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ARCHETYPES OF SEARCH

IT does not matter much that when a man first begins to think seriously about the meaning of his life, and of life in general, he may take some wondering satisfaction in the idea that no one else has ever thought this way before. While it is unlikely that he will think well or impartially without some kind of comparison of his thoughts with those of other men, the essential need is for him to think *as if* his search were indeed the beginning of all inquiry, since it is in fact exactly that for him. The more easily a truth can be borrowed from others, the less important it is. The higher on the scale of human meaning an idea, the more it needs to be forged in lonely self-dependence. A man may be able to bake a passable cake out of a cook book, but he can generate no uplifting vision from recipes or formulas. The capacity to create, to understand, to know, is not currency for exchange.

But what is it to think "as no man has thought before"? It is to attempt to tear the meaning of one's life from the granite of circumstance, to discover a single clear voice in a cavern of ambiguous echoes. At some point in his life a man may realize that his mind is "replete with the thoughts of other men," and find himself in growing revolt against this catalog of directives. It is not simply that he has come to distrust "hearsay"; some hearsay is sound enough; but that an irrepressible restlessness in him *demands* search for whatever it is that lies beyond all report. What is the truth before it is reduced to the captivities of the "said"?

Human nature being what it is, this hunger is itself subject to adulterations. Even "authenticity" can be turned into a brand name for a product. The very idea of independent knowing may be diluted with a cocky egotism which leads to very inadequate settlements, mere verbal finalities based on the sophist's art. The confident egotist lives in a very small universe indeed; making it larger will require him to pursue unsettling reflection on the nature of selfhood and the paradoxes of "individuality." Pain seems an essential of human growth. That some men embrace this pain almost with affection, while others flee from it, may be a mystery that has no final explanation. But it is a fact that the philosophical enterprise is involved with this mystery.

Are there archetypal forms of the philosophic search? It is difficult to locate them in past history without making it seem that there are circumstantial prerequisites, and this may be misleading. One sighs and says, "Then, but not now." Heroes and truth-seekers can have no role in our society. The myths are costume-pieces. Yet the hunger is real, philosophic longing declares itself, and the myths are being revived. The classical situation may be simply in the fact that the great questions always find us in the swim of life. There are always vast and variegated scenery and setting, and countless currents of influence which shape the problems we set for ourselves. Can these be generalized into some recognizably archetypal form? Some men have tried, and a few have been more successful than others. Ortega, for example, said that a man must know that he is *lost* before his thoughts can begin to attain clarity. This shows Ortega to be a modern Socratic. Socrates' claim to "knowledge" was that he knew nothing—his virtue lay in recognizing his ignorance, that he was "lost." The first real perception of men in social situations, then, seems to be that the "consensus" is always wrong, or at least unreliable, and never to be embraced without examination. The content of "they say," the foundation assumptions of the times, is not an intuition of truth but an acquired pseudo-intuition.

Is, then, the isolation of the philosopher from the opinions of the world a necessary element in the archetypal form of the quest for truth? It would seem so in our historical epoch, although, if mythic accounts of remote times can be relied upon, there have been periods during which the institutional forms were not merely a means for the repression of individuality. This, at any rate, is an implication of the psychological profundity now being recognized in the symbolic rites and ceremonies of ancient peoples. Yet it has never been easy to find the lonely path of the hero or the sage.

The story of the Buddha begins with a young man's deep dissatisfaction with the traditional role allotted to him by custom. The circumstances of his life were a masterpiece of "conditioning" intended to quiet his questions. No jarring note intruded upon the early years of Prince Siddartha. His turbulences arose entirely within himself; it was as though he *knew* that the delights he experienced in the palace were not a true representation of the larger world and its works. According to the story, the very wind spoke to him at night, calling him to the service of a suffering world. And after he learned the- reality of disease and death, he could no longer tolerate the perfections of his own life. No "explanation" men offered had meaning for him now. He exclaimed:

> The veil is rent
> Which blinded me! I am as all these men
> Who cry upon their gods and are not heard,
> Or are not heeded—yet there must be aid!
> For them and me and all there must be help!
> Perchance the gods have need of help themselves,
> Being so feeble that when sad lips cry
> They cannot save! I would not let one cry
> Whom I could save! How can it be that Brahm
> Would make a world and keep it miserable
> Since, if all-powerful, he leaves it so,
> He is not good, and if not powerful,
> He is not God? . . .

The language may give us some difficulty, but not the ideas. Siddartha's longing was born from his feelings of kinship or unity with other men. The what, the how, the why of his inquiry were generated by the compassion of his heart.

We have to do here with beginnings, not with answers. The closed-system circumstances of the beginning of the life of the Buddha need consideration. He was a youth who lived in a populous kingdom. Many others—one could say all others—had witnessed the pain of human life, but they did not respond as Siddartha did. And other men besides Socrates walked the streets of Athens and knew something of the fallacies of sophistical reasoning, the inadequacy of the "physical" explanations of the Ionians, and the corruptions of popular belief. But Socrates became a teacher of the young. And when Plato attempted to explain what moved such men to give their lives to the pursuit of truth, only the inspiration of Divine Eros would suffice. The varying responses to this inward spurring—personified in the tale of Buddha in the whispering night wind—remain unexplained. Yet the reality of this higher longing was for Plato the seed of all philosophic inquiry and the reason for his insistence that knowledge and virtue are facets of the same truth.

Here, as in reflection on all forms of antique questing, our psychological difficulties are great. The vocabulary of the positive human nobilities is at a serious discount, these days. The lofty conceptions of commitment and sacrifice seem to require emotionally neutralizing disguises in order to gain attention. We know that the past hundred years of history have been filled with moralists who claimed to have no truck with "morality," proposing that only the external compulsion of fact would make men behave as they "should." The bludgeon of "objective certainty" would work where exhortation and threat of damnation had failed, and proved to be sentimentalism and lie. The secular moralists of political ideology made it easy for people to ignore every reference to inward guidance or moral feeling as an echo of "reaction." One had only to determine the "class" of a philosopher to dispose of him, since his ideas

were now known to be mere epiphenomena of the social forces of his time. As a book which treats of Socrates and Plato in this way puts the general principle of its approach:

> Seldom in history do we find the same transparent unity of ideas and social struggles that we find in fifth-century Greece. Indeed, thought always *is* consciously or unconsciously a reflection of social forces, but in the Greek world is particularly vivid.

This is using a conditioning formula to destroy the meaning of all philosophy. For if thought has no independence, but is a mere reflection of "forces" external to the thinker, it is, as Thomas Huxley explained, no more than an accidental squeak produced by the friction of moving parts in the great world machine.

Perhaps we can leave this argument behind by a radical change of context. In *A Sand County Almanac,* Aldo Leopold says:

> To the laborer in the sweat of his labor, the raw stuff on his anvil is an adversary to be conquered. So was wilderness an adversary to the pioneer.
>
> But to the laborer in repose, able for the moment to cast a philosophical eye on his world, that same raw stuff is something to be loved and cherished, because it gives definition and meaning to his life.

Some kind of "repose," then, is an essential of the philosophic quest. Yet repose has meaning only as an interim between struggles. The world is the place where "definition and meaning" are realized. At the same time, a man cannot be a philosopher if the world is too much with him. He is not a philosopher if "the world" makes his definitions for him. A man who takes his self-definitions from outside sources is only a creature, not a creator. Yet a man, apparently, can be both—by turns, or in uneasy and unfruitful compromise.

The present is a time clouded by all sorts of "hangovers" from the "social forces" theory of the determination of ideas. It is often pointed out, for example, that the revolting generation of youth is an "affluent" generation. They, it is said, sometimes a bit contemptuously, can *afford* it. But why this should make their revolt and the reasoning behind it meaningless is not clear. Men choose among the things they can afford. People get the "repose" necessary to reflective thinking in various ways. That they get it is by no means an indication that they will *use* it. They may waste it. Various affluent generations have done so.

Theories of conditioning as the major factor in the shaping of human life and thought are useless to philosophy. They have a role only in criticism. Philosophy—or becoming more human—involves *transcendence* of conditioning. Only by this means can the play of conditioning in human life ever be understood. Every teacher knows this. There is a sense in which all teaching is concerned with reaching independence of the conditioning process, and there is a subtle, almost indescribable relationship between "good" conditions and becoming free of them. It is the difference between teaching "parables" and teaching "mysteries," of which Jesus spoke to his disciples. It is the difference between orderly habits and the energies which orderliness makes it possible for a man of imagination to release. It is the difference between a richly suggestive but finite and limited symbol and the meaning which the symbol is used to represent. It is the difference between life and its ever-changing forms, or between the self and its embodiments.

Why should there be any confusion about this? Because it is so easy to make statements about conditions, forms, and embodiments, and virtually impossible to make statements about "life." The idea that it is possible to make truth a captive of some kind of statement is surely the major delusion in a great deal of thinking.

Who, then, are the philosophers? They are men who understand this difference and make it the foundation of their inquiry into meaning. For a philosopher, there can be no such thing as a final definition. Every day the philosopher makes new definitions, but he marks them temporary and to be replaced. This sort of defining creates a wonderful "family resemblance" among the things

said by great philosophers, so that, when a generation of men begins to think philosophically, they continually discover wisdom in things said by men of long ago. The forms of things, the conditions presented by experience, the habits and attitudes of men change, but the delicate and obscure psychological transitions by which a philosophical thinker comes to distinguish between the reality that he seeks and the forms of men's beliefs and theories about them do not change very much. He may say something about this, and when his language is understood; his wisdom becomes apparent. If there could be a science of these transitions, it would probably take the form of timeless metaphysics and transcendental psychology.

What of the present? It seems, more than anything else, a time of the exhaustion of all familiar beliefs and theories of "reality." The great philosophical questions, Who am I? What am I doing on earth? If I am lost, can I find myself? Is there a purpose working through me greater than can be seen or encompassed in but sixty or seventy odd years of life?—these questions, which once were asked only by isolated individuals, are now pressed upon us all by the collapse of the popular certainties on which most men have relied for answers to them.

A "world-view" is a set of answers to these questions. Today we have a world without a world-view. The fact is that no world-view ever survives persistent questioning. Like any definition, to look at it closely is to see its time-bound limitations. Borrowing from Aldo Leopold's image of the pioneer and the wilderness he attacks, we might say that we can no longer justify partisan readings of meaning because of our struggle with an adversary. The "conquest" theory is being disproved by its own law of diminishing returns. We are shamed by the innocence and the native integrity of the "enemies" we choose. The moral neutrality of our theories of the universe begins to seem a chauvinist disgrace. Meanwhile the anger of our righteousness and the impotence of the targets of our protests against bad "conditions" are proving that nihilism, like virtue, is its own reward.

Only the virtue of not yet disillusioned men holds present-day civilization together. Their faith, not what they have faith in, is the glue. Science which leaves out man turns out to be anti-human in practice. Theories which explain intelligence in terms of blind forces are impotent to solve the problems of intelligent beings. Education which has no view of man except as passive clay to be modelled by experts produces little but rebels and zombies. What is happening in the world of today is not evidence of the potentialities of human behavior, but of its distortions under the influence of dehumanizing beliefs. We see, not the heroic profile of Prometheus, but his impotent, twitching body, manacled to the dull rock of denials of his godlike nature. Who knows what he might do if he were set free?

What is the value of archetypes of philosophic search? An archetypal conception is inclusive. It is a common denominator. If there is anything "universal" in human nature, the archetypal idea has the best chance of setting going resonances in its neglected chambers. Here, no doubt, we have the explanation of the undying life of the great myths. They are refutation of all the indoctrinations of man's mediocrity and dependency. The revival of the myths, in present-day psychological literature, may finally bring the rebirth of heroic themes.

Yet there is bound to be a difference. The eighteenth century was not without meaning. The conception of the equal worth of all men cannot die out from human thinking. The hero, if he returns, will have to come back in the image of Everyman. Hierarchy, if recognized as a law of human nature as well as of all other natural structurings, can be restored only if excellence loses all relation with power. How long will it take for such conceptions to be clothed with the flesh and blood of common human acceptance, so

that a literature can indeed be made out of them? Will centuries of assimilation be required to turn ideas which now seem to require "tracts" into richly spontaneous lore—the cud of universal human musing?

Who will make it possible for the sadness of sages to have relief in delight? How can there be "art" when there is so much agony?

When a young man resolves upon a Galahad mission, when will there be elders who will not laugh him out of town? Such intentions are characteristic of the young, these days. They look for "helping" activities. Well, the world needs help, but the avenues and agencies for helping are incredibly hampered by an inherited cultural egotism with more than just traces of the Lady Bountiful complex. Human beings don't want "help." The established means of helping are nearly all techniques of management. Who knows how to help without managing?

A man who shows that it is possible to do dirty, difficult, but necessary things, and with a good heart, may give far more help to other men than any of the "helping" professions. To help somebody, these days, you first take some courses. Helping involves "studying" what is wrong with him, and then, probably, "explaining" it to him. No wonder the underdeveloped world is mad clean through.

"Teaching," as Carl Rogers discovered to his horror, can be "harmful." Nothing discourages a real teacher so much as people who expect him to "teach" them something. The best he can do is act as some kind of catalyst, and he knows it. People learn by themselves. A great teacher is a man who knows how to *let* them. He also has some profound intuition of the time it is going to take, and he is never in a hurry. So a helper, a teacher, has also to be a philosopher.

How can anybody be patient when things are as bad as they are now? That is one of the philosopher's secrets. He has his own definitions of good and evil.

REVIEW

WOMEN IN REBIRTH

Two recent novels—both now in paperback—show how good writers find ways to leave behind the froth and artificiality of modern life, and to restore the elements of natural struggle and human awakening to story-telling. One is *The Seasons Hereafter* by Elizabeth Ogilvie (Avon), which deals with the partial recovery of a young woman from the mutilations imposed upon her by life. The other is *Children at the Gate* (Pocket Book) by Lynne Reid Banks, again the story of a reconstruction, but in this case of a woman lifted out of a self-made lethargy by the rebirth of love—a love for children.

Vanessa Howard, who is thirty when Miss Ogilvie's story begins, has one enduring intensity in her life: she loves to read. She always has a stack of books in her sleeping-room, and if one of them is engrossing, her ineffectual husband, whom she trapped into marriage a few years before, will have to fix his own supper. A foundling, she has never known either love or affection. The life of Vanessa—she took this name, liking it better than "Anna"—has always been a struggle for psychological survival. Nothing ever happened to her to evoke feelings of gratitude. She did whatever she had to do to keep down the friction in her life, and lived it according to her own invention. Her foster parents had been impersonal, cool, although not unkind. The reader feels without being told that Vanessa's feelings about people are almost completely undeveloped—honest, spontaneous emotion is simply unknown to her, and it only excites her suspicion when she encounters it in others. Somehow, she is not to be "blamed" for being completely self-centered. It is her defense against a predatory world, the only world she knows. She has only the most superficial relations with those around her, the idea being to keep them at a distance where they won't be able to interfere with the private life she has managed to create in a small seacoast town in Maine. She is sustained by her books, by the code of her own toughness, but also by a dream that, some time, there will come her Day. This is a magical event in the future, fed by her reading, and all the suppressed symmetries of her mature womanhood continue unexpressed in this mythic expectation. For her husband she feels only a tired contempt mixed with resigned acceptance that she has married a timid, conforming man. She reacts almost violently when he speaks with servile admiration of "successful" people. Her self-respect depends partly on rejecting conventional standards, and that they seem to be the summit of his longings is often more than she can put up with.

Vanessa wins the reader by her strength. She isn't lovable at all. You want her to "grow," but it just doesn't seem possible. Her lack of normal human sympathy doesn't bother her. She is simply incomplete. The story unfolds with a strong sense of inevitability and such fidelity to character that moral judgment of what anyone does seems somehow irrelevant. This may be the most interesting thing about this book—the *fateful* character of what happens. Yet there is no feeling of mindless, cruel destiny.

The action comes when Vanessa's husband gets a job working on a small island owned by a family dynasty of Maine lobster fishermen. She goes with him to the island only because she must. While she thinks of her house there as a fortress, the island is small, the other women friendly. Inevitable contact with them wears away at her isolation. Almost by accident she saves a child from drowning, and the gratitude of the parents cannot be evaded. Vanessa's fight against natural feeling becomes her major problem, since until then it has been her first rule of survival.

There is no miraculous change in Vanessa. A sudden and tempestuous love affair with a much older man turns her dream of the Day into a brief reality, and with its end no more than the possibility of a certain emotional openness seems to have been achieved. This climax, which reveals and tears, fits into no category. It cannot be

called "romantic," nor is it only physical attraction. The attachment, which is overwhelming, comes out of the grain of the lives of two people; it unites them—for a time they are Tristram and Isolde; and then the man, out of his maturity, finds he cannot play havoc with the lives of his wife and children.

It is difficult to say why this book gives the reader so much satisfaction. Perhaps it is because it describes without contrivance the struggle of a human being with a very bad start in life to make something out of it, to do it all herself, and totally without pretense.

The woman in the other book, Gerda Shaffer, is older. At thirty-nine she has taken refuge in a little Arab town in Israel. Her marriage failed after her little boy drowned in an accident for which she partly blames herself. Gerda has sensibility, sophistication, a good middle-class education—everything but a reason for living. She has one friend, an Arab whose fondness for her is something of a puzzle. It seems like a very old virtue brought forward to intrude on the modern world. When the story opens Gerda is slowly going to pieces—drinking, having nightmares, indulging the melancholia her past has made practically inevitable for a person whose conceptions of meaning are drawn from these times.

The Arab conspires to interrupt her broodings. He is the agent of her survival, but he also has ends of his own, which do not matter. Very little things help Gerda in her return to a useful life. The first turning-point comes through her skill in house-painting. Knowing how to use the tools of a trade is not much in itself, but when it enables a person to fill a void—when it takes over and gives some meaning to a dead, waiting-time—it becomes a wonderful natural resource.

Gerda's world of ideas and culture, at the outset of the story, is a shadowed and aimless place. It holds nothing for her. She can shape no image of purpose out of what it supplies. The bourgeois meanings have all been blasted and were insignificant to begin with, anyhow. What breaks her out of this prison is the claim of the Arab on her friendship—this, and her human inability to turn away from children who are starved for mothering love. In the abstract these simple bonds could not have moved her at all, but when two Arab children are thrust upon her—when she is told that they will be put in a cold-hearted institution if she does not give them a home—she cannot refuse. She takes them, one at a time, first the little girl, then the boy, and pretends they are Jewish—Gerda had a Jewish mother—to get herself and the children accepted by a nearby Kibbutz.

In normal life, ideas come first, then action. But Gerda's life is not normal. For her the order is reversed and circumstances press her into action. She does what is expected of her, and lost meanings begin to emerge into the field of very ordinary activities. Her old abilities come into play. Little by little, she becomes a valued member of the Kibbutz. Gerda's stature grows, not so much from what she can do, but in how she uses it in the community setting. She has the potentialities of a useful and loving human being, but these have been sealed off by personal failures and the impoverished intellectual and moral horizons of Western man.

Well, it is no great new truth that daily cooperative functions, the necessities of social structure and the meeting of specified obligations, are an effective means of lifting an individual out of obsessive preoccupation with the dreariness of his life. But no form of generalization about how this works can rival the wonder of its actual happening. The peculiar virtue of the novel may lie precisely here. Generalizations about people often rob humanness of its uniqueness, hiding the original wonder of each truly human act. Neither the joy nor the pain of a man, woman, or child bears comparison. The smiling delight of an infant is in no way diminished in absolute value by the fact that *all* babies have smiled, since the beginning of time. The splendor of the morning

sun is not less because you cannot count all the days it has created. There is something almost wicked about intellectual operations which dissolve human activities into patterns of repetition, then turning them into abstractions. Could we not have only *sacred* abstractions for speaking of the timeless truths about man?

Gerda is not much spared by the ruthless course of history in Israel. But the vital currents of her life, once restored, keep on flowing. Her discovery of the portion of her being which looks at her from the eyes of children will never again dim to anguished memory. This diffusion of self is now the law and the gospel of her life. What she suffered before has now given a hard edge to her determination, and her worldly sophistication has added sagacity to her plans and projects. At the end, when accidents of history conspire against her, you know that she will be all right. She has this thing to do with children, and she is going to do it.

COMMENTARY
THE GENESIS OF TASTE

THE reader who finds enjoyment in the delicacies as well as the strengths in the two books described in this week's Review may be led to wonder about the meaning of what is commonly called "good taste." It is certainly not represented in attention to "nicety," which has no place in either of these stories. While taste may reveal itself in small matters, it seems somehow connected with awareness of great things. Taste might then be thought of as artless and spontaneous, like the delighting motions of a dancer when at home in the kitchen, cooking a meal.

In different ways, the needs of individual destiny grip these two women. They respond to a calling. There are symmetries they need to restore. They start out very much in the dark. Their emerging humanness struggles against hard circumstance. The things that happen to people in stories happen to them, but the unfolding of meaning remains the essential theme. This puts everything else into fitting proportion. Taste is the natural apparel of things in proportion.

It seems always to involve a grasp of the changing relationships between fact and potentiality. Facts have a stationary quality, but potentiality is a restless, molten stirring of the spirit. It can do no miracles, yet it is unpredictable. The play of the tropisms of potentiality in the field of stubborn facts is figured by the writer, according to his sense of what the flow of a particular human life makes possible. The artist writer will always give the facts their due, but shows how dawning humanness will press against them, work around them, and sometimes find a way of transforming them. The impulse to fulfill a destiny remains obscure; the good writer claims only to have surmises about its origin and resources. Yet some certainties exist, and the artist has schooled himself in these. There is always a springtime somewhere in his mind. He may not understand life, but he has clues to some of its ciphers. He knows about the melting of snows, the quickening of seeds, the cyclic flow of nourishing fluids, and the reach of reborn life toward warmth. Somehow, an artist reveals secrets without finding them out. If his art is free of tribute to fashions, if his fidelity is to living process, his work will never be measured by any closed system or habit of thought. Taste is a natural by-product of all this.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
SCATTERED REFLECTIONS

As the myths of collective identity constructed out of racial and national formations go down the drain of history, the shaping conceptions of education begin to disappear along with the assumptions from which they grew. And without any over-arching hierarchical structure of meanings to suggest what is really important to teach, the choice of educational materials is likely to become exceedingly difficult.

There is a sense in which the revolt of the young is a rejection of all collectivist theories of history. The revolt is existentialist to the extent that it eschews nationalist, race, and class definitions of identity and obligation. What then will "history" be for such a generation? Who or what is its protagonist? Scientific scholarship is of little help to us in finding an answer to this question, which embodies a sort of philosophic longing that men of learning years ago found themselves able to do without. Even simple "evolutionary" or "growth" theories of social development are now regarded with suspicion, as reading into the data of history interpretations which are by no means found to be implicit in the events themselves. The young, however, are innocent of these sophistications. Their rejection came simply because they found they could no longer live in the atmosphere of sterility produced by the doctrines of human nature and selfhood allowed by nationalist assumptions. It is not a matter of not *wanting* to continue in the traditions which supported the beliefs of their parents, but that they *can't.*

What then is to be done about teaching "history" to such a generation? What *is* history, if it is not the story of human identity, as applied to men in groups? And when the available doctrines are either intellectually insupportable or too gruesome in effect to claim intelligent allegiance, on what general scheme do you hang what seem the most important facts? And until you have some such scheme, which amounts to a principle of selection, how do you tell the important facts from the trivial ones?

Critical relativism as the sole pursuit of scholarship was bound to contribute to a denouement of this sort. A relativist is a man who tells you about the world without saying anything about its meaning. For all he knows, there isn't any. He may be brilliant, but he is a kind of fraud, because he pretends to have no stance; he claims to be outside of everything, high on the Olympus of "Objectivity." But how can a motiveless man contribute to any real understanding of the world? When relativist reductionism finally comes into focus—as it must—on what men really are in themselves and what their life is about, the scholarly game will be over, because then the cultural vacuum will no longer be preserved as a polite secret which justifies the formal unbelief of learned men. The relativist is a dependent of the naïveté of ordinary people who believe that life has a meaning, that some things are better than others, that progress is possible and ought to be sought. When those ordinary people lose their faith, primitive forces attack the roots of civilized life and the relativists lose their patrons.

This is not to suggest that the relativists have been of no service. By exposing the self-deceptions of which men are capable, they guard the future against all claims of easy truth. But after they have done their critical work, it remains necessary to say that there can be no human life without the pursuit of admittedly *difficult* truth. Modern scholarship ruled out this necessity when it chose to be scientific instead of humanistic.

Where, then, can one find texts for teaching "history"? Would it be too skeptical, too ungenerously purist to say that they do not exist?

Some ancient cultures seem to have regarded our kind of "history" as essentially unimportant. The jumble of their records and the gaps in them make us feel very superior, or used to. We have precise information about *everything,* but they

taught the young "myths" about the past and didn't put in any dates.

Is it relevant to ask if teaching mythic origins for ancient history might make the young better able to cope with the world and its works? If what is lasting and relevant in history can be preserved in timeless forms in great myths?

In an age of the collapse of theory, what qualifies a man to teach the young? Should a firm Socratic ignorance be the canon? We have to teach *something!* Ortega said that reform in education will involve stirring longings and a sense of need, instead of "transmitting" what we think we know. Is there, then, a way of filtering out of the learning of our external and scientifically impressive culture those rare and precious elements which need to be carried forward into any future? What are the methods for doing this? Who ought to do it? Has anyone made a start?

It seems obvious that a beginning in activities of this sort needs to be made by men who are masters of existing disciplines, and at the same time painfully aware of the shortcomings of modern theories of knowledge. In science, the pioneer in this kind of thinking is obviously Michael Polanyi. Polanyi is philosophizing the teaching of science. General science textbooks for tomorrow ought to be composed with Polanyi's works as source material.

There is some consolation in the fact that along with the data explosion in the various branches of science have come individual figures who made heroic attempts to provide synthesizing philosophical conceptions. The late Edmund Sinnott was such a teacher of biology, and there have been others. We know of a man who is working hard on ways of presenting the major conceptions of mathematics so that they will hang together as a way of ordering experience, and on showing their connection with the impetus of philosophic longing. He is also hoping to develop an open-ended means of teaching astronomy, rejecting the assumption that the present-day approach to cosmology is "of course" superior to that of other epochs.

What about teaching about man? Well, who knows about man? Do you go to the bone collectors for advice? The rat psychologists in the universities? Do you study the tables of the statistical sociologists? Will you start with a sentence from Aristotle or a panegyric from Hamlet? Why wouldn't Henry Anderson's article, "The Nature of Human Nature," serve as a text?

Should the study of man be mission-oriented? What have the best of men believed about themselves? Has anyone ever collected opinions of this sort? Was there *ever* a really good man who would docilely submit to being defined in his nature and possibilities by other people? What sort of men are able to persuade themselves that they are competent to define and arrange the lives of whole populations? How can the lion of integrity and the lamb of trust ever find the same resting-place in human associations? Is this one of the things that men practice better than they are able to preach? Are there some resolutions which are made practically impossible by too much theoretical analysis?

This is of course discussion of education in terms of utopian peaks, far-off goals. Some notice should be taken of the fact that there will always be some kind of Establishment. After you climb and try, you have to rest. The hare needs the tortoise. He is obligated to people who just cultivate their gardens. Hares run fast, but we wouldn't know this without the tortoises, who get there, too. The standard distribution curve is not a libel on the human race.

The main trouble with Establishment thinking is that it is susceptible to delusions of grandeur. It ought to have printed on its doorways: "The promise of the future does not await in here." The Establishment has virtue only when it says to all comers: "We don't really know, but we do what we can. Show us something better." It is impossible to abolish the Establishment. A tree

has to have a trunk. It couldn't be all cambium layer and growing tips.

Actually, the promising young don't need much help. If you read biography you see that nobody can keep an education from such people. Learning is as important to them as breathing, and they'll get it. They are the exceptions, the wonderful individuals who evolve mythic meanings. *They* are no educational problem. As Ortega pointed out, it is the people who don't hunger to know who make the problem—and the problem is not teaching them but awakening hunger in them.

What you *must not* do, Ortega also said, is repeat to them what other men have said and thought and pretend that this is learning and education. It isn't. For the majority—which is the Establishment level—the thing to do, Ortega said, is to try to stir in them recognition of the fact that learning and education begin when students experience an inner compulsion to know. Once this fire is lit, the rest follows naturally. Without that fire, the Establishment always substitutes fake flames of inspiration—delusions of grandeur—and then, eventually, there develops what we have today.

FRONTIERS
The Nature of Human Nature

PART III: THE NEED TO JUDGE

IN Parts I and II, it was suggested that there are vantage points from which it is possible to gather understandings about essential human nature, before it becomes mauled and molded by social and cultural pressures. Observation from these vantage points seems to indicate that the distinguishing characteristics of man's nature—the means by which he becomes human in the first place—are responsive, interactive, dynamic, pleasurable, spontaneous, empathetic, loving, creative, unfettered. It was suggested that these qualities manifest themselves in, or are the manifestations of, two fundamental processes, which might be called Sympathetic Interaction and Symbolic Interaction. It was suggested that these processes of humanization, and the qualities with which they are intertwined, are necessarily found everywhere human beings are found: in New York City as in the Australian bush; in Siberia and Liberia; Santa Monica, San Juan, San Luis Potosi, San Francisco. It was suggested that these processes have held true ever since that immemorial time when pre-man became true man.

If all this, or any substantial portion of it, is admissible, a number of major conclusions follow. It is hardly putting the case too strongly to say that everything else follows. Without some conception of human nature, it is difficult to see how people can function toward one another in any coherent way—politically, in families, in the arts, or in any other way. For instance, if a people believe that man is by nature depraved, guilty of original sin, all their social institutions will be structured either to take advantage of this weakness, or to correct it.

If, on the other hand, one believes that man is shaped originally, in the center of his being, by the process of Sympathetic Interaction, and subsequently goes on to shape a unique center of being for himself, through the process of Symbolic Interaction, then all one's thinking about social institutions and goals and values will be different.

Among many other consequences, a theory of human nature such as we have attempted to sketch in this series renders the doctrine of cultural relativity untenable. The behavioral sciences are revealed as preaching a doctrine which is not only false, but which immobilizes its adherents and prevents them from acting as moral beings—that is to say, as fully human beings. If our analysis is correct, or close to correct, to be human is to be moral, in the sense that one must constantly weigh options, and choose between them. In a single word, one must *judge*.

It is not only permissible, but inescapable, for any responsible person to pass judgments, among other things, on individual and collective styles of life. The basis for judgment usually is, but need not be, ethnocentric. The basis for judgment could be, and should be, nothing less stable than the nature of human nature itself. Any personal or social arrangement which fosters the continuing play, throughout life, of the qualities by which we became human in the first place, is consistent with the nature of man. Any pattern which tends to warp, or deflect, or corrupt those qualities is contrary to the nature of man. The one may be called "good"; the other may be called, if we so choose, "evil."

If necessary to preserve our humanity, we should be prepared to go our own way and let the cultural relativists go theirs. But perhaps dialogue with behavioral scientists may be salvaged. Perhaps we could obtain from sociologists, anthropologists, and social psychologists the admission that it is the basic function of society and culture to keep the species going: *i.e.,* to produce human beings. If some social or cultural arrangement is not, in fact, producing *human* beings, but something closer to automatons or brutes, then it is not fulfilling its fundamental purpose. It is "dysfunctional"—a term which social scientists usually permit even when they forbid the terms "good," "bad," "should," or "ought."

With an adequate conception of the nature of human nature, it becomes possible to talk more seriously than ever before about the just man. And, on the wings of understanding of the origins and nature of humanness, that elusive concept, the Good Society, is borne into a clearer light. The Good Society may be seen as one in which the nature of

man is recognized, and given growing-room. When we talk of the Good Society in these terms, far from seeming something fantastic, it begins to seem more workable than any of the katatopias, dystopias, Bad Societies—more real than what we have been taught to think is "realistic." Katatopias must wage an endless battle of suppression against the intrinsic nature and needs of their communicants. The Good Society would have the nature of man as its greatest ally and its only instructor.

The despairing among us cry, "Do you not have eyes to see? Look about you, and then say that you still believe the nature of man is as you claim." We look. We can see, all around us, people who do not seem free and responsible and authentic. They seem cramped, crippled, conforming, uncreative, unfeeling, unthinking. No matter how liberated and fulfilled we may be, we can see such tendencies within ourselves from time to time, if we look honestly. Evidently, it is sometimes difficult for man to believe in the good news of his own nature. It is difficult for him to live with the peaks and valleys, volcanoes and oceans, indeterminism and responsibility. He tries to stifle it. But that does not change his nature. It only makes him miserable and sick, as is being demonstrated clinically by humanistic psychologists.

If we are hostile, hoarding, hateful, far from it being our "human nature," as some tell us, it is a sign that something has betrayed our human nature. The betraying forces are not serpents, or devils, or black genes, or anything inevitable or fixed in the firmament. They are artifacts; they are man-made. And anything man has made, lies within his power to make over, differently.

And then, clutching their despair desperately, the despairing among us cry, "How can you possibly account for Buchenwald and Baba Yar and My Lai in terms of any theory so sentimental as this? How can you account for the Inquisition? How can you account for slavery? How can you account for lynchings? How can you account for the fact men have been at war with one another through almost all of recorded history?"

Although it may not satisfy those for whom despair has become the only sure pillar of their lives, the answer is this: man's inhumanity to man is possible because his imagination is so great that he can imagine another human being is not in fact human. If one denies the humanness of another, the claims of sympathy do not apply, any more than they apply to the cooking of lobsters in this country, or the bullfight in Spain. Men enslave other men, and go on living with themselves in good conscience, if—and only if—they believe their slaves are less than human. Men war against other men if—and only if—they believe that the others are not really men but monsters, or some strange breed "who do not value life as we do."

The moment man permits himself to perceive another as a fellow man, the basic imperatives of human nature, absorbed almost literally with his mother's milk, take precedence, and he cannot squeeze the trigger, he cannot spring the gallows trap, he strikes the chains from slaves, quenches the fires under condemned heretics, shields harlots from stones with his own body, embraces lepers, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, loves his neighbors—and his enemies—as himself.

Every educational institution, religion, government, economic enterprise, voluntary association, folkway, collective attitude, is either building such perceptions, building beings who are in touch with their humanness, or working in effect for the destruction of the world. They may properly be so judged. They must be so judged. Those who evade the need to judge, on grounds of scientific objectivity, must themselves be judged in the same ways, and for the same reasons.

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