

PSYCHOLOGY OF REVOLUTION

A GREAT deal of light could be thrown on the paradoxes of revolution—the transfiguring but temporary effect on human beings of "revolutionary love," the inevitable lapses from the revolutionary dream, the revolutionist's uncompromising righteousness and its all-or-nothing certainty—by the application of a primary conception of humanistic psychology. This is the distinction between deficiency-needs and being-needs. To speak of this distinction differentiates between animal and human psychology, pointing to qualities which are uniquely human and occur only during the health of the self-conscious condition.

This distinction is best made in the writings of A. H. Maslow, although other humanistic psychologists have contributed to the literature on the subject. It is thoroughly treated in the third chapter of Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being* (D. Van Nostrand paperback, 1962). Suppose we consider that there are three areas of need in human beings: (1) Physiological needs and needs which become apparent through the dependency of the individual upon others; (2) the highest needs of human beings, which in principle men have to satisfy for themselves—such as the need to think clearly, to be self-reliant, to know for oneself, to discover meaning, to understand, to love, and to grow into and sustain the kind of life which we associate with the finest self-expression and altruistic endeavor; and (3) the middle ground where the deficiency-needs and the being-needs of people overlap and merge, sometimes becoming almost indistinguishable.

The problem of understanding the psychology of revolution grows out of this middle ground, in which satisfaction is sought for both kinds of needs, simultaneously, and where, too often, critical distinction between the two is lost. The ambivalence toward non-violence of some of the

followers of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., might be better understood in the light of this distinction. Dr. King was strong in his perception of being-needs as at the root of all ennobling human longing; he saw in non-violence a way of making the struggle serve satisfaction of deficiency-needs as well.

The fundamental situation is put clearly by Dr. Maslow: "the psychological life of the person, in many of its aspects, is lived out differently when he is deficiency-need-gratification-bent and when he is growth-dominated or 'metamotivated' or growth-motivated or self-actualizing."

It would be gratuitous to tell a hungry or a deprived man that he is deficiency-motivated when he ought to be being-motivated. The growth-transition from one condition to the other is a private affair—hardly the business of anyone but the individual concerned. And to prevent such indecent moralizing and paternalistic manipulation the social community works out—or is supposed to work out—impartial laws which reserve matters of inner motivation to each individual for his personal decision. This is what we mean by freedom of religion, accomplished through separation of church and state. The rough averages of the requirements of public morality are reflected in the society's constitution, which attempts to objectify in law the minimum common decencies of human behavior. Public morality is supposed to establish gross equity in relation to the practical satisfaction of deficiency-needs, and to serve being-needs by a hands-off policy. When it fails in either of these functions, the revolutionary situation will sooner or later emerge.

A man deprived of the opportunity of paying his own way, of supporting his children and providing the nurture that will give them healthy

bodies and a foundation of self-respect—a man who cannot accomplish these things through hard work and thrift must become a revolutionary. His being-needs demand the satisfaction of his children's deficiency-needs. Or, as Gandhi put it, God dare not appear before the hungry man except in the form of bread. In this way being-needs and deficiency-needs are naturally and historically united.

This union is illustrated by the situation of the native Algerians during their war of liberation, as described by Frantz Fanon:

Under the colonial regime, anything may be done for a loaf of bread or a miserable sheep. The relations of man with matter, with the world outside and with history are in the colonial period simply relations with food. For a colonised man, in a contest of oppression like that of Algeria, living does not mean embodying moral values or taking his place in the coherent and fruitful development of the world. To live means to keep on existing. Every date is a victory: not the result of work, but a victory felt as a triumph for life. Thus to steal dates or to allow one's sheep to eat the neighbor's grass is not a question of the negation of the property of others, nor the transgression of a law, nor lack of respect. These are attempts at murder. In order to understand that a robbery is not an illegal or an unfriendly action, but an attempt at murder, one must have seen in Kabylia men and women for weeks at a time going to get earth at the bottom of the valley and bringing it up in little baskets. The fact is that the only perspective is that belly which is more and more sunken, which is certainly less and less demanding, but which must be contented all the same. Who is going to take the punishment? The French are down in the plain with the police, the army and the tanks. On the mountain there are only Algerians. Up above there is Heaven with the promise of a world beyond the grave; down below there are the French with their very concrete promises of prison, beatings-up and executions. You are forced to come up against yourself. Here we discover the kernel of that hatred of self which is characteristic of racial conflicts in segregated societies.

In extreme situations—in which the lives of men are incredibly distorted—deficiency-needs do double duty for all the needs of man. Nonetheless, in Fanon's writing there is a high,

clear note of appeal to human dignity. Then, as a psychiatrist, he says:

The Algerian's criminality, his impulsivity and the violence of his murders are therefore not the consequence of the organization of his nervous system nor of characterial originality, but the direct product of the colonial situation. The fact that the soldiers of Algeria have discussed this problem; that they are not afraid of questioning the beliefs fostered among themselves by colonialism; that they understand that each man formed the screen for his neighbor and that in reality each man committed suicide when he went for his neighbor: all these things should have primordial importance in the revolutionary conscience . . . Under a colonial regime such as existed in Algeria, the ideas put forward by colonialism not only influenced the European minority, but also the Algerians. Total liberation is that which concerns all sectors of the personality. The ambush or the attack, the torture or the massacre of his brothers plants more deeply the determination to win, wakes up the unwary and feeds the imagination. . . .

The important theoretical problem is that it is necessary at all times and in all places to make explicit, to demystify, and to harry the insult to mankind that exists in oneself. There must be no waiting until the nation has produced new men; there must be no waiting until men are imperceptibly transformed by revolutionary processes in perpetual renewal. It is quite true that these two processes are essential, but consciousness must be helped.

It is clear from such passages that Fanon was thoroughly aware in his own terms of the reality of both deficiency-needs and being-needs. That he saw in revolutionary violence a synthesizing power, the genesis of self-respect, does not change the fact of this recognition. It seems pertinent, here, to recall that Gandhi, before he asked revolutionary Indians to seek liberation through non-violence, identified himself entirely with the plight of the oppressed. How else could he propose further sacrifices to them? And so it is with the agony of those who turn to violence in their revolutionary struggle. Anyone who feels able to prescribe their revolutionary methods has first to suffer their pain. This is not a question of abstract right, but of what men are entitled to ask of other men, in moral language.

That the contradiction of its means will overtake the fruit of violent revolution is a general proposition, no better understood by the affluent peoples of the world than by downtrodden colonials. Our purpose, here, has been to show that, during the time of revolution, deficiency-needs and being-needs are indeed united; to illustrate the problem of the revolutionary leader, who wants to keep alive the feeling of being-needs throughout the struggle, in order that there may be some survival: of the dignity of man. For, as Dr. Maslow says:

Deficiency-need gratification tends to be episodic and climactic. The most frequent schema here begins with an instigating, motivating state which sets off motivated behavior designed to achieve a goal-state, which, mounting gradually and steadily in desire and excitement, finally reaches a peak in a moment of success and consummation. From this peak curve of desire, excitement and pleasure fall rapidly to a plateau of quiet tension-release, and lack of motivation.

In the Indian revolution, too, there was the union of deficiency-needs with being-needs. Indignity was to be thrown off with poverty. Freedom was to replace colonialism. Gandhi chose the revolutionary means because the being-needs to which he was devoted for all his people required him to do so. As he explained again and again in *Young India*:

If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake. (1920.)

My work of social reform was in no way less or subordinate to political work. The fact is, that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work would be impossible without the help of political work, I took to the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former. I must therefore confess that work of social reform or self-purification of this nature is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called political work. (1931.)

Gandhi had no illusions about the more or less temporary union between these two forms of motivation, yet he felt that to use only the outer

method of being-satisfaction in the revolutionary struggle could be vastly instructive, and would prevent an incalculable amount of pain:

I adhere to the opinion that I did well to present to the Congress non-violence as an expedient. I could not have done otherwise, if I was to introduce it into politics. In South Africa too I introduced it as an expedient. It was successful there because resisters were a small number in a compact area and therefore easily controlled. Here we had numberless persons scattered over a huge country. The result was that they could not be easily controlled or trained. And yet it is a marvel the way they have responded. They might have responded much better and shown far better results. But I have no sense of disappointment in me over the results obtained. If I had started with men who accepted non-violence as a creed, I might have ended with myself. Imperfect as I am, I started with imperfect men and women and sailed on an uncharted ocean. Thank God that, though the boat has not reached its haven, it has proved fairly storm-proof. (*Harijan*, 1942.)

It is comparatively useless, at this stage, to attempt to draw decisive conclusions about revolutionary methods and their results. But it should be clear enough that, in principle, the best revolution is one which does not lose its sense of a higher calling after victory is achieved. If the revolution gets its most profound impetus from the longing for human dignity, yet formulates its policies solely on the basis of the full satisfaction of deficiency-needs, it will inevitably suffer from the *episodic* character of deficiency-need gratification. And then, for those who do not understand what has happened, comes the mournful question: Why does the Left always make the revolution and the Right always write the Constitution? Doubtless the frantic efforts of Chairman Mao to perpetuate the revolutionary spirit in China comes from his frustration at seeing the episodic motivation of deficiency-needs die away.

It seems evident that in the non-revolutionary United States, there has been a strenuous effort to promote ever more voracious appetites for deficiency-need satisfactions, dressing them up in the glamor of "gracious living" and "full

prosperity." These satisfactions are then identified as the pinnacle of human achievement—as though a Tower of Babel raised by material plenty and luxury had somehow reached the heavenly condition of self-actualized man.

Deficiency-needs are also a practical measure of the requirements of programmatic social reform. You can *count* deficiency-need satisfactions, while being-need satisfactions are incommensurable. Politicians can't produce the latter on order; so they dub in deficiency-needs, as something they can talk about and win elections with. Scientific method can be applied to deficiency-needs, but not to being-needs, save in the pioneering efforts of the humanistic psychologists. The fundamental difference is well put in *Toward a Psychology of Being*:

The deficit-needs are shared by all members of the human species and to some extent by other species as well. Self-actualization is idiosyncratic since every person is different. The deficits, i.e., the species requirements, must ordinarily be fairly well satisfied before real individuality can develop fully.

Just as all trees need sun, water, and foods from the environment, so do all people need safety, love and status from *their* environment. However, in both cases this is just where real development of individuality can begin for once satiated with these elementary, species-wide necessities, each tree and each person proceeds to develop in his own style, uniquely, using these necessities for his own private purposes. In a very meaningful sense, development then becomes more determined from within rather than from without.

It is the idiosyncratic character of being-needs, and the unpredictable nature of their requirements, that make their systematic neglect almost a certainty in a society which regards *production* as its main achievement and uses *propaganda* as its principal means of social control. In such a society, only symbolic attention can be paid to being-needs, since genuine concern for them would mean a practical reversal of attitude toward the major institutions.

How is one to say, for others, when the "species-requirements" have been "fairly well

satisfied"? To tell another man that the time has come for him to leave off catering to his deficiencies would be to revive the entire apparatus of Calvinist social control. It is evident that there are no "management" solutions for this problem. There are only individual solutions, and the social outcome, if individual solutions are successful, will lie in the general *esprit de corps* of the community, for which there can be no guarantee, and which is possible only among a people who have outgrown any psychological need for guarantees.

Such transformations, quite plainly, cannot happen all at once. To try to engineer them would be like attempting planned spontaneity. All that can be done is to try to open a way for them, to stop putting up barriers against them, and denying their possibility on pragmatic, status quo grounds. The idiosyncratic forms of human development can prosper only in an environment where they are understood, not in a society whose mass media insist that people become "full human beings" by satisfying all their deficiency-needs over and over again. Such over-developed deficiency-needs produce people who are impressed by what other people tell them; they go on thinking that after they make their first million, and get a good start on the second—*then* will be the time to pay some attention to the deficiency-needs of other men, and to the starving humanity inside themselves.

Obviously, the entire commercial ideology will have to go. It will have to be abandoned, but it can't be put down except idiosyncratically, by one person after another. If you put it down by force, then success is identified in manipulative terms, and after this "success" has been institutionalized by the revolutionary party, the whole process has to be gone through all over again.

If a society reaches the point of knowing that the people are starved for being-needs, and does nothing about it, the result may well be a widespread revolt of youth—and it is then too late for the society to "naturalize" them by its general

program of self-deceit. So there are hippies and non-ideological radicals, all pervaded by the intangible reality of being-needs, desperately looking for ways to actualize their satisfactions in some concrete form. The society has driven its youth forth to seek human dignity, but there are no new, vital institutions growing up to meet them—only the ghettos in the cities, and the desolate open fields.

These effects of inner deprivation can no more be avoided, now, than the violence of a revolution such as the Algerian struggle. This is no time for either preaching or remorse. The preaching does no good because it is not sincere, and remorse unmans. The only remaining path is the idiosyncratic revolution of self-discovery and independent growth. Actually, all the good societies, good communities, and the open, freedom-allowing institutions of the past were formed by people in whom being-needs controlled the deficiency-needs, and never let the latter get out of hand.

REVIEW

ARTIST AT WORK

A RECENT book by Manfred Schwartz, an American painter, seems a triumph of writing about a very difficult subject—the painter's art. Mr. Schwartz is accomplished in two ways—in art history and in understanding himself. Major problems remain, of course—a writer who does not expose major problems in a time of cultural dissolution and rebirth would be guilty either of concealment or of fraud. This writer brings to the reader a precise consciousness of those problems and no one who hungers to understand the feelings and intentions of the modern artist can fail to be grateful to Mr. Schwartz. He says in the last paragraph of *Etretat* (New York: Sherwood Publishers, 1965):

The layman generally prefers to snuggle up to the warm and attainable security of classification. To compartmentalize according to judgments swiftly arrived at is less threatening to the intellectual equilibrium than the pursuit of the challenge into its own realm. So we devise a plausible name and simultaneously chloroform the living phenomenon whose full power is capable of transforming the viewer, of re-establishing personal vision, or of menacing his intellectual security. Besides, the modern world being what it is, we seem to have little time. In other epochs, when voyages were longer and goals less quickly attained, hurrying accomplished less. So we strolled. We explored at leisure. Spiritually, we belonged more to the world and, in turn, the world belonged more to us. The longer one stayed before a given object or a given work, the greater the chance it had to reveal the full dimensions of its personality. Conclusions were less pressing. Today, we seem to have become tourists in every aspect of life, with time only for what the guide is ready to credit with four-star approval, suitably labeled. To know that a work is Impressionistic or Expressionistic, objective or nonobjective, by its circumstantial means, is the crippling triumph of modern education. That approach establishes some degree of contact, but hardly enough. I want to plead for a more direct contact with painting, to declare a moment of silence that might lead to a sensitivity toward painting, since information about it alone does not seem to be the solution.

One sets out to read such a man with great expectations. He knows us so well!

Etretat is a village on the Norman seacoast of France. There are records of this birthplace of Guy de Maupassant as seen through the eyes of Corot, Courbet, Monet, Matisse, and Braque. From their works, some of which are reproduced, one sees why. Unlike his predecessors, Manfred Schwartz found the form and color of the pebbled beach enough to engross him. He went there in 1950 at the suggestion of Henri Matisse, made some drawings, then left—

But just before my departure I took a last look at Etretat. And for the first time I saw the pebbly beach as a vast black, green, and burnt sienna carpet, unexpectedly beautiful, still wet and glistening as the tide pulled out.

This last look, ironically, was really my first. I felt, and for ten long years thought of this vast flat. I wondered why it was always ignored except as incidental flooring and base to the cliffs.

So he went back in 1960 and painted the beach. In his book are eighty-four works with seventeen in color—nearly all of the pebbles of the beach at Etretat. They are painted with the stippled pointillism remembered from Seurat. It began while he was drawing. "I found myself," he says, "stamping and hammering charcoal against paper in phrases, in the rhythm of the movements struck up by these spots which were actually pebbles but which soon revealed a vast mosaic." Not much "choice" was involved:

I kept beating out the stony movements as on a drum, on sheet after sheet until the paper began to sing, not only to my own pleasure but to the delight of a group of Norman children who enjoyed the staccato hammering as a musical performance, the tapping out of a beat. And the tempo was fast.

Never before had I worked in this way. But as a reaction to the particular segment of nature before me, my response was complete. My hand was propelled by the impulse. I was far too absorbed to question the impulse, and my pleasure at that time came both from an immediacy of feeling and from the pleasure of drawing itself. To me, drawing is above all the most intimate and immediate mode of

recording—not drawing for exhibition but drawing done out of personal urgency. When drawing, one does not look self-consciously over one's shoulder.

Well, we do not reproduce these words in order to suggest that the reader ought to like the result in the paintings in this book. We have no idea about that; the reviewer, for one, is a bit puzzled by them. The point, here, is concerned with what may happen when a man has skill and has long ago put behind him those petty embarrassments of being an "artist." Having this experience, or something like it, is apparently what matters in an art. Not ever having it almost prohibits art appreciation, except in imitative, curricular terms. But Mr. Schwartz knows what happens, and his words are extremely clear:

. . . nature receives little fidelity from art. History testifies to this. We come to nature, and even require it to pose for us, only to depart from it in rebellion and return to formal values as though the two were not inextricably bound. We proclaim our independence and claim total self-reliance, challenging nature to match our wit and ingenuity—only to return for nourishment when our own resources are exhausted.

Again:

. . . what we suppose we see often belongs to the realm of the imagination. I sometimes wonder whether what I saw ever did occur in objective terms. The threadlike difference between what one sees and what one knows and feels is always fragile and sometimes hidden. Psychological realities and what we think of as objective realities are often inseparable, as metaphysics has often guessed and as modern science has only recently found.

This is a rare example and confirmation of the shrewd accuracy of visual intelligence. It could be taken as a comment on the researches into perception of Adelbert Ames, except that it probably has more to it than the findings of a scientist. But both Ames and Schwartz are wonderful empiricists. Their discoveries are entirely first-hand. To distinguish, we might say that the artist puts his imagination in the place of memory, in perception. He sees a succession of multiplying visual fugues, not just one association.

This leads to what seems an excellent definition of a work of art:

. . . it is actually the painting that produces the subject rather than the subject the painting. The work transforms the fact after its own rhythms, and the more the work possesses its own equilibrium, its own circulatory system, and its own anatomy, the more the motif comes into existence.

These excellences go on and on. Nowhere have we encountered so clear a discussion of the meanings of "modern" and "abstraction." In every case, the author has thought his own way through to a conclusion. There are no echoes of the opinions of others in this book, although, like all thoughtful men, Mr. Schwartz has learned much from others.

As for getting the book, while it is marked \$9.95—a price entirely reasonable for what it contains in the way of color reproductions—our copy was obtained for 99 cents from a Los Angeles department store; in short, it is being remaindered. The indignity of remaindering seems now a standard part of art-book publishing. Perhaps, if everyone would conspire, refusing to buy a book until it has been on the market for a couple of years, this manic-depressive style of pricing could be stopped. Meanwhile, we must confess that except for the 99-cent price, we would never have read Mr. Schwartz at all.

Some closing thoughts: Why do men who understand so well what they are doing, and who think so illuminatingly about art, do such curious things, themselves? Perhaps one has to learn to practice an art, in the present, in order to answer such questions. One view might be that today—a time of enormous superfluity in "styles"—the serious artist seeks a rock-bottom reality for his work. He tries to feel his way to forms which are not trite—and these turn out to be utter simplicities: great areas of simple color, which amount to subjective reveries lying beneath the surface of the painting. You look at the ocean and you see a calm plane. You know the depths are there, but you don't see them. A painter paints

the surface, but he sees the depths. It is hard for him to persuade you of this, especially when he gives you little hint that they are there. And if you happen to be living, visually, in another century—there's nothing wrong with that—why, then, he may want to explain himself to you. Hence this book. But writing about art has its hazards:

I have always hoped that the silent art of painting might be seen, absorbed, and, wherever possible, enjoyed in all its silence. But this does not seem to be the order of the day. Peripheral interpretations and persuasions have been invoked on behalf of art and for those who seek to grasp it as swiftly and painlessly as possible. A number of distortions have resulted.

We can think of no way to correct these distortions save by becoming an "artist" oneself. Art needs spectators, but it does not submit to only spectators. Art's being is in its becoming, and is to be understood only by some corresponding, inventive process.

COMMENTARY

THINGS THAT MUST BE SAID

A PROBLEM skirted in this week's Review was tactfully stated, a few years ago, by Thomas H. Messer, director of the Guggenheim Museum, in the catalog of an exhibition of pop art:

The relationship between the *good* and the *new* in contemporary art is intriguing and baffling. The realization that art and invention are akin is balanced by the suspicion of eccentricity. Out of this question arises the question: *Is it art?* And the answer: Yes and no. Yes, *it could be*, since the expansion of artistic boundaries is inherent in the creative process. No, *it need not be*, for no mode in itself assures of artistic validity.

In a paper which appeared recently in *Music Educators Journal*, A. H. Maslow is more insistent:

We must have some criteria for distinguishing good art from bad art. They do not yet exist in the realm of art criticism so far as I know. They are beginning to exist, an empirical hint. A possibility is beginning to emerge that we would have some objective criteria for discriminating good art from bad art.

If your situation is like mine, you know that we are in a complete and total confusion of values in the arts. In music, just you try to prove something about the virtues of John Cage as against Beethoven—or Elvis Presley. In painting and architecture similar confusion is present. We have no shared values any more. I don't bother to read music criticism. It is useless to me. So is art criticism, which I have also given up reading. Book reviews I find useless frequently. There is complete chaos and anarchy of standards. For instance, the *Saturday Review* recently carried a favorable review of one of Jean Genet's crummy books. Written by a professor of theology, it was total confusion. It was the approach that Evil now has become Good because there is some kind of paradox while playing with words: If evil becomes totally evil, then it somehow becomes good, and there were rhapsodies to the beauties of sodomy and drug addiction which, for a poor psychologist who spends much of his time trying to rescue people from the anguish of these kinds of things, were incomprehensible. How can a grown man recommend this book as a chapter in ethics and a guide to the young?

If Archibald MacLeish says that works of art lead to the truth, then Archibald MacLeish is thinking about particular works of art that Archibald MacLeish has picked out, but ones his son might not agree with. And *then*, MacLeish really has nothing much to say. There is no way of convincing anybody about this point. I think this could be some symbol of the way in which I feel we are at a turning-point. . . . Something new is happening. There are discernible differences—and these are not differences in taste or arbitrary values. These are empirical discoveries. They are new things that are being found out, and from these are generated all sorts of propositions about values and education.

One is the discovery that the human being *has higher needs*, . . . the need to be dignified, for instance, and to be respected. and the need to be free for self-development. The discovery of higher needs carries with it all sorts of revolutionary implications.

. . . many people are beginning to discover that the physicalistic, mechanistic model was a mistake and that it has led us . . . where? To atom bombs. To a beautiful technology of killing, as in the concentration camps. To Eichmann. An Eichmann cannot be refuted with a positivistic philosophy or science. He just cannot; and he never got it until the moment he died. As far as he was concerned, nothing was wrong, he had done a good job. I point out that professional science and professional philosophy are dedicated to the proposition of forgetting about the values, excluding them. This, therefore, must lead to Eichmanns, to atom bombs, and to who knows what!

I'm afraid that the tendency to separate good style or talent from content and ends can lead to this kind of danger.

In this article, which has some proposals for art education, music, rhythm, and dancing are conceived as approaches to peak experience:

There are signals from inside, there are voices that yell out, "By gosh this is good, and don't ever doubt it!" This is a path, one of the ways that we try to teach self-actualization and the discovery of the self. . . . This is also an experimental kind of education that, if we had the time to talk about it, would lead us into another parallel educational establishment, another *kind* of school.

Mathematics can be just as beautiful, just as peak-producing as music; of course, there are

mathematics teachers who have devoted themselves to preventing this. . . .

Well, like all verbal descriptions of beautiful things and high objectives, the right meanings have to be embodied in them. But right meanings come from reaching after them, and the reaching can begin only after these meanings are declared and felt to be important. For this, somebody has to use words.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

PROBLEMS OF THE ACADEMY

CULTURE is the living record of what the best men have thought and done, and culture declines when its elements come to be regarded as models rather than inspirations. "Fashion" is probably an accurate symbol for the corruption of culture. Fashion exploits the imitative tendency in human beings—to achieve a merely external identity by dressing one's body or one's mind in something that has very recently become popular. A worn-out fashion has no distinction; or rather it gives a minus distinction. In a civilization ruled by fashion, the rich buy the most noticeable forms of distinction, but the poor are not without their resources. There can be fashions in blatant rejection of the pretensions of the rich. Exhibitionistic contempt for conspicuous consumption has as many nuances to run through as conventional affluence. Alienation is as diverse as conformity in its styles and possibilities.

Education, unfortunately, has no immunity to all these tendencies, although, in education, the rule of fashion develops a heavy scholarly respectability. A couple of years ago, in the Spring 1966 *Queen's Quarterly*, Richard E. Du Wors, a sociologist who teaches in a Canadian university, set down some musing thoughts on how the writing of poetry is regarded by a great many of his colleagues in higher education. Passing by his introductory remarks about the basic improbability of a sociologist having an interest in poetry—competence being of course unthinkable—we quote him on this general mood in the university:

Poetry is unworthy of a grown man's efforts. Not that the latter attitude is confined to natural scientists. I once had a Canadian economist tell me that the *Canadian Forum* is not as intellectual (his word) as it used to be. When I asked him what he meant, he replied that the *Forum* now had more poetry and such things. Therefore it was less "intellectual" than formerly. I wondered if he thought

only a tariff commission report worthy of the label, "intellectual."

This sounds like what used to be called the "engineer's mentality," but Mr. Du Wors shows that the view has widely spread:

He [the economist] is not alone. I am also familiar with faculty people in an "arts and science" college who refused to sign a petition to give higher priorities than those already allocated a Fine Arts Building. The building would house Art, Music and Drama. The reason given for not signing? Such activities are not "intellectual." Therefore, they are unworthy of a university's attention.

I am still baffled that the writing of an essay on the images in Hamlet, or a description of the Globe Theatre is "intellectual," but the writing of Hamlet is not "intellectual." And the study of Hamlet in order to put it on the stage is not intellectual. A study of the use of the definite article in the fifth scene of the first act of Hamlet, that is intellectual!

This is surely an illustration of the Academy in the last stages of decay! It represents the final substitution of anatomy for life, of form for content. The people who express such views have not the slightest notion of the meaning of education. They are too "professional" to bother with anything like that. A spontaneous thought would probably have the same effect on them as the sight of Medusa. So *of course* there are Dadaist revivals all over the place.

A man who teaches art in a Canadian university, Eli Bornstein, wonders about the purpose of art education. You might think, he suggests, that it is to increase the number of museums and galleries; or to have more art schools; to equip more artists with Masters' Degrees; to widen the market for works of art; to have more "art books." These are the ways in which "art" becomes objective in our culture. But in these terms, he shows, the sweet smell of success is all about:

. . . various reports tell us that there is more art being created, looked at and sold than ever before in all history. We are also told that there are more museums and galleries than ever before. In fact museums have become preoccupied with their

attendance records and compare their figures with spectator sports like hockey and baseball. We have more art departments and art schools than ever and are graduating more Master artists than we can presently use. The volume of sales of art and art books from all accounts indicates the emergence of a booming international network of multi-million dollar industries. Art has in fact achieved a popularity far beyond the wildest expectations of art educators of a generation ago.

But what has art education to do with all this? Again, we are haunted by the overwhelming presence of the "objective" in relation to art—the artifact, you could say, has displaced the practice of art. Mr. Bornstein writes:

There is a tendency in current Art Education to . . . run blindly and frantically after the rapidly changing fashions in art. . . . in some instances this pursuit embraces the very antithesis of art and negates Art Education itself. Much of the current art vogue rejects Art Education. Yet we see Art Education chasing after these symbolic rejections. I have used the word *frantic* because any pursuit of fashion inevitably becomes frantic. It is a hopeless pursuit of an impossible goal. Fashion by its very nature is mere change for the sake of change. No matter how fast you move, you will be left behind. . . . What I am really getting at is the attitude in Art Education which perpetuates the myth and madness of most negative art styles and destructive fashions of our day. In doing so it thereby institutionalizes, elevates, and enshrines these fashions and prematurely makes of them a tradition long before they have withstood any tests of time, any genuine criticism or evaluation. In this tendency Art Education is surely in danger of processing students as consumers of what is "new" even if that in essence is anti-art, non-art, or devoid of anything relating to art. In other words, we are brought full cycle and Art Education becomes pursuit of conformity.

A thing that ought to be recognized is that, when such things are happening throughout our culture, *pain* is inevitable. The man who feels bewildered, confused, or even mutilated by these rapid transitions may be a man of health and promise. Institutions are no longer a matrix which gives him time to develop until he has his own strength. Institutions tend to work in reverse; the signs and labels often mean the opposite of what

they say; the advertised is the false, the claimed is a form of the social lie. So, men who would be artists are thrown back upon themselves and the difficulty, here, is that the culture from which they long to escape has given people almost no exercise in self-recognition, so that, much of the time, the flight is from externality to emptiness.

Yet there are those who are finding stability in the midst of flux and change; there are men who are creating strength and patience out of their pain. These are the people who can help the children, as they come along.

FRONTIERS Measures of Meaning

ONE of the unexpected benefits of acute intellectuality is self-limitation. Men begin to realize that what they have been trying to accomplish with precise definition cannot be done with the techniques of isolation. And then, when this is recognized, a kind of "wild" period ensues. The formal barriers of method and confident research have been taken down, and men exult in that marginless freedom which follows when an externalizing culture loses its shape. How some of these people know that the collapse has taken place remains a mystery. For only a few *hard workers* have personally exhausted the possibilities of intellectual analysis, entitling them to throw away the old rules.

The men who do the actual research, who press out to the last drop the juices of meaning in methods they are now ready to abandon—these men do not fall apart in a dimensionless world. They make break-throughs; they discover a ground for new rules. But because of what the nihilists are doing, at the same time, the new rules have to be formulated in an atmosphere of Ragnarok.

Fortunately, a kind of social sluggishness or lag stretches out these changes. Slowly, the new ground becomes accessible to a few more than the pioneers. For example, on the constructive and regenerative side, the rediscovery of the importance of *myth* is one of the break-throughs of our time. The new seriousness toward myth has two aspects. One is concerned with respect for the *content* of the myth. The other honors its psychology, recognizing its human necessity and indispensability. The myth, for instance, enables us to generalize comprehensibly about ultimate feelings which otherwise could have no formulation at all. The myths dramatize timeless realities of human behavior. They are an intuitive, symbolic shorthand for larger meanings which we know are somehow true, but which are lost by

intellectual exactitude. The myth dips up what these rational techniques cannot touch.

There is a sense in which rational analysis destroys mythic meaning, just as anatomizing an organism takes away its life. We can know it, analytically, only after it is dead. So analysis is recognized as a killing technique. There was a time in recent history when this view of the shortcomings of science and intellectuality was jeered at as a "failure of nerve." We hear this charge much less frequently, now, if at all. For science, and even rationality, it now appears, are themselves myths masquerading in modern dress. A man must now give himself permission to believe in representative fictions if he wishes to enter a career in "science."

Yet there is a way of using our rational faculties to gain a better understanding of the role of myths in human life. Myth, we might say, is to our modes of understanding what breath is to the body. A breathing body may do great things which have little to do with breathing, but these things must never express contempt for breath. So with the myth; it is a living foundation for the more finished products of the mind.

Let us consider the hero, who is a man who does what he must. He knows this completely, but not, perhaps, reflectively. He shows you what a man is by being heroic. And then the culture fits its dreams and laws and customs around the patterns of his acts. The culture does not "explain" its myth, but the myth is the seed of meaning behind everything else.

Eventually, as the culture grows self-consciously mature, it feels the need to explain itself—the need for self-knowledge—and then the myths begin to undergo refinement of expression. The myths turn into "literature," and this is followed by "criticism." Finally, from self-consciousness, a man becomes able to take the myth or leave it—he learns how to dabble in it; or he may simply ignore it. If he ignores it without having devised a meaning of his own to take its

place, he suffers from the impossible conceit that he can *do without it*.

The revival of interest in the myth, today, is the discovery that we cannot do without it. We read about the learned forms of this discovery, but other break-throughs are more primitive and unpremeditated, and are to be recognized in the free-floating independences of various "radical" activities. The value of the learned rediscovery, however, is that it may supply a new language on the subject, applicable in many directions. In the Summer 1967 issue of *Existential Psychiatry*, Wilhelm Dupre has a paper, "Myth, Truth, and Philosophy," which illustrates this potentiality. At the beginning he makes his peace with the intellectual obscurity of myth: "It is simply a fact that there is *no exact definition of myth*." After disposing of the notion that myth is "merely" the language of the childhood of mankind—a truth which loses its truth from being misused—he tries to think about myth without killing it, first, as an objective critic would do. He says:

In a given culture with an observable mythology, the latter permeates all the social patterns, renders sense to them, and is an integral part of its religion. That is, it collects the variety of objects and pieces and brings them together to the unity of the world, of an existential—not necessarily scientific—world-picture which proves its truth by the undeniable fact that it works. This kind of mythological truth is accepted even by people who consider the mythologies in themselves to be a system of lies and fantastic associations without further value outside a certain society.

Simply because such people—who imagine themselves tough-minded "skeptics"—ride on the moral energy of the myths of their time, they are often able to do great things. They know, you could say, better than to ask themselves embarrassing questions. They have a once-removed sort of heroism—not really noble, but still demanding—and the busy-busy excitement of their lives is a substitute for meaning. There is also "achievement" to urge them on. Even if, at the end of the line—culturally speaking—the

goals of this achievement are a Madison Avenue put-up job, the myth still works in a vulgar way.

But when their *children* come along and begin to ask those terrible questions about goals and what it means to be human, even they begin to sense the emptiness of their lives. The bluster and slogans of the present are the last death-throes of the old myth, and today the break-through is no more a daring adventure for the few, but a practical necessity for the many.

The root-reality of myth is that there is a quality of self-conscious existence which can be mirrored in imagery, dramatized in particular acts, or abstracted in metaphysics, but which cannot be directly expressed. It is that whole-as-part and part-as-whole mystery we all feel, the tensions of which create the circumstances of our lives, and the resolutions of which give us our personal and historical climaxes. We simply *are* all this.

A man who understands might say: "I am the myth, but I cannot tell it to you." Or he might say: "There is this little story, but you are not to take it too seriously." Or, as the *Rig Veda* puts it:

Who is there who knows, who here can tell, whence was the origin, and whence this creation? The gods are this side of the creation. Who knows, then, whence it came into being?

This creation, whence it came into being, whether spontaneously or not—he who is its highest overseer in heaven, he surely knows, or perhaps he knows not.

It isn't that you go back and "believe" in the *Rig Veda*. But when it is realized that the dynamics of conscious being were somehow understood by the men who set down the *Rig Veda*, you develop a healthy respect for such people. The parameters of the Vedic hymn are the parameters of universal experience—the message is there, and the medium doesn't matter so much. And you wonder, in passing, what is the matter with people who insist that you become totally involved in the medium. Are they, after all, people who are terribly afraid of having to *think*?

But let us benefit by Mr. Dupre's final reflections:

Myth manifests itself as presupposition of all thinking and being in their interrelation, i.e., as the presupposition of all theory; myth offers itself to us as origin or as the *origination* of all thinking and being, i.e., as the nature of our existence. . . . Demythologization understood as the abolishment of the mythic in general is nothing but the creation of new myth, the myth of science and progress, the undiscussed silence of a fundamental disorientation.

In other words, myth is the origin of all philosophy as the quest for the meaning of life which transcends all finite patterns and therewith rationality. It gives us the idea of ultimates and thus of truth; it reveals to us the future as already-known darkness and is the invisible-visible light of all things as they are seen by the eyes of our mind. Its truth is the pushing force of our philosophizing and the truth of our philosophy is the presence of its self-willed reality in a critical mind. Thus, to be or to become aware of it is one of the most important and significant events of humanity, whose accomplishment is at the end nothing but the lived myth in the light of an all-embracing reason and faith.

This is a radical restoration of the role of intellectuality—which must never outrun the unknown reality that can be felt, but not defined.