

## PROBLEMS OF THE FREE SOUL

PLATO'S myth of the Cave provides a suggestive setting for this discussion. It begins, as readers of the *Republic* will remember, with the scene of an underground den. Human beings are chained so that they can see only before them, while behind them a fire flickers, casting shadows on the wall. The movement of these shadows supplies their idea of "reality." Having throughout a lifetime known no other experience but the shadows, the men in the cave find freedom difficult to understand. As Plato says:

At first, when any one of them is liberated, and compelled suddenly to go up and turn his neck around, and walk, and look at the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows. And then imagine someone saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now he is approaching real being, what will be his reply? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

There are those, however, who persist in the attempt to understand the outside world. There is a good summary of this aspect of Plato's thought in Arthur Rogers' book, *A Student's History of Philosophy*. Rogers speaks of the one who has escaped from the shackles in the cave:

By practice, however, he can accustom his eyes to the new conditions. First he will perceive only the shadows and reflections in the water; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars; and at last he will be able to see the sun itself, and behold things as they are. How he will rejoice then in passing from darkness to light; how worthless to him will seem the honors and glories of the den out of which he came! And now imagine further that he descends into his old habitations. In that underground dwelling he will not see as well as his fellows, and will not be able to compete with them in the measurement of the shadows on the wall, there will be many jokes about the man who went on a visit to the sun and lost his eyes; and if those imprisoned there find anyone trying to set free and enlighten one

of their number, they will put him to death if they catch him.

Here, potentially, and by no means spelled out, is the "social situation" of religious teacher or philosophical reformer. The myth of the Cave is Plato's version of the story of the Christ or of any man of great vision who tries to convey to his fellows the impact of the world of reality beyond the cave of illusions. His first problem arises when he decides that he will leave the free air and sunlight outside and return to the cave. How will he communicate his vision? What language will he use? Whom can he get to help him?

Several important questions come up here and we shall have to dispose of them quickly—too quickly, perhaps—in order to get on with the general argument. There is the matter of the deluded individual who hallucinates about the sun instead of really seeing it and who rushes about declaring his Message to anyone who will listen. Then there are those who go into the Message business. Having seen evidence of the secret longings of the chained for another kind of life, they capitalize on a line of pseudo-satisfactions and often do quite well, since people with deep longings are usually as gullible as their ignorance will permit. Out of these various forms of deception and vulnerability to deception come mighty upheavals in history and strenuous and terrible designs to immunize men from the virus of religious lying. The designs never work, since there can be no infallible system for the determination of truth, but the belief that such a system can be found is one of the engines of violent revolution. As for the means of learning how to separate the true from the false in religion, or in any field of inquiry involving the basic hopes of mankind, we can at this point only say to ourselves that, here and there, some individual men seem to have found a way. We have intuitive but not scientific evidence for thinking this to be so.

We can take this part of the discussion no further, for the reason that the idea of giving

intuitions some kind of "public" validity is the crux of the problem of authoritarian religion and authoritarian politics. A short discussion of this problem can do no good.

Back, then, to the central theme. The teacher who returns to the cave has certain practical decisions to make. He has to speak to the condition of the prisoners, and he has to find help. Perhaps, as Jesus did, he collects a few disciples. Or like Pythagoras, he starts some kind of "school." Socrates went about asking young people questions until he accumulated a group of listeners. Plato founded an "academy" and wrote dialogues embodying his insight and methods of inquiry. Luther challenged the religious mores and practices of his age by a defiant declaration of principles. William Lloyd Garrison started a magazine called *The Liberator*. Emerson wrote essays. Alcott held "conversations" and started children's schools.

The teacher wants to impart vision and the courage which gives vision strength. No man can live by vision without the courage to stand alone. It follows that a chief obstacle to the work of the teacher is the fear which lies close to the surface in very nearly all human hearts. We have learned a great deal from modern psychotherapy about the role of fear in human life—how it produces various forms of hostility and is no doubt at the root of the causes of war and many other social evils.

It is becoming obvious that to meet these difficulties, the teacher can have nothing better than a compromise solution. In the first place, there is no such thing as a direct communication of vision. You can describe a particular vision but you can not give vision. If you could, and exposed an unready individual to its impact, it might drive him mad. So the teacher devises what approaches he can to the psychological reality of vision. If he is a real teacher—and we are trying to limit the discussion to real teachers—he does his best to keep the description of it "loose." Plato, for example, used "myths" to avoid dogmatic versions of what he had to teach. Jesus resorted to parables. The mystery schools of antiquity employed dramatic rites and symbols to convey in some cipher of human feeling the import of the basic experiences of life. The idea

is always to supply a kind of order, or preparation, for discovery. But the need for order in discovery inevitably creates a paradoxical situation, since order, which is external or "collective," whenever it gets separated from an inner recognition of how vision takes place, becomes a barrier to vision, which is private and individual. For this reason every religious and even educational institution has a built-in contradiction for its foundation—just as every man, in another sense, suffers the built-in contradiction of his own compositeness of being. But the institutional contradiction is different, in that it has no single egoic center, no true *self* to resolve the contradiction and overcome the dilemmas it creates. The institutional resolution requires a cultural *esprit de corps* that is probably the most difficult of all human achievements.

This brings us to a letter by a reader, which contributes much substance to this discussion:

I am not opposed to institutions; quite the contrary, they are necessary; but when institutional needs (the sociologist calls them bureaucratic needs—preservation, status quo, etc.)—supersede the human needs for which the institution was created, then the institution no longer functions creatively or worthily for man. It has become an end in itself, a monster, sometimes, which cares not at all for the man it was once established to serve and assist.

People who work in institutions with high ends need to give careful thought to their need (which, if unmet, would emasculate us) for the inspiration of Thoreau, Emerson, Sandburg, Russell, the Huxleys, and dozens of others who were or are not "institutionalists." For my part, at least, I could not function without them, the free spirits. Again, this does not mean that the only free spirits are outside the institution but if we are so moribund that we must be confined to a jail, we are imprisoned by an institution which was once built, by men, to make men free.

To borrow from Emerson, every institution conspires to rob its members of their manhood. Ours included. Our institution does not think; only those within it have that power. Our institution does not give us dignity; those of us in it earn what dignity we have, and if enough of us earn it, we make of our institution an atmosphere, a tool, an historical continuity a launching pad for the rising-up of other men.

If this is utopian, well and good. The only thing which makes our struggles with this institution worth-while is the belief that the end is man's fulfillment, and that the institutional disadvantages will always be outweighed by the human advantages. If our institution ever becomes more important than the people in it, then good-bye. You can have it, and it will be no gift, because it will kill you, smother you with its demands only for petrification.

Why, one may ask, should a man submit at all to the patterns of institutions? To make the question clearer, since the objection to institutions is so obvious—why should a man submit to the minimum limitations of even the best of all possible institutions?

There can be only a long answer to this question. First we need to look at the temper of the "liberated man"—the free soul. His freedom consists in having broken with the confining illusions which beset other men. In respect to organizational work, he has discovered, for example, that political action usually depends upon compromise. Even with the best groups, the need to deliver the vote wears away at principles and ideals. While there are both tolerable and intolerable compromises, the political person too often submits to the intolerable compromise in the name of the tolerable, excusing his decision by pointing to his objective—the Good of Man. In religion, the justifications for compromise are both subtler and more far-reaching. People, one may say, need an objective entity like a church to identify with. They also need beliefs to live by. They may also need subjective compulsions to believe in their beliefs. The rationalizations are endless. What is more, there is probably *some* truth in every one of the rationalizations, an either up-side-down, or right-side-up sort of truth. But there is a strong tendency—a natural tendency—in the free soul to turn away from all these arguments. He is a self-reliant man. He needs and wants no religious institution. He sees political institutions as necessary expedients, but often prefers to have as little as possible to do with them. He develops extraordinary clarity in pointing to the defects of all existing institutions, and demonstrating his freedom from their limitations on thought and action.

Now as a matter of fact, MANAS has printed dozens of articles expressive of this temper of mind. Such criticisms ought to be made and, after a while, as you study the institutions all about, they become quite easy to make. And the continued submission of many men to the demands of the major social institutions give continued justification for this criticism. You may admit on practical grounds that institutions are necessary evils, but you spend most of your time exploring the evils instead of defining the necessity. So the examination of this necessity becomes an obligation.

In order to maintain perspective in this inquiry, we shall avoid direct examination for a moment, and turn to what might be called the "historical situation" in respect to institutional religion.

The Western world has just about completed a cycle of rationalistic rejection of religious doctrine. The main thrust of Western civilization has been in terms of scientific discovery, technological application of science, and scientific theories of knowledge and reality. The preoccupation with "physical" or "empirical" reality, while it has been enormously fruitful in a number of ways—in arousing men to self-reliant, self-benefiting activity, in leading to endless practical ventures and material achievements, in perfecting logical processes and the forms of logical analysis, in exposing ancient and not-so-ancient religious hoaxes and anti-human dogmas—has also led to an almost total neglect of the realities of man's psychic life, to say nothing of his "spiritual" nature. There is nothing new, of course, in this charge, which has been made for a century or so, but what may be new is the meaning the charge can now reveal.

We have in mind, for example, the material in the December 1962 *Atlantic*, under the title, "Jung on Life after Death." Actually, it was reading this transcript of a tape-recording of the late Carl Jung's final thoughts on such questions which made us say that the cycle of Western rationalism is "just about complete," since Jung puts into words the sort of objectivity toward the effects of modern rationalism which cannot help but bring its psychological imperialism to a close. Jung, of course, is articulating ideas which have been gathering in

Western thought for the best part of a generation, but his clarity, combined with his eminence, seem to entitle him to bring down the curtain and to point to "the next development in man."

In the *Atlantic* article, Jung begins by framing and justifying what he is going to tell of his own thoughts about life after death, which he identifies as "mythologizing"—a kind of thinking that has pervaded his whole life and which he could suppress or ignore only out of prejudice. He says:

Critical rationalism has apparently eliminated, along with so many other mythic conceptions, the ideas of life after death. This could only have happened because nowadays most people identify themselves almost exclusively with their consciousness and imagine that they are only what they know about themselves. Yet anyone with even a smattering of psychology can see how limited this knowledge is. Rationalism and doctrinairism are the diseases of our time; they pretend to have all the answers. But a great deal will yet be discovered which our present limited view would have ruled out as impossible. Our concepts of space and time have only approximate validity, and there is therefore a wide field for minor and major deviations. In view of all this, I lend an attentive ear to the strange myths of the psyche, and take a careful look at the varied events that come my way, regardless of whether or not they fit in with my theoretical postulates. . . . We are strictly limited by our innate structure and therefore bound by our whole being and thinking to this world of ours. Mythic man to be sure, demands a "going beyond all that," but scientific man cannot permit this. To the intellect, all my mythologizing is futile speculation. To the emotions, however, it is a healing and valid activity; it gives existence a glamour which we would not like to do without. Nor is there any good reason why we should.

Here Jung seems the same cautious man he was throughout most of his life, since he plainly has in mind something far more than "glamour." A little later, after reviewing some of the phenomena of extra-sensory perception, including several personal experiences of his own, he says:

If such phenomena occur at all, the rationalistic picture of the world is invalid, because incomplete. Then the possibility of an other-valued reality behind the phenomenal world becomes an inescapable problem, and we must face the fact that our world,

with its time, space, and causality, relates to another order of things lying behind or beneath it, in which neither "here and there" nor "earlier and later" are of importance. I have been convinced that at least a part of our psychic existence is characterized by a relativity of space and time. This relativity seems to increase in proportion to the distance from consciousness, to an absolute condition of timelessness and spacelessness.

In his conclusion, Jung declares himself unequivocally in philosophic terms:

Only if we know that the thing which truly matters is the infinite can we avoid fixing our interest upon futilities and upon all kinds of goals which are not of real importance. Thus, we demand that the world grant us recognition for qualities which we regard as personal possessions—our talent or our beauty. The more a man lays stress on false possessions, and the less sensitivity he has for what is essential, the less satisfying is his life. He feels limited because he has limited aims, and the result is envy and jealousy. If we understand and feel that here in this life we already have a link with the infinite, desires and attitudes change. In the final analysis, we count for something only because of the essential we embody, and if we do not embody that, life is wasted. In our relationships to other men, too, the crucial question is whether an element of boundlessness is expressed.

Jung's final paragraph is a profound charge to the men of his time:

Our age has shifted all emphasis to the here and now, and thus brought about a dæmonization of man and his world. The phenomenon of dictators and all the misery they have wrought springs from the fact that man has been robbed of transcendence by the shortsightedness of the super-intellectuals. Like them, he has fallen a victim to unconsciousness. But man's task is the exact opposite: to become conscious of the contents that press upward from the unconscious. Neither should he persist in his unconsciousness, nor remain identical with the unconscious elements of his being, thus evading his destiny, which is to create more and more consciousness. As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being. It may even be assumed that just as the unconscious affects us, increase in our consciousness likewise affects the unconscious.

Here, then, is the "historical situation" brought up to date. Those who are able to read Jung with "the shock of recognition"—and they will be many—are well prepared by both objective pressures and subjective maturity to take a new look at their status as "free souls." How will they now justify refusing to go back into the cave to do what they can to dispel the darkness that remains there?

The content of transcendental inquiry, as generalized by Jung, is no more an embracing of religious formulas. The search is by definition not capable of institutional control or reduction to creedal formula. To mark and print "religious beliefs" as public truth has for long generations been against the grain of our culture—due to the rationalist criticism of religion; but now, as well, to condemn as no kind of truth the deep inquiries into meaning which individual philosophic religion may pursue will be against the grain of the culture of the future. Jung puts it well:

A man should be able to say he has done his best to form a conception of life after death, or to create some image of it—even if he must confess his failure. Not to have done so is a vital loss. For the question that is posed to him is the age-old heritage of humanity: an archetype, rich in secret life, which seeks to add itself to our own individual life in order to make it whole. Reason sets the boundaries far too narrowly for us, and would have us accept only the known—and that, too, with limitations—and live in a known framework, just as if we were sure how far life actually extends. As a matter of fact, day after day we live far beyond the bounds of our consciousness; without our knowledge, the life of the unconscious is also going on within us. The more critically the reason dominates, the more impoverished life becomes, but the more of the unconscious and the more of myth we are capable of making conscious, the more of life we integrate. Overvalued reason has this in common with political absolutism: under its dominion the individual is pauperized.

Here is a mood happily reminiscent of the Socratic reserve which appears when, after expounding in the *Phaedo* concerning the fate of the soul after death, the old philosopher turned to his listening friends and explained that he was not laying out for them the precise conditions of the after-life, but proposing only that "something like" what he had

said might be the case. Jesus's parables, Plato's myths, Hindu epics, and Buddhist allegories probably have the same intent.

Perhaps we shall never again need the old kind of "religious institutions" with their creedal certainties, hardened rituals, and rhetorical ethics, but will find all the help we need, not from authorities or specialists, but from one another, limiting the practical mechanisms to simple societies or associations for search. There will be libraries, discussion groups, but no personal leaders in the sense of "authorities." And there may come, in time, by organic growth, other qualities of awareness which will provide, in the words of the reader quoted earlier, "an atmosphere, a tool, an historical continuity, a launching-pad for the rising-up of other men."

It should be added that the selection of Carl Jung to "call the turn" on the historical situation of the present was by no means intended to set the Swiss psychologist up as a prophet of any "movement." He would not want this, and such a movement cannot use "prophets." The idea is rather that *man*—Jung, others, perhaps many others—is capable of this kind of thinking, and the endeavor is to help one another to awaken such thinking, and perhaps still better thinking, in us all.

This is a project for free souls. What, after all, is their freedom for? They should put it to work.

## *REVIEW*

### TARDY HONOR FOR A PROPHET

"ALL the community may scream because one man is born who will not do as it does, who will not conform because conformity to him is death,—he is so constituted. They know nothing about his case; they are fools when they presume to advise him. The man of genius knows what he is aiming at; nobody else knows. And he alone knows when something comes between him and his object. In the course of generations, however, men will excuse you for not doing as they do, if you will bring enough to pass in your own way."

Thus wrote Henry Thoreau in his Journal in a passage which, seen in retrospect, fairly characterizes his own life and destiny. To his Concord townsmen Thoreau was an eccentric and loafer who had never made the most of his education. They called him "Dolittle." The reviewer for the influential *New York Tribune* found the philosophy in Thoreau's first book repugnant: "[It] is the Pantheistic egotism vaguely characterized as Transcendental. . . . It seems second-hand, imitative, often exaggerated—a bad specimen of a dubious and dangerous school."

Today, a century later, Thoreau's bust rests in the Hall of Fame, and *Walden* is included "among less than a score of essential classics of democracy and distributed throughout the World in many languages by the United States Information Agency." It is a long road for a man to travel.

So the prophet is no longer without honor, even in his own country. But is there no irony in the fact that, while officially circulating his work to improve its image abroad, our warmaking state still finds itself obliged to outlaw and imprison certain embarrassing heirs of Thoreau, the civilly disobedient pacifists? Or that it claims as its own the man whose lifelong attitude toward unprincipled government was usually indifference but often contempt? Angry over a particular governmental injustice, Thoreau once asked

rhetorically how it became a man to behave with regard to such a government, and declared, "he cannot without disgrace be associated with it." We doubt that his pronouncement on affairs today would be any more temperate.

Although August Derleth's new biography, *Concord Rebel: A Life of Henry David Thoreau* (Chilton, Philadelphia, \$3.50), is neither conspicuous for new material nor attempts critical evaluation, it is a highly readable book, presenting chronologically the events and problems in Thoreau's life with insight and understanding.

We learn of how the young Thoreau "had walked eighteen miles from Concord to Boston—and back by night—solely to hear Emerson lecture." We follow his struggle to find a livelihood which would allow him that "broad margin of leisure" he required. We see his exulting over the promises and prospects which an intelligently imaginative young man sees in the life before him, although even then he found more satisfaction and sense of purpose in "cultivating his garden" in Concord than in going abroad to seek the fortunes of his genius, "knowing that it was not important who one might be or where he might go, but *what* he was that mattered."

We sense Thoreau's elation at first discovering the treasures of Hindu literature in Emerson's library. He writes: "In the Hindoo Scripture the idea of man is quite illimitable and sublime. There is nowhere a loftier conception of his destiny. . . . There is no grander conception of creation anywhere." And again: "Even at this late hour, unworn by time, with a native and inherent dignity it wears the English dress as indifferently as the Sanscrit. The great tone of the book is of such fibre and such severe tension that no time nor accident can relax it." So firmly grounded was the idealism of even the young Thoreau that he was able to build upon it progressively: "Nothing he read shook his foundations, but only reinforced them."

Of Thoreau's literary masterpiece Mr. Derleth says, "No mentally alive young man or woman can

read *Walden* and come away from it willing to accept readily the common conventions of the world or the shabby goals set for the mass of men by their materialistic society."

The book describes the gradual estrangement from Emerson, as well as Thoreau's relations with Hawthorne, Alcott, Channing, Margaret Fuller, and the other luminaries of mid-nineteenth century Concord, that fascinating, fertile hotbed of intellectuals and idealists.

There are detailed accounts of Thoreau's daily nature walks, sometimes with friends but usually alone, which became for one of his rich sensibilities a ritual ever fresh and meaningful; and of his excursions to the Maine Woods, Cape Cod, Canada and elsewhere. In 1856, on a visit to New York, he met Walt Whitman. Despite the wide divergence in their temperament and outlook, Thoreau came away much impressed, later writing: "he has spoken more truth than any American or modern that I know."

Generous and well selected quotations range from pointed observations such as "I would remind my countrymen that they are to be men first, and Americans only at a late and convenient hour," and "The world rests on principles. The wise gods will never make underpinning of a man," to homely but revelatory incidents of village life. Once Thoreau argued with two Concord neighbors, who held that John Brown had done wrong. "When I said I thought he was right, they agreed in asserting that he did wrong because he threw his life away, and that no man had a right to undertake anything which he knew would cost him his life. I inquired if Christ did not foresee that he would be crucified if he preached such doctrines as he did, but they both, though as if it was their only escape, asserted that they did not believe that he did. Upon which a third party threw in, 'You do not think he had so much foresight as Brown.' Of course they as good as said that, if Christ had foreseen that he would be crucified, he would have 'backed out.' Such are the principles and the logic of the mass of men."

Out of the wisdom of his later years Thoreau could make such observations as, "How vain to try to teach youth, or anybody, truths! They can only learn them after their own fashion, and when they are ready," and "Talk about slavery! It is not the peculiar institution of the South. It exists wherever men are bought and sold, wherever a man allows himself to be made a mere thing or tool, and surrenders his inalienable rights of reason and conscience. Indeed, this slavery is more complete than that which enslaves the body alone."

Rebel though Thoreau may be, his rebellion was born of an intuition and driving conviction that it is to the "higher laws," as he called them, that one owes first allegiance. Thus the "rebel's" quest for valid Authority and the *higher conformity*.

RICHARD GROFF

Boyertown, Pennsylvania

**COMMENTARY**  
**TEXT FOR FRICTION-MAKERS**

THIS week's review of a new Thoreau book brings occasion for notice of another edition of Thoreau's essay, *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, just published as a Peace News Pamphlet (5 Caledonian Road, London, N.1), at a shilling (about 13 cents). It is quite impossible to have too many editions of this essay, and this one has the advantage of an introduction by Gene Sharp. Our only version, until now, was published by the 5 X 8 Press of Harrington Park, N.J., in 1942, and bore the Note:

*Civil Disobedience* was delivered as a lecture by Thoreau before its publication in 1849 in the first number of *Aesthetic Papers*. In that magazine, which was edited by Miss Elizabeth Peabody, the essay was entitled *Resistance to Civil Government*. In modern times, it has become the text of Gandhi's revolution against English rule in India; and many of its principles are perplexing the Nazis in occupied European countries.

Mr. Sharp's introduction is less laconic. He finds Thoreau's work representative of "a significant transition in the development of non-violent action." He continues:

Before Thoreau, civil disobedience was largely practiced by individuals and groups who desired simply to remain true to their beliefs in an evil world. There was little or no thought given to civil disobedience for producing social and political change. Sixty years later, with Gandhi, civil disobedience became, in addition to this, a means of mass action for political ends. Reluctantly, and unrecognized at the time Thoreau helped make the transition between these two approaches.

Thoreau also began as a man who "decided simply to remain true" to his beliefs, but unlike those who maintained a narrow view of personal goodness, he could not ignore wrong in the social community to which he belonged. Here, in principle, was the "transition" of which Mr. Sharp writes. When, in 1854, the state of Massachusetts returned an escaped slave to bondage, Thoreau wrote:

I had never respected this government, but I had foolishly thought I might manage to live here, attending to my private affairs, and forget it . . . but now I cannot persuade myself that I do not dwell wholly within hell.

Gandhi did not get the idea of resistance to government from Thoreau, but came across the essay in a South African prison library, called it "masterly," and adopted the term "civil disobedience" from the title as a means of explaining to Europeans the movement he had already begun.

Thoreau paid his road tax, and some others, but he would not pay the poll tax, arguing that it went to support a government which sanctioned slavery. When the Mexican War broke out, he was jailed for tax refusal. He regarded this war as intended to expand slave territory. His night in jail, it is said, led to the writing of the essay.

In his analysis, Mr. Sharp shows Thoreau's social intentions:

Thoreau recommends that the abolitionists withdraw their support from the government of Massachusetts, and refers to the breaking of the law as creating a "counter friction to stop the machine." He hypothesizes a thousand men refusing taxes and the resignation of government officials and agents. "When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished." . . . He was concerned with creating conditions in which a continual diminution of state power would take place.

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Readers wishing more information about the Synanon Houses (see *Frontiers*)—there is also one in Reno, Nevada, and another just opening up in Westport, Connecticut, close to New York City—are invited to write the Synanon Foundation, 1351 Ocean Front, Santa Monica, Calif.



# CHILDREN

## ... and Ourselves

### ON BEING ALONE

A MONTH ago (Jan. 30) we extracted from Betty Fancher's *Satevepost* article ("We're Cheating Our Children," Sept. 29, 1969) some sample ordeals of the "junior rat race," showing how modern parents fill the lives of their children—even four-year-olds—with hard-pressing routines of busyness, until "the leisure, the freedom and the incalculable magic of childhood are being lost in an endless maze of planned activity." Now we have a Pendle Hill pamphlet, *Children and Solitude*, which offers a rich development of the values of letting children alone, and letting them *be* alone. The writer is Elise Boulding, wife of the economist and poet, Kenneth Boulding. Mrs. Boulding is the mother of five children, but she has found time to write and translate books, and has for the past several years been working as a research associate with the Center for Research on Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan.

Early in this pamphlet, she writes:

Our wants for our children are very inconsistent. While we are anxious on the one hand that they fit as smoothly as possible into the social grooves society has prepared, we also want them to be "creative." We in our time set great store by creativity, because we recognize that it is creativity which sets man free from his grooves and enables him to realize all the God-given potentialities within him. We know that it was the tremendous exercise of creativity in the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment which produced the explosive and exciting developments of twentieth-century society. We also dimly realize that only a tremendous exercise of the creative imagination is going to help us find our way out of the deadly nuclear dilemmas we face in the world community.

Year after year the research piles up on the conditions of creativity, steps in creative problem-solving, the theory of innovation, and so on. And what does all this research tell us? First, that creativity is a fundamental characteristic of the human mind, and that there is no sharp dividing line between the creative thinker and artist and the

"ordinary" human being. Unlike the ant, we are incapable of completely stereotyped, instinctive behavior and everything we do, no matter how trivial, is in some sense an innovation, simply because we never do anything twice in exactly the same way.

Second, the essence of creativity is a recombination of elements, a putting together of things in a slightly different way from the way they have been put together before. This is as true of a three-year-old's drawing of a tree as it is of Einstein's theory of relativity. Fragments of knowledge and experience have been recombined to create a new synthesis.

Third (and here I vastly oversimplify a large body of data), there has to be *time*. There have to be large chunks of uninterrupted time available for creative activity. We are accustomed to the demand for solitude as a foible of the creative artist or an ascetic craving of the saint, but we have not realized what an indispensable condition it is for all mental and spiritual development. It is in these chunks of time that the great interior machinery of the brain has the opportunity to work (both at the conscious and unconscious levels) with all the impressions from the outside world. It sorts them out, rearranges them, makes new patterns; in short, creates. This is not to say that creative activity can go on only in periods of undisturbed concentration. Such periods may alternate with sometimes quite long periods when the conscious mind turns to other things while the unconscious stays busily at work on the sorting and rearranging process. But the workings of the unconscious are of little use to man if he does not spend sufficient time organizing these labors with his conscious mind.

This is only a portion of the "scientific basis" for solitude, in behalf of the creative process, which Mrs. Boulding assembles. It is impressive, and persuasive, but even more pertinent is her own observation concerning modern children, who, she says—

do not have enough periods of withdrawal from outside stimulation, and must therefore rely on developing a series of stereotyped reactions to that environment to protect themselves from having to cope with more perceptions than they can handle. The absurdly stereotyped lingo of adolescence, the mask of apathy that is often worn, represent defenses against a world that presses too constantly, too insistently, without allowing opportunities for

meaningful reflection, a world without riches and in-between spaces where a teen-ager can get a foothold while he finds out where he fits in. The younger child has not yet been pressured into developing these defenses. You still see him, wide-eyed and open-earred, taking in what the world has to show him, and then going off quietly in a corner to mull it over. But watch out! We worry about the child who goes into corners to mull things over. We feel we must fill the young child's life with meaningful activities and opportunities for creative interaction. We must prepare him for the group life he must lead as an adult!

Well, even these few paragraphs are enough to make the point. But what do we do about it? How can we give our children room to think? No parent who has personal experience of the "mask of apathy" and the "stereotyped lingo of adolescence" can fail to long for large doses of Mrs. Boulding's prescription—for himself as well as his children.

But solitude is more than a physical arrangement. Individually, it is an inclination of the mind, and culturally it is an entire *milieu*. You don't just seek solitude. You seek and generate it at the same time. Physical aloneness is not necessarily the solitude of incubation any more than togetherness is inevitably a fellowship of the human spirit.

The kind of solitude Mrs. Boulding cherishes probably starts as a family affair. The parents have without too much planning or overt design managed to "grow" some solitude in their life habits, in almost casual response to felt need. This is of course the best kind. One might do some experimenting with solitude, to see how it works, but the seeing would probably come by some kind of accidental notice, *after* it works. Most likely, however, the full fruit of solitariness will ripen only after all designs upon it have long since been forgotten. This at any rate has to be true of the child:

Well before the time when a child can consciously make use of time alone, . . . comes that critically important moment in his life which represents the dawning of the sense of self-

consciousness. All later intellectual and spiritual development depends upon this emerging sense of identity. "I stood one afternoon, a very young child, at the house door, when all at once that inward consciousness, *I am a Me*, came like a flash of lightning from Heaven, and has remained ever since." This was Jean Paul Richter's experience. This may not happen in early childhood. It may not come until adolescence. But many of us if we look back introspectively can recall some special moment of realization. In spite of its momentary character, the memory of it stays on. Gerald Bullett makes the indelibility of this experience very vivid: "I came upon a four-year-old child standing alone in a sunlit country lane . . . the summer sky arching over him. . . The moment . . . has nothing at all of drama or poignancy . . . nor could I hope to express in words . . . the meaning it holds for me. But if I shut my eyes and hold myself very still, I no longer see that child: I *am* that child. The chalky road is hard under my feet and brilliant to my eyes; I feel the sun on my hands and face, and the warm air on my shins. . . . Except for this aloneness, this sense of *me*, it is perhaps a purely animal or sensual experience, and it occupies, as I conjecture, the merest point in time, a fraction of a second."

Why, asks Mrs. Boulding, is such a moment so important? And "why is aloneness an essential part of it?" It is the beginning, she suspects, of the first step in finding oneself—"the first conscious integration which the young mind undertakes of the world outside with the interior world of his mind."

Pendle Hill pamphlets are thirty-five cents and may be purchased by writing to Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pennsylvania.

## *FRONTIERS*

### New Crimes and New Solutions

THE dialogue concerning crime and punishment continues, but it is not easy to select the material most important to review. Few "new" things are being said on these subjects, although occasionally someone says the old things very well. What is perhaps new, however, is the increasing irrationality of both crime and punishment in our society. This trend—and it does seem to be a trend—may mean that the breakdown in our understanding of offenders has become so extreme that what we say about "crime" has little actual relation to this growing social disturbance.

For example, in the Feb. 2 *Saturday Review*, Lewis Yablonsky, University of California sociologist (U.C.L.A.), proposes that "a new type of criminal is at large." Yesterday's felons, he suggests, were predictable professionals whose motivations were not obscure. Prof. Yablonsky contrasts lawbreakers of this type with the "new criminal." After quoting a description of the "professional thief" from a standard text on criminology, he says:

This image of the old-fashioned criminal characterizes him as a resourceful, well-trained and effective felon; a member of a profession (albeit illegal) with certain ethics and values which dictate his conduct. In criminal jargon, the "professional thief" had "class" or "character." He would not "give his buddies up" and he even proscribed certain victims. Assault and violence were used as a means to an end—not as an end in themselves.

In sharp contrast to the personality just described is a young modern violent gang member who told me, after a brutal homicide in which he had been involved:

"I have my mind made up I'm not going to be in no gang. Then I go on inside. Something comes up. Then here all my friends coming to me. Like I said before, I'm intelligent and so forth. They be coming to me—then they talk to me about what they gonna do. Like 'Man, we'll go out here and kill this cat.' I say, 'Yeah.' They kept on talkin.' I said, 'Man, I just gotta go with you.' Myself, I don't want to go, but when they start talkin' about what they gonna do, I

say 'So, he isn't gonna take over my rep. I ain't gonna let him be known more than me. And go ahead, just for selfishness. . . ."

Prof. Yablonsky comments:

This type of senseless violence is perpetrated for ego status—for "kicks" or "thrills." The "kicks" involve and produce a type of emotional euphoria which, the new criminal maintains, "makes me feel good." He does it "for selfishness." The goals of the crime are self-oriented in a primary fashion with material gain as a very secondary consideration.

The article goes on to show the difference between the old "cohesive criminal subculture" of the past and the disoriented individuals of the violent gangs of the present. All that the new criminal seems to care about is his immediate emotional experience. Criminal "technique," underworld loyalty, "correct behavior" when in the hands of the police or in prison—these traditions of the old offender hardly exist for him.

As Prof. Yablonsky fills in the portrait of the *new* criminal, it becomes evident that he is describing a psychological sickness rather than a fresh category in criminality. The crime is there, and it is a new kind, but the familiar methods of dealing with crime do not in such cases seem to touch the problem. They do not relate to the private nightmare of the offender, who is often a drug addict as well as a criminal.

The positive proposal that Prof. Yablonsky makes is that only the new approach of a "therapeutic community" offers any hope of meeting the needs of the new criminal—and, therefore, the needs of society in relation to this sort of crime. Life in a therapeutic community takes the individual out of the inhuman surroundings of institutional façades and places him in *direct contact* with people—people with problems, like himself, but also people who have found a way to do something about their problems. This offers the individual the opportunity for an exciting discovery which, given time, he may make for himself. And he cannot be helped nor can the society he harms be helped—until he does discover for himself that he can live a

constructive life in a situation where the "values of truth, honesty and industry become necessary means to the goal of status achievement."

Where may such a therapeutic community be found? Dr. Yablonsky has recognized it in Synanon—the self-help laboratory for ex-drug addicts on the beach at Santa Monica, California. Prof. Yablonsky outlines the history of Synanon in his *Saturday Review* paper and tells why, from his professional point of view as a sociologist and therapist, it works so well. He ends with this paragraph:

The conclusions reported here are not based on any one special study but upon my own close contact with various offenders and with the structure of the crime problem over the last twelve years. I have studied New York violent gangs, ex-addicts, and ex-criminals currently living in an anti-criminal society at Synanon House in Santa Monica, California. My experience in running group psychotherapy sessions with offenders in custody in various institutions over the last ten years has also contributed to these observations. My conclusions are more hypothetical than "hard" research results; yet they seem to be confirmed by considerable evidence. Obviously, more intensive research is needed on this oldest frontier of human society—the other-world of crime.

Prof. Yablonsky is author of the recent book, *The Violent Gang*, published by Macmillan (\$4.95). Several of the concluding chapters of this book are devoted to Synanon.

In the *Menninger Quarterly* for the Winter of 1962, Richard C. Allen looks at the question, "Why Punishment?" Punishment, he explains at some length, is administered by the social community according to three theories of purposes. It is supposed to *protect* society, *deter* other offenders, and *reform* the one who is punished. He adds that vengeance probably plays a part, wondering about the extent to which "punishment represents an appeasement of society's hostility to the offender, which is in turn an outgrowth of internal psychic defenses."

Mr. Allen finds it difficult to discern much rational relationship between the ends of

punishment, as so defined, and the actual effect of putting men and women in prison. He asks:

Why have our prisons failed so signally? Why has "punishment" failed to live up to its advance billing of "Protection Deterrence, and Reformation"? There is, of course, no simple answer to these questions, but I suggest that, as a concerned citizen with an important stake in the problem, you may find that a part of the answer lies behind the walls of the penal institutions of your state.

Now comes an account of the typical state correctional institution:

If your state is like mine, you will find a single institution for housing adult male offenders: a grim, fortress-like building, nearly 100 years old, surrounded by a 12-foot thick concrete wall, topped with barbed wire and broken glass, and patrolled by uniformed guards carrying riot guns. Inside the wall you will see men—half again as many as the prison was originally designed for—marching in lock-step or aimlessly wandering in the prison yard. You are not likely to find leg-irons or a whipping post—few prisons today sanction the grosser kinds of brutality—and the prison officials will proudly point to the first-run movies shown once or twice a week, the baseball diamond or gym, the chapel, craft shop and library—products of the reforms of the thirties. Unfortunately, this is about as far as the reforms got, and if you scratch the surface you will find that because of insufficiency of work opportunities and inadequacy of the educational program, most of the inmates are forced to spend their terms in undirected, unproductive, non-educative idleness. You will perhaps find also a classification system without trained personnel; a medical care program that does not include a single psychologist or psychiatrist—even on a part-time basis—let alone a working program of psychiatric evaluation and treatment, and a woefully underpaid, undertrained and overworked staff of guards.

There are exceptions to this bleak picture, of course; Mr. Allen tells about some of them, but on the whole "our treatment of prisoners," as he says, "presents a pretty dismal picture of dehumanization, which for first offenders, as Judge Irving Ben Cooper, formerly Chief Justice of the Court of Special Sessions of the City of New York, observed, makes as much sense as

putting a child with a head cold into a small-pox ward for treatment."

Perhaps the Synanon method advocated by Prof. Yablonsky is the only rational substitute for prisons. It is certainly the only antidote to the irrationality of both crime and punishment that the individual can help to put into effect—and by "individual" we mean the private citizen, who can, without going into politics or getting involved with "prison reforms," help the voluntary associations for therapy and self-help that are developing in various parts of the country under the Synanon plan. Synanon houses keep young people out of prisons instead of trying to "improve" institutions already encrusted with even the *tradition* of total human failure.