people more time to devote to their all-important spiritual tasks; it has made it exceedingly difficult for anyone, except the most determined, to find any time whatever for these tasks. In fact, I think I should not go far wrong if I asserted that the amount of genuine leisure available in a society is generally in inverse proportion to the amount of labour-saving machinery it employs. If you would travel, as I have done, from England to the United States and on to a country like Burma, you would not fail to see the truth of this assertion. What is the

> explanation of the paradox? It is simply that, *unless there are conscious efforts to the contrary,* wants will always rise faster than the ability to meet them.
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> The widespread substitution of mental strain for physical strain is no advantage from our point of view. Proper physical work, even if strenuous, does not absorb a great deal of the power of attention; but mental work does; so that there is no attention left over for the spiritual things that really matter. . . .

Mr. Schumacher notes that industrialism did not *have* to have this effect, and thinks it at least conceivable that countries now adopting the methods of technology might take on only those that facilitate and enrich life. But as he says, this is not happening. He continues:

> Whether the tendency to raise wants faster than the ability to meet them is inherent in industrialism as such or in the social form it has taken in the West may be a debatable question. It is certain that it exists and that the social forms exacerbate it. . . . Industry declares that advertising is absolutely necessary to create a mass market, to permit efficient mass production. But what is the bulk of advertising other than the stimulation of greed, envy, and avarice? It cannot be denied that industrialism, certainly in its capitalist form, openly employs these human failings—at least three of the seven deadly sins—as its very motive force. . . . British socialism once upon a time showed an awareness of this evil, but attributed it solely to the peculiar working of the private enterprise-and-profit system. But today, I am afraid, British Socialism has lost its bearings and presents itself merely as a device to raise the standard of living of the less affluent classes faster than could be done by free enterprise. However that may be, present-day industrial society everywhere shows this evil characteristic of incessantly stimulating greed, envy and avarice. It has produced a folklore of incentives which magnifies individual egotism.

After some further discussion, Mr. Schumacher lists what he regards as the "four great and grievous evils" of industrial society. They are "its vastly complicated nature; its continuous stimulation of, and reliance on, the deadly sins of greed, envy, and avarice; its destruction of the content and dignity of most forms of work; and its authoritarian character owing to organization in excessively large units." While allowing that trade unions have contributed an element of control, he finds highly objectionable features of capitalist enterprise continuing without restraint:

> Perhaps the outstanding examples are to be found in the field of "communication media"—in sections of the press, the entertainment industries, book publishing, and so forth. You may have read Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy,* which is a terrible indictment. The worst exploitation today is "cultural exploitation," namely, the exploitation by unscrupulous money-makers of the deep longing for "culture" on the part of the less privileged and under-educated groups in our society. The exhibition of reading matter on most of the bookstalls in industrial localities is—to my mind—the worst indictment of present-day industrial society. To claim that "this is what the people want" is merely adding insult to injury. It is not what they want, but what they are being tempted to demand by some of their fellow men who will commit any crime of degradation to make a dishonest penny.

But matters of this sort, it may be argued, are not the business of businessmen, who have enough to contend with as it is. There is only one answer to this comment: Such matters are the business of all men. In a specialist society—where the responsibilities of all become the obligations of none—the elimination of such matters from the disciplines of professional or business practice accounts for the breakdown of basic dialogue in modern civilization. Serious, general discussion of such matters would of course change things around considerably. It would have a quieting effect, for example, on the enormous fuss made over Marshall McLuhan; and it would open up communication between "doers" and "critics," conservatives and liberals, and all the other sectors of partisan opinion, each of which enjoys a private unanimity by conversing only with those who already agree.

We might conclude by suggesting that the wilderness in which Mr. Schumacher cries is the only wilderness that needs urgent attention from modern man—a wilderness now rampantly on the march, and one which first invades, then subverts, and finally destroys the human capacity to recognize the difference between good and evil.