VOLUME XXI, NO. 22
MAY 29, 1968

CUTTING THE GORDIAN KNOT

IT isn't just the scientists who have the problem of too much "data." We all have this problem. And the solution the scientists are trying to work out—micro-photographic records of the results of all research—will no more work for us than for them. There is too much material. We are swamped by it.

There are too many issues to make up your mind about. Every week there is a new book—probably excellent—about the war in Vietnam; about Black Power; about the despair of people living in city slums; about the Middle East; about conditions in the public schools; about injustice to minority groups in various regions; about the Warren Report and what is right or wrong with it; about the threat of drugs or the comparative innocence of marijuana; about the invasion of privacy; about the blindness of technical progress; about the failure of higher education; about the spiritual impoverishment of modern man; about the breakdown of the democratic process; about the irresponsibility of pesticide manufacturers; about the dying landscape and dead Lake Erie; about the threat of smog, the pollution of waterways; about the anti-human policies of urban renewal; about the destruction of farm lands by real estate developers; about public relations manipulators and image-makers; about the waste of natural resources; about the apathy of the people and about the extremism of those who try to compensate for apathy; about the hostility of the insecure; about the crimes committed against the mentally ill; about the systematic cruelties and demeaning indecencies of relief programs; about the shallow effects of the war on poverty; about the social indifference of free enterprise; about the stupidities and betrayal of public interest by small-minded bureaucracy. . . .

Obviously, *all* these things need attention, making the situation quite impossible. Some of these problems may be served up right at your front door—and then you have to work on them. Circumstances selected them for you. But the over-all situation remains.

It is a question whether anything really important can be said about how to meet the over-all situation. There is a sense in which an individual answer to this may also be brought to a man's front door—to his mind, since he is a human being capable of entertaining general ideas. But competence in synthesizing understanding is rare in an age of specialization. The distance between over-all problems and their solution usually seems very great, when you look at a culture like ours and try to decide upon the best way to spend your time and energy.

Sometimes a man gets subjective help in thinking about such questions. In one of his commencement addresses at Antioch College, Arthur E. Morgan said: "Since boyhood I have had the prophetic urge; that is, I have had an emotional bent toward the conviction that the manner in which I live my life may perhaps have a significant influence on the long-time course of human events."

Well, this is a kind of "calling." Not every man feels it. But not every man tries to open himself to such invitations. Those who get them are sometimes made to feel humble instead of proud by this kind of "natural selection," and then a man can speak impersonally about the driving inspiration of his life. It is so tangible to him that it isn't quite "his." It is like, perhaps, the joy a teacher has in watching some other person *understand* a difficult problem. Nobody "possesses" these moments. Nobody actually creates them. They happen in our presence; they are a natural, human wonder; they constitute the

grace of our common being. To claim them personally is to dry them up.

To say that one feels no "calling" is like saying, "I *never* have any mystical experience." Of course not.

> Oh, where is the sea? the fishes cried
> As they swam its brimming tide.

One of the advantages of being a "natural" man is that conventional prejudices against the reality of inner experience and leadings are held to a minimum. To be educated and still avoid those prejudices—or to get rid of them, somehow or other, in spite of one's education—is a rare and notable thing. And to accept and investigate rare and notable things may be to open up a way for their more frequent occurrence. A. H. Maslow, in a current paper, speaks of something like this in connection with his studies of self-actualizing people:

> What I've done as a technique is pull out the best specimen rather than sampling the whole of the population. This can be justified quite apart from the startling things we have learned using this technique. Consider, for example, that an Olympic gold medal winner represents the limit of human potential in that event for every baby in the world. When I was a youngster and trying to run on track teams, it was humanly impossible to run a hundred yards in less than ten seconds, as it was humanly impossible to run a mile in less than four minutes. In each of these events what was humanly impossible became possible because somebody did it. Each time somebody did it, the potentials, the horizons, the ceilings for every newborn baby were lifted. These became potentials for every human being.
>
> Thus we are using techniques for selecting the most fully developed, the most fully human persons we can find and suggesting that these people are what the whole human species can be like if you just let them grow, if the conditions are good and you get out of their way. This is *not* an average sample, it is a growing tip sample, the best part of the top 1 per cent.
>
> We are dealing with a new image of man. This is most important because from that everything else flows. All of man's works, all of man's institutions, including science—all the sciences—mathematics and physics are also human institutions—can be modified. The image of man is growing. There are more possibilities.

Let us get back to Dr. Morgan, who has written a lot of books, but not any like the ones listed in our second paragraph. Sixty-nine years ago, on April 27, 1899, he confided to his diary:

> "Have been reading the introduction to Butler's *Analogy*. I have heard of it for years and have half dreamed that when I should read it my doubts would all vanish, and that my theology would rest on a sure philosophical foundation. I never knew what was meant by analogical reasoning, and so did not know what course was taken in Butler's work. But I have for years been making analogies for myself and have received all the analogical assurance I feel the need of.
>
> "But I was disappointed in finding that the book I had so long been preparing myself to read, makes no pretense at demonstration.
>
> "It is the possibility of there being no foundation for my faith in things and of my then being a dreamer; for it is this possibility I want removed. The possibility at times seems small, but at other times seems to become equal to the other. That is, it sometimes seems equally possible that the universe is purposeful and that it is purposeless.
>
> "For about three years I have lived on the supposition that there is a divine purpose, and it seems to me that is the only way to live. If we don't live consciously on that supposition, we live unconsciously on it, because the laws of the universe seem to govern us whether we will or no. It is only a choice of acting willingly or by compulsion. To bemoan the thought of the possibility of the universe being purposeless would demand an infinite intelligence.
>
> "I do not feel sharply, except when sick and despondent, the possibility of the universe being purposeless, and I can live on the other supposition feeling that I have a sure foundation.
>
> "Rainy. Set our cabbage. Fine weather for the ranch."

There is more here, you could say, in this diary entry of a young man twenty-one years old, than in all his later books, because you can see that whatever he might think, later on, it would be really *his own.* He is like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in this—no second-hand truth is acceptable; at the

same time, he has enormous respect for the unknown.

Arthur Morgan was born in Indiana and he was a small boy when his family took up a homestead in the Minnesota woods. He was sickly and struggled with ill-health throughout his youth. His first job after high school was teaching a country school for three months. He also worked on the farm and for neighbors, but he found time to make a collection of two hundred species of lichens and in 1896 he started contributing as a writer to *Popular Science News.* On Feb. 12 of that year he said in his diary:

> Have been doing as nearly nothing as possible all day. Wonder what I shall do when I get through school. I do not know how to do anything but walk, for all my eleven years of school. Find my hrains are just about worn out after all their training. Guess I will have to hoe corn for a living and be a philosopher for amusement.

He had boils. One would break, then another would start. At nineteen he decided to leave home. He took with him the New Testament, Gray's *Elegy,* his diary, writing materials, shoe strings, and a change of socks. Concerning his first day on the road, he mused:

> A destination is a fine thing to have. It makes all the difference between a man and a tramp. There are tramps in a physical sense, such as we were that day. Then there are mental tramps, men who labor from day to day laying up nothing on earth or in heart, living just because they have a physical impulse to live. The worst kind are moral tramps. They have no moral destination. They see only their immediate gains and will lose a friend or a reputation for slight personal advantage. The pleasantest kind of tramp to be is the kind that I was on that summer morning.

These quotations are from a book put together by Lucy Griscom Morgan, Arthur Morgan's wife, and published with the title, *Finding His World,* by Kahoe & Co., Yellow Springs, Ohio, in 1928. Morgan's diaries were not written for publication, and he protested the book, but Mrs. Morgan insisted that it was a valuable record and a needed companion to *My World,* which expressed Morgan's mature thinking at that time. So, in an epilogue he contributed to her book about him, he tells why he left home:

> I deliberately threw myself into exposure and stress, determined to grow strong or die in the attempt. I believe that such physical stamina as I have was gained in that process. A few specific injuries have permanently damaged certain tendons, bones and other tissues so that physically I am far from whole, but otherwise I think I am no worse for those experiences. I took foolish and unnecessary chances, not having confidence and respect enough for the prospects of my life; but as for hard living, it did me good.

Arthur Morgan became the nation's leading flood control engineer, and eventually a director of the Tennessee Valley Authority. More important, however, was his lifelong interest in education. He had hoped that his first engineering company (formed in 1910) would be "the means of educating some young men while at work with the company." In 1921, after a visit to Yellow Springs and a look at declining Antioch College, started in 1853 by Horace Mann, he said to his wife: "I believe it is near enough dead to start over in the form I dream of."

The enduring quest of Arthur Morgan's life has been to find out, if he could, what shapes human character. He made Antioch into what he hoped would be such an influence, worked at it for fourteen years, but in the process began to feel that family and small community life is more important than college in forming human beings. After his work with TVA, he. founded Community Service, Inc., to pursue researches hlto the ingredients of the good community life and to supply help to all interested in this general approach. His books are the fruit of his intensified thinking about community as the matrix of learning for life. He wrote about the principles of community and communities all over the world; he did a life of Edward Bellamy; he studied the writings of all the utopians and produced a fascinating book, *Nowhere Was Somewhere,* to show that utopian conceptions are all founded on historical achievements.

What particularly interests us, here, is the *level* of Arthur Morgan's interest in the spectrum of human problems we listed at the beginning. He moves in on these problems at their characterological source. A vast area of debate, for example, is eliminated by the following (also from the Epilogue to *Finding His World*):

> In my boyhood I was at first a natural pragmatist. It happened that by actual experience I observed that the narrow-minded, orthodox, provincial, and evangelical people in our community with whom I grew up were also the people in our community who stood for clean-cut integrity, neighborly fellowship, and genuine social-mindedness.
>
> The present-day tirades of Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, and others against the evangelicals of the Middle West do not give a true picture according to my experience. Narrow and provincial these people were, but seldom have human communities reached higher standards of fair dealing and good fellowship than in some of them. Moreover, the religious liberals I happen to know too often were people without sound characters. The chief supporter of the liberal church in our community was a banker who went through bankruptcy, ruining many people of small means who had trusted him implicitly, and shortly afterwards built himself the finest house in town.
>
> In my home I saw my liberal father in his slackness, apparent laziness, and failure to provide, with occasional lapses of sobriety; and my orthodox mother, setting her teeth and straining to the utmost to make ends meet on almost nothing, yet forever helping those in greater distress.

But orthodoxy could maintain no claim on Arthur Morgan. (Again he reminds you of Tolstoy.) After telling about his emancipation from all trace of dogma, he said: "If in some respects I have continued on my way, and have departed still further from traditional beliefs, it is because the momentum of the journey could not suddenly be arrested."

A great deal of criticism and counter-criticism is rendered unimportant by the following, from a sheet written by Morgan in 1902:

> "I believe in the practical life. I believe in work and play, and planning, and business relations, and affection, and eating, and a conformity to physical, immutable laws. Poets may dream, saints preach, and painters picture an ethereal life. But they all eat physical bread earned by *someone* with physical toil; they were all born physical births, and while they exist *someone* must live a practical life to supply them with physical necessities.
>
> "It is cowardly for people to shirk or deny the responsibilities of life. Every man but the anarchist admits the necessity of some sort of politics; and I have as much respect for the ward-healer as I have for the man who will call the policeman when his house is broken into, but who abhors politics and advises all decent people to keep out of it.
>
> "Every man except the savage buys food and clothes from the storekeeper. I have small admiration for any 'godly' man who becomes a preacher because a man cannot be honest in business. So much for the practical life. But I do not want anything to be 'practical' to me which does not conform to these other standards—which would not be practical to Christ. But likewise, I want every other standard of mine to be formed with a just consideration for every desirable demand of the practical life. And taking all these elements of life together they must be balanced by a sense of proportion, the trite name for which is 'sanctified common sense.' I want to live all these lives as one, simple, harmonious, spontaneous life. And it is because of many persons—the religious person, the scientist the artist, and the practical person—each demands of me that I shall live his one particular life, that I sometimes feel lonesome, and occasionally rebellious. . . . my usual feeling toward people is the sympathetic fellowship of a fellow traveler knowing that each of us sees his way but dimly in the morning twilight."

Of a piece with the foregoing is this:

> When starting for the West at nineteen, I determined never to do a day's work for pay where the normal and natural results of that day's work would not be of human value, and I never quite starved on that program. I realized that to live wisely by such a standard, one's ideas of values must include the whole range of legitimate human needs, both the practical and material and the so-called "impractical" hungers of human nature. My failures have been due to living not closely enough in accordance with my convictions, and in not using ordinary common sense

in applying them in specific cases. Good will is only potent when associated with intelligence.

The life story of Arthur Morgan, effectively told, might constitute a practical justification for the "end of ideology," in the sense that most ideological issues are resolved in principle in the primary attitudes of mind of this man. There are *no* ideological solutions for the problems we set out with, in this discussion. There are only characterological solutions. The ideological epoch may have taught us a great deal about social ideals, but these ideals have remained abstractions; we have not internalized them as the habits of a balanced mind, which is the only way the contradictory duality of social ideals can be resolved.

REVIEW
TWO CRITICISMS OF TECHNOLOGY

THE modern criticism of technology—and criticism is addressed to little else, these days—seems to have its primary effect in alienating thoughtful people from the culture as a whole, rather than accomplishing a noticeable influence on the practice of technology. One reason for this may be that the most forceful criticism of technology is philosophical in origin and tone, affecting those who are susceptible to philosophical reasoning, whereas the practitioners of technology are wrapped up in the engrossing realities of their daily lives. The abstractions of criticism can hardly touch the minds of such men. Moreover, they are doing "the world's work," and criticism which attacks the very meaning of their undertakings is difficult for them to take seriously. There is for example this by Ortega, quoted in the lead article of MANAS for May 15:

> . . . technology for all its being a practically unlimited capacity will irretrievably empty the lives of those who are resolved to stake everything on their faith in it and it alone. . . . Just because of its promise of unlimited possibilities technology is an empty form like the most formalistic logic and is unable to determine the content of life. That is why our time being the most intensely technical, is also the emptiest in all human history.

Now this is not the sort of statement against which any committed practitioner of technology will bother to defend himself. He doesn't think of himself as "empty," and he is proudly filling the pitchers of everyone who comes to his well. As a matter of fact, it is hard to find any serious "defenders" of technology, which is a practical pursuit. A man devoted to this work feels no more obligation to answer someone like Lewis Mumford than the President of the United States feels a need to meet, point by point, the pacifist criticism of war. There is, of course, the argument of C. P. Snow, and the get-with-it argument of Marshall McLuhan, but the one is a simple-minded claim of the humanitarian intentions and achievements of science, and the other a razzle-dazzle appeal to relax and enjoy the saturation of the mind by flooding sensory images. We have had fully a hundred years of brilliant philosophical criticism of the technological obsession—starting, say, with Carlyle, and ending, today, or rather not ending, with practically everyone who thinks—and this criticism has had about as much response from the community of practical men as buzzing flies get from a work horse.

Following is another philosophical criticism, written by John Dewey in 1932:

> Physical science has for its fruit an astounding degree of new command of physical energies. Yet we are faced with a situation which is serious, perhaps tragically so. There is everywhere increasing doubt as to whether human happiness is going to be wrecked by it. Ultimately there is but one sure way of answering this question in the hopeful and constructive sense. If there can be developed a technique which enables individuals really to secure the right use of themselves, then the factor upon which depends the final use of all other forms of energy will be brought under control.

Like Ortega's comment, which declares in principle that a life wholly absorbed by, material aims will be humanly *empty*—"unable to determine the content of life"—Dewey's declaration is that man must order himself before he can order the results of technology. To order oneself is a philosophical enterprise, and requiring a technologist to accept this as a prerequisite of his true efficiency is like asking him to believe in magic. He knows what makes his machines run, and it is not Confucius' Golden Mean.

Lately, however, we have been getting almost a surfeit of books which make factual empirical exposés of the dangers to health, life and limb arising out of technological progress. A book on the lethal effect of pesticides, *Our Daily Poison*, by Leonard Wickenden, was quoted in the MANAS lead of two weeks ago. We have reviewed Barry Commoner's *Science and Survival*, dealing with similar problems. Ecologists are up in arms about the waste and

subversion of the natural environment, and George Stewart's new book, *Not So Rich as You Think,* now being widely reviewed in the magazines, is a thorough account of the defacement and pollution that technological progress leaves in its wake. This isn't "philosophical" criticism, but a practical inventory of multiplying evils, giving facts, figures, and rates of progression in the self-destructive processes of modern civilization. Why don't people listen to *all this?*

One psychologist's answer to such questions is given by Jerome D. Frank in an article in the March *Etc*. His title is "Galloping Technology: A New Social Disease." He begins with a recital of particular symptoms—lives taken or reduced by pollution, accidents, and drugs. There are lots of figures; Dr. Frank is very specific, with many details like the following:

> We should have learned by now that no drug powerful enough to cause a change in psychic state is harmless if taken over a long enough period of time or in large enough doses. Barbiturates proved to be superb suicidal agents, dexedrine produces serious psychoses (in one series 83 per cent of those who used this supposedly harmless pep pill for one to five years showed psychotic symptoms), and increasing numbers of sufferers from the acute and chronic ill effects of LSD are appearing in psychiatry emergency rooms.

Why, then, with facts like these in print, are people not more alarmed? "Why," asks Dr. Frank, "do we not pay more attention to them?" He makes this answer:

> The obstacles are both perceptual and motivational. Perceptually, most of the dangers are remarkably unobtrusive. In fact, they are undetectable by the senses. Radioactive isotopes and pesticides in our tissues and the slowly rising carbon dioxide content of the air cannot be seen, heard, tasted, smelled, or felt, so it is easy to forget about them. When they do intrude on consciousness, in the form of eye-burning smog or brown water, in the language of perceptual psychology they are ground rather than figure. As an authority on air pollution says: ". . . the private citizen is unaware of the fact that the substance he is inhaling may eventually cause cancer of the lungs. He does not associate a bad cough with atmospheric conditions. . . ."

A further consideration is that ills exacerbated by environmental agents often have multiple causes that are difficult to trace: "If an elderly man with chronic lung disease dies during a heavy smog, who can say for certain that the smog was the cause of his death?" These deleterious influences creep up on us—they are "ground rather than figure"—and we hardly realize their all-pervasive presence. As Dr. Frank says:

> . . . although damage done by environmental poisons is constantly increasing, the increments are very small compared to the base level. So, in accord with a well known psycho-physiological law, they do not rise above the threshold of awareness. Humans may be in the same plight as a frog placed in a pan of cold water which is very slowly heated. If the rise in temperature is gradual enough, he will be boiled without ever knowing what happened to him.

Then, of course, there is the factor of commercial interest. The man concerned with making a profit is usually more alert to his own interest than the private citizen who can devote only his free time to confining that interest for the public good. The businessman works at his "cause" twenty-four hours a day. And there are dozens of psychological reasons for failing to recognize the menacing side-effects of technology:

> So everyone is motivated to minimize the dangers, especially when taking them seriously might jeopardize some of the gains. Perhaps this universal under-estimation also partly reflects the proverbial American optimism. Even scientists whose sole task should be to establish the facts, seem to be affected. One is constantly running across news items like: "New tests developed at Pennsylvania State University reveal that pesticide residue in plants is fifty per cent greater than present tests indicate." Or: "Radioactive caribou and reindeer may pose a health threat to nearly all the residents of Alaska. Scientists previously had believed that only Eskimos living near the Arctic Circle were endangered."
>
> When profits, not merely truth, are at stake, optimism becomes literally blind. One example may suffice. Fluorides discharged into the air by phosphates plants in two Florida counties have damaged citrus crops over a radius of about fifty

> miles, cut production in some groves by as much as 57 per cent, and have resulted in a $20 million reduction in property values. In the face of these facts, a spokesman for the Florida Phosphate Council told the citrus growers: "Gentlemen, there's no problem of air pollution in this area that is affecting citrus groves. All you boys have to do is take better care of your groves and you will have no complaints about air pollution."

Finally, while some of the maleficent effects of technology are too gross to be ignored, "in comparison with the size of the dangers, the efforts to combat them are so small as to be pitiable, or laughable, depending on one's point of view."

In the last part of his article, Dr. Frank offers various ideas for better practical control of these multiplying ills. He closes, however, with a suggestion that unites him with Ortega and John Dewey in philosophical criticism:

> The interesting psychological point is that our increasing power over nature as been accompanied by growing despair about ourselves. Playwrights, novelists, poets, philosophers keep hammering away on the related themes that life is meaningless, absurd, a kind of bad joke, and that man is capable only of making himself and his fellows miserable. And these statements kind a wide response. Could they spring, in part, from a feeling of terror at our inability to live up to the appalling responsibilities of our new power?
>
> In the past, men could shrug their shoulders in the face of most of the evils of life because they were powerless to prevent them. . . .
>
> Now there is no one to blame but ourselves. Nothing is any longer inevitable. Since everything can be accomplished everything must be deliberately chosen. It is in human power for the first time, to achieve a level of welfare exceeding our wildest imaginings or to commit race suicide, slowly or rapidly. The choice rests only with us.

Well, we have these two forms of criticism of technology—the philosophical criticism, which is too high-flung for the technologists and the common man, and the factual criticism, which has to get past so much defensive barbed wire that it peters out before it can make much of an impression. But there is one more reason for the ineffectualness of factual criticism—the resistance of people, generally, to facts they do not know how to cope with at all. At the 1962 annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dr. Lester Grinspoon read a paper,

"The Unacceptability of Disquieting Facts," in which he said:

> People cannot risk being overwhelmed by the anxiety which might accompany a full cognitive and effective grasp of the present world situation and its implications for the future. It serves a man no useful purpose to accept this truth if to do so leads only to the development of very disquieting feelings, feelings which interfere with his capacity to be productive to enjoy life, and to maintain his mental equilibrium.

Dr. Grinspoon's paper is a thorough discussion of this basic psychological block against factual criticism, and its practical implication is that fundamental reorientation, in positive terms, is what is needed, rather than a flow of ominous "warnings." In other words, philosophical criticism must turn itself into a program of regenerative reform. This will take some doing.

COMMENTARY
"CREATIVE DISORDER"

AMERICANS take pride in the fact that they have a society based on law. 1f you have a good idea for society, you try to put in the form of a general principle, and then it can be widely used. You don't just illustrate it with an anecdote—you *define* it. You make it scientific. In our social life we have, we say, a government of laws and not of men. The laws embody the principles of justice, and when the laws are understood the irregularities of individuals are eliminated from public administration.

So with other institutions. In education, we work out what we think is a good system and then we establish it by law

And so we encounter problems. It is evident that what Dr. Drews and the two teachers at Fernwood (see "Children") worked out was far more educational than what was going on in the schools from which their twenty-four children came. But how would you make a *system* out of what they did? How could you put lying on a raft, and watching the clouds drift by, into the curriculum?

Obviously, that won't work. You can't package and tie with neat knots a way of teaching that begins with untying knots and throwing away the wrappings—doing away with the familiar norms, the conventional standards of achievement. The remedy for too much system is, clearly first some form of non-system. If people say that is only "negative," you explain that it only *seems* negative. It is negative the way making a clearing on a farm is negative; you have to clear away the weeds, stumps, and boulders in a field before you can plant anything.

Then what? Then you find teachers who know what to do, and turn them loose with the young. The minute you go very much beyond this specification, you prevent them from teaching. But how could you make a *law* to guarantee . proper arrangements for a program like that?

In the body politic, we make laws to control the energies and behavior of men. But schools are for the release of the energy and behavior of children. It is a different process, and different laws are needed. We don't really know what those laws are, and we learn about their existence not from abstractions but from wonderful anecdotes, from dramatic illustrations. Today, the biography of schools is more important than the formulation of laws to regulate the unfoldment and development of human beings. To have such laws and know what they mean will require a regenerated civilization.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

FOUR MONTHS

IN a recent report, Elizabeth Monroe Drews tells the story of Fernwood, an experiment in education that lasted four months—until the grant for the project, which was to have been for a year, was cancelled. Perhaps this is evidence that people who give money should also feel an obligation to give part of themselves, especially when the project is education. How else are they to know what is worth while?

Anyway, it was a great four months. Twenty-four children were (randomly) selected from grades 7, 8 and 9 of the Consolidated School of Colton, Oregon. There were two men teachers, Roger Bishop and Bill Monroe. They had one big room and the pupils were told they could do what they wanted with it, learn what they wanted to learn—or not. There were no schedules, no bells, and no rules about attendance:

> Since it was early fall [September, 1966], the out-of-school environment—including the extensive school grounds, the wooded areas and a large pond 20 minutes away—proved irresistible. When it at last became clear to the students that they were free to choose, they reveled in their liberty. At these early stages the teachers would prepare what they felt to be the best they could do—as they put it, their "usual dynamic presentations"—only to find that after teacher talk was under way the students would begin to disappear. Realizing that they could, in truth, come and go as they pleased, only one or two students ever would sit through even a better-than-ordinary lesson or lecture.

Many of these children, Dr. Drews says, had never had any quiet place of their own to withdraw to, "beyond a spot in bed." So, at Fernwood, they began to explore the joys of being alone:

> . . . as days passed they sought out personal refuges, sometimes in groups, but often singly. A boy or girl would lay claim to a corner or a nook and "nest" there.
>
> These claims to space and privacy—inside and out-of-doors—seemed to give security and peace of mind just as did the long, deep personal conversations. One boy made daily trips to the pond where he stretched out on a raft he had put together. Another who sought solitude, one of the most confirmed low-achievers and general misfits, was a boy of 16—a non-reader with a tested IQ that placed him in the moron category. Generally belligerent, he was mean to younger students and had been thrown out of school repeatedly and bounced back, always—more inured each time against learning. In the course of these abrasive confrontations, he had become an habitual truant, but at Fernwood his attendance record became perfect. At first he laid claim to the merry-go-round where he would lie for hours watching the clouds or waving at the occasional bewildered taxpayer who drove by. Gradually he gained peace of mind and overcame his aversion to school to the extent that he could cross the threshold and enter the classroom. By dint of alchemy or miracle (and perhaps with the aid of a stack of 200± comic books) he learned to read. His next venture was to become social. As a beginning, he learned to play chess, occasionally beat his teachers at the game they taught him, and finally became an excellent conversationalist who could speak on war and peace as well as on the vagaries of the weather. Now, a year after the program's end, he spends half of each day helping mentally retarded children in a special room. He is known for his gentleness and loving ways.

Dr. Drews' report doesn't say much about reading and writing, but there is a great deal about how the young people got themselves untied so that they were ready to learn. Taken out of the institutional surroundings and given time to lose their masks of adjustment to a routinized, artificial environment, they began to think about basic matters: "Who am l? What is the world all about? How can I live the kind of life I want to live and be the self I want to be in this world?"

One conclusion of the four months was that "young people want to learn and become competent." This became clear to the teachers, who saw them unfolding, but parents were doubtful that "their offspring could be learning anything important if allowed to make their own choices." Dr. Drews relates:

At one parent meeting a father commented, "My son isn't learning anything."

The teachers encouraged him to talk and then asked, "What isn't he learning?"

"For one thing, math."

"Do you think he has a desire to learn this?"

Both father and mother said they were sure he did. The teachers reflected that they were glad this was the case. However, the parents' complaints continued.

"Six weeks have gone by and he doesn't have a math book. Why can't he have one if he wants one?"

"We are happy to know that he wants a book," Mr. Monroe replied. "It may be that the one he wants is not on the shelf with the other math books. But if he will tell us what he wants, we will get it for him right away. We drive to the library in Oregon City (20 miles away) every Friday."

As the dialogue continued it became clear to everyone that only the parents, not the son, were interested in a mathematics book. The teachers gently explained that, as Montaigne had made clear centuries ago, learning under compulsion had little hold on the mind. Fortunately, this boy did find a need for mathematics soon—as he worked on plans to convert the woodshed into an industrial arts center—and he raced through sections of several books in record time and with high comprehension and recall.

Well, it sounds a little too good to be true. Yet it probably *is* all true. The following, for example, is wholly supported by common-sense expectation:

One of the areas where much growth was apparent at Fernwood was in the ability shown by boys and girls to present ideas orally. It became obvious, as days passed, that young people learn to talk by talking and they learn what they think and where they stand by making these thoughts and stances first conscious then public. A free situation peels away the traditional school culture—leaving no protocol to hide behind, no excuse of "over-due homework" to prevent one from facing oneself or coming to terms with a situation. Reality is no longer disguised by daily routine.

Later experience showed that these youngsters lost no ground from being out of the regular school program for four months. "All but two did better work and received higher grades upon return to school than they had done prior to the free experience." And in "regular school," the sort of development that occurred in those four months might never have taken place:

As the boys and girls came to understand how they felt and thought, acceptance of their physical selves—their physical selves—their teen-age, out-of-hand awkwardness—grew. And gradually the young people began to accept each other, including even gauche foot-in-mouth clumsiness, and to accept adults. Their verbal talents and poise advanced to such a level that by spring when the experimental group was asked to speak to a graduate seminar at Portland State College, almost all came eagerly although this meant giving up free time after school. The level of self-confidence and the sure-footedness of these adolescents in talking to the college people was such that the professor spontaneously remarked that he wished his graduate students could do as well.

Finally, the parents realized what good things were happening to their children, and were very grateful. The report ends by quoting a letter by one of the students to President Johnson, which explains that funds had been cut off for Fernwood and that Dr. Drews was in Washington looking for other sources of support.

FRONTIERS

Ideology—End or New Beginning?

BOOKS like Frank Lindenfeld's *Reader in Political Sociol*ogy (Funk & Wagnalls, 1968, $6.95) bring frustrations as well as knowledge to the general reader, who can't just "read" such a book. All specialized fields of study of man inevitably develop complex intellectual superstructures—layer upon layer of theorizing by the scientific thinkers involved—and in order to encounter the subject-matter you have first to comprehend the superstructure, which is no small task.

Shall we say, then, that there is something "wrong" with sociology? This might be presumptuous; such judgments seem more the obligation or option of sociologists than of the general reader. Yet for the latter there remains the embarrassment of having to learn an entire language and vocabulary of conceptual analysis if he is to know what sociologists really mean. There is a sense in which sociologists write only for one another, not for the ordinary man. This seems legitimate ground for complaint.

Such complaint probably has least application to the contributors to Prof. Lindenfeld's book, which contains the work of people like C. Wright Mills, Hannah Arendt, Crane Brinton, Iirantz Fanon, Paul Goodman, Irving Louis Horowitz, Herbert Marcuse, Barrington Moore, Jr., Bertrand Russell, Krishnalal Shridharani, and Alexis de Tocqueville. The editor has attempted to assemble the best critical thinking in present-day political sociology, with emphasis on "the consequences of the trends toward bureaucratization and rationalization of life within the technologically advanced societies." The book has the vigor of excellent writing and reflects, however indirectly, the social longings of the editor. Yet for the general reader it still presents something of a problem.

The root of the difficulty doubtless lies in the fact that sociology is largely committed to the practice of "objectivity" in social science. What is wrong with objectivity? Its virtues are obvious; the trouble with objectivity as a principle of observation is that it makes the field of human behavior infinite in extent. You can never hope to cover or to comprehend it all. But isn't that true of any subject involving the nature of man? Yes; of course; but the student *must* find a way of studying man which provides dramatic unities and develops natural limits. You can't study the infinite. Thus the student has to find a way of overcoming the practical omniscience of the specialists, whose endless objective researches and endless theories about these resources make the general reader feel hopelessly inadequate.

There may be a way of doing this, but it is likely to involve some kind of absolute reduction of scientific objectivity.

For example, take the excellent paper in this book by Robert A. Haber, "The End of Ideology as Ideology." This is a critical examination of a thesis originally stated by Daniel Bell, an impartial exercise of social science, filled with the austerities of objective examination. A person who thinks about the claim that we have reached the end of ideology needs to read this paper. In his conclusion, Mr. Haber proposes a project of research, defines its categories, and predicts: "The outcome of such an empirical study would, I believe, confirm that the 'end of ideology' is a status quo ideological formulation designed to rationalize the incorporation of intellectuals into the American way of life." This anticipation implies that the people who say the age of ideology is past believe that Utopia has arrived, and we now have only to adjust to its necessities.

Mr. Haber's contention is virtually the same as that made by Herbert Marcuse (in *One-Dimensional Man*), to the effect that the technological society is a complacent homogenization of issues which once shaped vital, humanizing struggle—a contemptible condition for which he seems to see no remedy except in some kind of revolutionary Ragnarok. It is true

enough that those who are able to feel comfortable in the "affluent" welfare state of the present are strangely indifferent to the corruption and superficiality of the euphorias that comfort them. Such people will say, perhaps, that apart from wars and racial unrest, our society "works," and that we cannot really expect very much more.

But who would be able to say this, or anything faintly like it, without having numbed in himself the essential elements of an aspiring subjectivity? It is a defect of the objective point of view that it becomes more interested in what will work than in what ought to be. Yet Mr. Haber is plainly on the side of those who worry about where we are going, and in order to show that he has allies, he draws attention to many signs that ideology is not dead, but has only changed somewhat in form. Ideology, he says, is still ardent, active, but less positive about social blueprints. In short, ideology is for Mr. Haber the form taken by the labors of men truly concerned with the progress of the human race. There is not, he says, an end to ideology, but an insistence that we evolve a better one.

Well, he is of course partly right. Yet he may also be partly wrong. For example, if a couple of hundred of us—men, women, children—were transported to a desert isle and made to understand that there was no hope of rescue, we should soon set about making the island habitable. Two hundred constituting a satisfactory face-to-face community, the makers of ideologies would have little to do on our island. And if we postulate a somewhat unusual intelligence among these people, it is conceivable that factions and power struggles would form no part of their lives.

Now it may be artificial to claim to solve social problems by isolating a few people from the congestions of a mass society, and eliminating through an enforced simplicity the terrible distances which in the technological society separate men from the consequences of their actions; yet it is by no means impossible that a process of human development, or maturation, among people in the mass societies could make them insist, more and more, on living *as if* the circumstances of these simplicities existed objectively, and not only in their subjective longings.

The anarchist's demand for immediacy in moral decision is surely founded on this creative determination. It is at least possible that the sickening pseudo-stability of the welfare state may be countered by the development of such feelings in considerable numbers of people—people who say to themselves, almost without knowing it, "The age of ideology is over for *me*, right now." They might still participate in the affairs of the polls; they might even take part, in a restrained way, in those diminished forms of ideological activity which Mr. Haber is able to recognize all about. But their sense of reality about where to place their hopes, and as to what shall claim their energies, will have *changed.* The priorities in their lives are now different, because of subjective longing and necessity. Multiply this state of mind by a few million and you may eventually get a broad, historical effect—which could be identified as the end of ideology.

Such changes have to do with where the push lies in people's lives. A sociology which would help people to illumine their own decisions in such matters could perform an extremely valuable role. Henry Anderson, in his MANAS article, "Toward a Sociology of Being," proposed something like this a few weeks ago. And books directly conceived to help people in this way would supply humanizing dramatic unities. They would focus problems according to a human activity scale, with here-and-now emphasis on what can be done by individuals. Development of such a sociology would go a long way toward finishing ideology