

OLD AND NEW DRAMAS

TWO ideas are practically all-pervasive in the thought of the time. One is that the present is a period of transition during which conceptions of morality and human objectives are rapidly changing, while old social and economic structures threaten to collapse. The other is that mankind is experiencing heightened self-consciousness, a development which intensifies the quest for meaning, as distinguished from concrete historical or material goals, and exerts a transforming influence on theories and expectations brought forward from the past.

These ideas are probably inseparable as tools of analysis, since heightened self-consciousness is both herald and compeller of transition. When people begin to think differently about themselves, their life-objectives change; old confidences weaken, being sometimes replaced by anxious and rootless dreams. The driving energy of motive deserts established forms of enterprise, seeking new channels of expression. The Big Institutions suffer not so much from brain-drain as from loss of integrity and vision; they become brittle shells which operate on the momentum of the past, prolonging their life with clever borrowings and inversions of the insight and energy of the new spirit.

There seems a sense in which two great dramas are unfolding on the stage of the present. One production, in which the players are acting out old ideas of achievement, is already in its last act and hurrying on to the final curtain. The other has barely begun, and the opening scenes present widely varying portents, some of them leading so far away from the familiar that thinking about them may produce nervous strain.

The Vietnam War and Watergate were doubtless closing episodes in the old drama, paroxysmic symptoms of the declining intelligence

in inherited patterns of behavior. They show what is left in human enterprise after all moral energy departs. Reliance on industrialism and technology is another characteristic theme in the play continuing the past. Only the small-minded can now speak the lines in the script. And increasingly, the large corporate players in this drama are seen as villains. There was once a time when the multinational corporations were described as the climactic achievement of technological and managerial expertise—expressions of Capitalism's finest hour. We see them now as frightening examples of the irreversible tendencies of a self-destructive age. A comment by Jim Hougan in last December's *Harper's* (in an article on civilian "spying") illustrates the moral coloring which seems to go with acquisitive enterprise at its zenith of expanding power:

To preserve their investments and increase their profits corporate giants and paranoid tycoons . . . shell out millions to develop their own intelligence services or to hire the expertise of firms whose loyalties are for sale. The costs are tax deductible. There is nothing wrong with this per se (they say). Gunboat capitalism has generally gone the way of gunboat diplomacy: in big business, as in international politics, a subtler strategy is required today than was ever necessary in the past. It is, however, a basically antidemocratic strategy in that it depends upon surreptitious manipulation of institutions, information, and public opinion—an operational style inimical to, and destructive of, an open society. The skills of the intelligence community are, after all, the skills of war. The multinationals' reliance on those skills suggests that they recognize the sometimes martial nature of their relationship to other countries, to government regulation, and the public.

Jim Hougan recognizes two dangers in this development:

First, by applying intelligence and counterintelligence tactics to public opinion, it

threatens to transform the society into a nation of "friendlies" whose ordinary activities are controlled by hidden persuaders of which they know nothing. (In this regard one sees the oil companies' recent ad campaign for what it was: a propaganda fugue designed to pacify a countryside of raped consumers.) The second danger is that commercial intelligence activities threaten to compromise the neutrality of government, and thereby threaten the security and rights of all.

The old-style reaction to such revelations—which are common enough—is to cry for revolution or house cleaning, for government control, for chopping up big business into manageable units policed by watchdogs of authority; but the participants in the new drama—the play which is unfolding new conceptions and values for human life are vaguely skeptical of all such remedies. They are more likely to wonder how the rags-to-riches hopes of a nation of energetic enterprisers reached this disgraceful destination, and to ask how the direction of human undertakings can be altered without the cost of bloody and unwinnable guerilla wars. They may turn to one of the great forerunners and prophets of the new spirit, such as Dostoevsky, and repeat his musings. He wrote in *A Writer's Diary* (about a hundred years ago):

The whole horror of the situation is that not only in our country but all over the world the most foul and disgusting actions can be committed by people who are anything but scoundrels. Our trouble today is that a man may commit a most atrocious crime without considering himself to be and, indeed, without actually being a scoundrel.

Who, today, after years of Watergate trials and investigations, after innumerable hijackings, kidnappings, and assassinations, after Weatherman explosions and SLA manifestos, needs particular identification of these people? We stare in revulsion at the last act of a drama in which we are still too much involved, as either powerless players or supernumeraries, and wonder what other troupe we can join.

But the new play presents only its opening scenes—bench-slammer acts which are hardly

inviting—with parts for only heroes or eccentrics. We don't know what to do. In her new book of essays, *The Small Personal Voice* (Knopf, 1974, \$6.95), Doris Lessing describes the common state of mind:

. . . to imagine free man, leisured man, is to step outside of what we are. There is no one on this earth who is not twisted by fear and insecurity, and the compromises of thinking made inevitable by want and fear. Those people who see leisured man in terms of football matches and television-watching; those who say: "You can't give man leisure, he won't know how to use it," are as much victims of a temporary phase of economic development as the coupon-fillers and the screen-dreamers. Their imaginations are in bond to their own necessities. Slaves can envy the free; slaves can fight to free their children; but slaves suddenly set free are marked by the habits of submission; and slaves imagining freedom see it through the eyes of slaves. . . .

There are only two choices: that we force ourselves into the effort of imagination necessary to become what we are capable of being; or that we submit to being ruled by office boys of big business, or the socialist bureaucrats who have forgotten that socialism means a desire for goodness and compassion—and the end of submission is that we shall blow ourselves up.

It is because it is so hard to think ourselves into the possibilities of the ancient dream of free man that the nightmare is so strong. Everyone in the world now, has moments when he throws down a newspaper" turns off the radio, shuts his ears to the man on the platform, and holds out his hand and looks at it, shaken with horror. . . .

Meanwhile, the best and most vital works of Western literature have been despairing statements of emotional anarchy. If the typical product of communist literature during the last two decades is the cheerful little tract about economic advance, then the type of Western literature is the novel or the play which one sees or reads with a shudder of horrified pity for all of humanity. If writers like Camus, Sartre, Genet, Beckett, feel anything but a tired pity for human beings, then it is not evident from their work.

This is the dark side of the fact of transition, a frightening interregnum of powerlessness and uncertainty that comes over people who no longer

can believe as their fathers believed or struggle for what their fathers fought to obtain. By the light of their heightened awareness, they see what has come out of those beliefs and struggles. The belief may have given only a second-rate vision, but it was at least a vision—and now, without vision, only apprehension and unutterable longing remain.

So these are actionless days. But they are not days without thought. Interregnums are also times of preparation, of seeking and wondering. The besetting questions are now not so much what to do as what to think. Carl Jung called the turn more than thirty years ago in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*:

The rapid and world-wide growth of a "psychological" interest over the last two decades shows unmistakably that modern man has to some extent turned his attention from material things to his own subjective processes. Should we call this mere curiosity? . . . This psychological interest of the present time shows that man expects something from his psychic life which he has not received from the outer world: something which our religions, doubtless, ought to contain, but no longer do contain—at least for modern man.

This inquiry into the nature of man, grown almost obsessive in recent years, has been accompanied by hundreds of books on questions having little to do with concrete, historical objectives. The practical questions are still there—they remain, as they must, since they represent everyday necessity—but the wave of thinking about non-historical reality, of asking timeless questions, is changing the approach to practical matters. Take for example the socialist movement, already in process of radical change. Through the years we have quoted the pioneering declarations for humanist reform in socialism by such writers as Erich Fromm and Jayaprakash Narayan. Today these pioneers are vindicated by the changed attitudes of seasoned radicals. One dramatic expression of this change is *Evolution and Revolution in the Twentieth Century* by James and Grace Boggs—a work which declares that human attitudes and what people make of their

lives are far more important than material rewards, although compensation ought to be just. The humanistic economics of E. F. Schumacher is keyed to similar philosophic conceptions of value—scaled to human welfare and values, to goals which have moral, not technical or scientific definition.

This changed feeling is everywhere in the air, with various elevations. It has trivial expression in the exaggerated importance given to emotional discharge and is reflected by the arts in numerous subjective preoccupations. When an entire society loses its motivational focus, the change inevitably finds many octaves of chaotic expression. And when external failures and disasters throw people back on themselves, they may encounter only the voids of psychic immaturity. The experience is common enough to have a name—the existential vacuum—leading to "anomie" and the alienation of learned diagnosis.

In short, the horrors of our time are not so much intrinsically real as they are the vacancies left in our lives by changes in feeling which demand new beginnings. Again? we don't know what to do. Doris Lessing looks for what is missing in the work of modern writers:

If there is one thing which distinguishes our literature, it is a confusion of standards and the uncertainty of values. It would be hard, now, for a writer to use a Balzacian phrase like "sublime virtue" or "monster of wickedness" without self-consciousness. Words, it seems, can no longer be used simply and naturally. All the great words like love, hate; life death; loyalty, treachery; contain their opposite meanings and half a dozen shades of dubious implication. Words have become so inadequate to express the richness of our experience that the simplest sentence overheard on a bus reverberates like words shouted against a cliff. One certainty we all accept is the condition of being uncertain and insecure. It is hard to make moral judgments, to use words like good and bad.

Yet I read Tolstoy, Stendhal, Balzac, and the rest of the old giants continuously. So do most of the people I know people who are left and right, committed and uncommitted, religious and unreligious, but who have at least this in common,

that they read novels, as I think they should be read, for illumination, in order to enlarge one's perception of life.

Why, Mrs. Lessing asked herself, does she go back to Tolstoy, to Stendhal?

Put directly, like this, the answer seemed to me clear. I was not looking for a firm reaffirmation of old ethical values many of which I don't accept; I was not in search of the pleasures of familiarity. I was looking for the warmth, the compassion, the humanity, the love of people which illuminates the literature of the nineteenth century and which makes all these old novels a statement of faith in man himself.

These are the qualities which I believe are lacking from literature now.

That is what I mean when I say that literature should be committed. It is these qualities which I demand, and which I believe should spring from being committed; for one cannot be committed without belief.

Committed to what? Here Doris Lessing recalls Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Prize address. The writer, she says, must see himself as "an architect of the soul." Required is a leverage of mind: "It is not merely a question of preventing an evil, but of strengthening a vision of a good which may defeat the evil."

What are the sources of vision, if vision is what we need?

For those looking for an answer, one stipulation seems necessary: that the springs of authentic vision are both without and within. The coloring, scene, and setting come from circumstances, but the synthesis and spur to action come from the man. Vision arises out of the conjunction of historic moments with eyes ready for a new kind of seeing. Vision is not intervention but the generation of a spectacle by the human spirit, a gathering of materials ready to be shaped into a new imagery of meaning.

We spoke of heightened self-consciousness. What if, today, we must learn to draw the elements of visioning out of ourselves?

The great myths—yesterday's spectacles brought forward from the birthtime of the race—have been endlessly elaborated. They have been used but not made to come altogether alive. For ages their themes have given dignity, strength, and elevation to man's mundane enterprises. They add to earthly affairs the glimmer of unearthly horizons. Their symbolisms hint of invisible dimensions, outlining spiritual analogues of life on earth.

But now our undertakings have changed in character. What, we ask, are we doing here? What are our lives *for*? Mythic glimpses of hidden meaning no longer serve. Analogical sanctifications of physical achievement do not aid a race whose pride in physical achievement has run its course.

Consider the changes now taking place in thought. We are asking transparently metaphysical questions. What is the relation of the individual to society—of the one to the many? What is different in every human being, and what is the same? We want to know these things, not only in relation to urgent social and historical crises, but in the form of general answers, as explanations which apply both now and forever. The circumscribed solution will not do, since tomorrow, as we know, the question may be repeated in even more painful and desperate circumstances.

We need the general answers in order to make the circumstantial and historical answers work. Without basic, philosophical comprehension our clever relativist solutions inevitably become closed systems which then turn into prisons from which we escape by increasingly costly means. The pain of this frustrating repetition collaborates with our inner longing: the delusions of finite expedience can no longer be tolerated.

A decisive sign of the times is the loss of faith in institutions. We know at last that humanly devised systems cannot save either our souls or our bodies. We may need systems as practical

tools, but they provide no "answers." They have no more authority than a hammer and nails. Workable systems are schemes which coordinate relationships that can be delegated to the rule of habit, but no habit can be left without the supervision of independent, designing intelligence. So the churches are dying away, governments are becoming shaky and distrusted, while organizations in general are bypassed as interfering with spontaneous human intercourse. In time, no doubt, we shall find sensible uses for all these devices and structures, but no longer look to them for any real help. For now we are engaged in nothing less than the definition or redefinition of man.

It is possible to discern behind the external involvements of the best books of the time the slow, muscular writhings of the Promethean hero, seeking to free himself from the bonds of fallacy, the blinders of self-deception. A Platonic longing haunts the pages of Richard Goodwin's *The American Condition*. In *Pentagon of Power* Lewis Mumford seeks out the Minotaur and engages him in mortal combat. What are his weapons? The high and ennobling qualities of human beings. Not *Homo Faber* but *Homo Sapiens* is his champion. What man does at his best begins to reveal what he is. In the pages of Theodore Roszak, an awakening human begins to shake off his Caliban disguises, disdain the dogmas of single vision, and reach out toward the wide kinships declared by poets and mystics in all ages. L. L. Whyte selected the symmetries of mind and form which are the constant references of human wondering, interpreting them to show the grain of purpose in all that we see and all that we know—the movement toward ever more precise focus of intelligence and ever more comprehensive understanding.

It is the struggle of Laocoön renewed, perhaps with a different outcome. We see in the works of these men a wrestling with the half-lies and half-truths of definitions made for coping with material necessity. There is an exhibition of mind,

no longer encountering the puzzles and problems of the world, but in the throes of a contest with its own mysteries and dilemmas. The old definitions were good only for getting food and building shelters, and now we are filled with an irrepressible longing to understand ourselves as erstwhile inhabitants of the stars—as beings requiring another nourishment. We need new definitions for understanding what we *are*.

The materials of the coming vision project themselves into our psychic life. Our emerging hungers are the being-needs of which Abraham Maslow spoke. They come upon us with insistent declaration of *their* necessities, shaping the vision of man with the stuff of self-generated feeling and idea—and picking up, as they gain substance out of reflection, the rhythms and harmonies of ancient song and prophecy. At this new level of experience of self, we accumulate the intellectual stuff of better definitions. We are slowly but surely acquiring the framing structures of a new sense of history in which it becomes possible to distinguish between the cultural childhood of getting and spending and the civilized maturity of being and becoming. While the two dramas continue, our understanding and perceptions grow. The shadows of the old performance, darkening in so many ways, become fuel to illuminate the new.

REVIEW

THE THERAPY OF PRAGMATISTS

ONE thing that comes out clearly in Jerome Frank's *Persuasion and Healing* (Schocken, revised edition, 1974, paperback, \$4.75) is that the great diversity of opinions held concerning human nature and the processes of life produces widely differing conceptions of therapy. Dr. Frank regards the common factors in these numerous therapeutic schools as having primary importance. Basic in all psychotherapy is the endeavor to relieve stress, to help the patient to master his problems, and to inspire in him a feeling that he *can* deal with them more effectively.

In a concluding chapter, Dr. Frank asks if it is legitimate to speak of all these differing approaches and methods as "a single entity"—Psychotherapy.

At first glance the question seems to answer itself. The number of schools of psychotherapy exceeds the tens and continues to increase. The conditions which psychotherapies purport to treat also cover an enormous range. They include the whole gamut of neurotic and psychotic reactions, personality disorders, disturbances of sexual functions, addiction, school phobias, marital discord—the list could be continued indefinitely.

On closer inspection, however, certain aspects of the psychotherapeutic scene strongly suggest that the features shared by psychotherapies far outweigh their differences. Practitioners of all schools claim to be able to treat persons with a wide variety of diagnostic labels, and each can report success with patients who had failed to respond to the methods of another. Since all can do this, however, the claims cancel each other. That is, therapists using method A cure some patients whom method B failed to help, but method B also succeeds after method A has failed.

In view of this state of affairs, it is not surprising that all therapeutic schools persist. Despite vigorous and prolonged polemics, no school has yet succeeded in driving a rival from the field. The obvious conclusion is that all must do some good but that none has produced results clearly superior to the results of any other.

Dr. Frank chooses the word "demoralization" to stand for what the therapist tries to overcome in the patient. Therapy, he says, is fundamentally persuasion, since it seeks to change or improve the way the afflicted person sees the world and other people, and his way of reacting or relating to experience, since these are elements in the patient's life to which there is some access.

Fundamental to both "normal" as well as demoralized people is the "assumptive world." Historians speak of this outlook as the world-view, and every human being has one, either poorly or well organized. Involved is a conception of the self, a way of thinking of causality, and ideas of goals and values. As Dr. Frank says, the assumptive world exists "at different levels of consciousness." We may have attitudes of which we are hardly aware, yet which operate at the emotional level.

A healthy, enjoyable life requires that the individual create an assumptive world that fits with "reality." Checking on one's assumptive world, revising its misconceptions, filling in its gaps and confirming its judgments are part of normal life. On the social and cultural level, we do this more or less collectively, forming common judgments and declaring common values. On this subject, Dr. Frank observes:

Societies, like families, often contain built-in conflicts, or sources of stress, which create disharmonies in the assumptive worlds of their members. Often a society also contains institutionalized ways of resolving the stresses it creates. . . . Too often, however, no readily available institutionalized way exists to handle a conflict engendered by discrepancies in the assumptive world of a society. Americans, for example, are taught to be aggressive, yet at the same time to be affable and considerate. Violence is glorified in the entertainment and mass media, yet condemned in personal relationships or in the encounters of daily life. American society offers no institutionally sanctioned way of resolving the confusion and guilt engendered by these conflicting social values. As a result, just as neurotic conflicts in Freud's day centered on sex, today, although sexual conflicts have

by no means disappeared, neuroses often derive from conflicts related to aggression.

The lack of an over-all world-view is reflected in therapeutic practice:

The diversity of American society permits the coexistence of various therapies based on different conceptual schemes representing the value systems of different sub-cultures. This may have certain virtues. A patient whose outlook is at variance with one group may find acceptance in another. If after therapy he can no longer find support from his former group, he may be able to get it from a new one. Group support need not be expressed as liking. What really counts is whether the patient's new self or behavior achieves recognition and respect. Psychotherapy may help him to gain increased group support by enabling him to embody the group's values more successfully, or, in line with our democratic values, by becoming able to think and act more independently.

The pluralism of our society, which means "the absence of a single, all-embracing world-view," may, however, limit communication between healer and patient. Dr. Frank makes this interesting comment: "No form of American psychotherapy can approximate the influencing power of primitive healing or thought reform in this respect, though perhaps an ideal therapeutic community, which completely immerses the patient in a culture expressing a self-consistent assumptive world, could approach it."

Here Dr. Frank implies the high capacity for therapeutic persuasion of a unified and generally accepted worldview, but he nowhere undertakes discussion of whether or not a particular world-view may be *true*—in fact, as might be expected, the word "truth" is not in the index of his book. What does this mean? It doesn't mean, for one thing, that Dr. Frank is without moral convictions, as anyone who has read his other books will know. It means, simply, that in our society there is no commonly pervasive feeling about "truth" and no emphasis on the idea of pursuing it. We are forced to conclude that "the truth" is somehow disreputable. To fill the place once occupied by the goal of finding truth we are told that a person

needs to develop an assumptive world which corresponds to "conditions as they actually are."

But, we know, of course, that men's ideas of what conditions "actually are" change—sometimes radically. As Dr. Frank has suggested, the values of Freud's Vienna are not the same as those of today. The question arises: Should therapists simply reflect the consensus assumptions of their times, or have they an obligation to seek or point to some deeper sense of "reality"? Dr. Frank might say that the therapist is neither a philosophical teacher nor a social reformer. He does say: "Patients do not come to psychotherapy to learn something but to be relieved of stress and disability," adding, however, that "they may learn a great deal in the process." He suggests that psychotherapy is a healing art, like medicine, "which uses methods derived from principles of learning rather than anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry."

Well, the "principles of learning" are pretty vague, these days. There is reason to think that the really unusual therapists or healers are strongly intuitive people—Karen Horney is an example—who have deep convictions concerning certain truths about life and human nature, but who manage to fit their feelings and ideas into the agnostic language of the time. Dr. Frank finds advantages in a pluralistic culture, such as freedom and intellectual independence, but on the other side of the ledger is lack of commitment and a tendency to drift with the times.

Perhaps, instead of hoping to reach the truth—achieve some sort of consolidated world-view in which all may or should believe—we need to restore vitality to the *ideal* of truth. What could be more health-producing than an increase in the ardor of the search for meaning? Something of this sort has already been begun by pioneering humanistic psychologists, men such as Erich Fromm and A. H. Maslow, neither of whom is mentioned in Dr. Frank's book.

One of the things these humanistic psychologists set about doing was the formulation

of a new assumptive outlook concerning the nature of man. See for example Maslow's *Motivation and Personality*. It seems fair to say that the effect of this effort has been to give some *lifting* truth-content to the assumptions of psychology. Perhaps it is too soon to say much about "truth," but we certainly need a better understanding of what the word implies, and a clearer perception of the difference between what we know and what we believe.

In an article in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Fall, 1974), Walt Anderson writes, in effect, about the attempt of the humanist psychologists to improve the assumptive world of therapists:

The most important single limiting factor is the idea which any society has about what the possibilities of human development actually are. A stunted or narrow conception of the human potential, especially when deeply built into cultural norms and reinforced by a society's art and science and philosophy, is as powerful a form of tyranny as any political institution. By stunted and narrow conception I mean any lopsided view which focuses on certain human needs—safety or esteem, for example—to the exclusion of others, or a truncated value system such as our own which sees the acquisition of a great amount of material goods and social prestige as evidence of the upper limits of human growth.

The historical importance of humanistic psychology is that it offers us a new and more expansive vision of human growth at a time when the shortcomings of the old vision have become most evident. Humanistic psychology is a challenge to our commonly held beliefs about what people are how they grow and change, and what they may become. Humanistic psychology is significant only insofar as it pushes and tugs at fundamental ideas.

Mr. Anderson, of course, outlines high intentions, not achievements. The object is to provide better, "truer," conceptions for everyone to draw upon in shaping both an individual and a common assumptive world.

COMMENTARY

SMALL IS COMPATIBLE

A GOOD—perhaps the only—test of a new idea is its compatibility with basic values in other areas. Take for example E. F. Schumacher's recommendation of small-scale technology and organic agriculture: how do these fit with other conceptions we hold to be ideal? In a recent address "The Age of Plenty," Dr. Schumacher said:

With all the great powers man has recently acquired through his science and technology, it seems certain that he is now far too clever to be able to survive without wisdom.

As with so many other things, perfect non-violence may not be attainable in this imperfect world. But it *does* make a difference in which direction we *strive*. A system of production and a style of living, or a concept of efficiency, which advance steadily in the direction of violence, which refuse to recognize non-violence as a valid criterion of success, move on a disaster course. And the warning signals are appearing all around us. We call them pollution, environmental degradation, ugliness, intolerable noise, rapid exhaustion of resources, social disintegration and so forth. In other words, I do not think of violence only in the context of man's relation to other men, but in the context of all his relations including those with animate and inanimate nature.

What is non-violence? We can say, for instance, that biologically and ecologically sound farming systems, with "good husbandry" and the careful observation of the Law of Return (recycling of all organic materials) represent a nonviolent approach, whereas the ever intensifying warfare against nature of highly chemicalized, industrialized, computerized farming systems represents violence. Some people say: "The choice is between these violent systems and hunger. Look how productive, how efficient, these systems are. We need them to feed the growing populations of the world." The question is: Is this true? An immensity of R & D (research and development) expenditure has gone into the development of these violent systems, which completely depend upon a vast chemical and pharmaceutical industry, which in turn completely depends upon non-renewable oil. How much R & D has gone into development of non-violent systems? Apart from a few private efforts, such as those of the

Soil Association, hardly any. Even so, there are thousands of farmers around the world who are obtaining excellent yields and making a good living without resort to chemical fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, etc. Would it not be right to take these alternatives seriously and support them consciously, instead of putting all our eggs into the basket of violence?

There are many other directions in which the idea of nonviolence can and should be developed. In medicine, we can say that prevention is essentially non-violent, compared with cure. Somebody once asked the question: "If an ancestor of long ago visited us today, what would he be more astonished at, the skill of our dentists or the rottenness of our teeth?" We should not need the violent interferences we get from our skillful dentists if we had maintained the health of our teeth the way other peoples have.

Sooner or later, such common sense must take hold. All that is required is spreading it around and acting upon it as much as we can.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

SETTING FOR LEARNING

GANDHI advocated education for children based on the economic activities of the local scene—a proposal which makes complete sense as preparation for village life. What about education for the young in the industrialized societies—where rural population has probably fallen to almost an absolute minimum?

Similar, well-rounded education for technocratic societies seems hardly possible, since a number of other far-reaching reforms would be needed first, but there may be certain beginning steps in the right direction that could be taken now. One that would help to open up awareness of the necessity for changing our methods of agriculture is suggested by an article in the *Wall Street Journal* for Nov. 7 of last year.

The writer, Joseph Winski, begins by reporting the serious decline in the number of bees in the United States. The increased use of pesticides by the farmers is apparently the chief cause. Last summer, a southerner observed, "bees were dropping off like flies in Virginia." In addition, their food supply is everywhere being reduced:

Changed farming practices (such as using chemical fertilizers instead of plowed-under legumes, which while in blossom are excellent sources of nectar) and the continuing spread of suburbia into what used to be open fields also have contributed. "The bee just doesn't have enough flowers she can visit," says John Root, whose family has been in the beekeeping supplies business in Medina, Ohio, since 186g. Another factor, until the last couple of years, has been a depressed honey market.

In any area where access to fields or countryside is possible, beekeeping could be made a project by the young. Certainly its requirements are well within the capacities of highschool students, and younger children could probably participate, too. A large, well-planted backyard might be all that is necessary. Quite evidently, the

restoration of an adequate environment for bees is an essential of our future food supply, and this is an aspect of ecological reality which children can learn about at first hand instead of getting vague impressions from a teacher. Some intensive experience in one direction is far more valuable than the hearsay of a biology course.

Moreover, by working in this way, the children would come to learn about the ecological and economic problems of their society through the eyes of *active restorers*, which is very different from becoming righteous critics who echo published reports of pollution and industrial abuse.

The facts in the *Wall Street Journal* article are extensive and interesting:

. . . there are 20% fewer honey bee colonies in the U.S. today than there were 10 years ago—about four million versus five million. (A colony contains between 25,000 and 60,000 bees.) In California, the leading bee state, as much as 20% of the state's honeybees have been killed in some recent years—a mortality rate double that of the early 1960s. . . .

Nearly 100 crops with a farm value of \$1 billion annually depend upon honeybees- for pollination; another \$3 billion worth benefit from bee pollination in terms of higher and better-quality yields. Among these crops are apples, cherries, plums, broccoli, cucumbers, cabbage, melons—indeed, virtually all fruits and berries as well as many vegetables and even some livestock-forage crops such as alfalfa.

A researcher in the bee laboratory at the University of Wisconsin has pointed out that as pollinators bees are worth twenty times their value as honey-makers. The drop in bee population plainly threatens the nation's food supply. "You just can't pollinate as efficiently with fewer bees."

California almonds are grown on 200,000 acres, and each acre requires two colonies of bees to pollinize the almond tree blossoms. Since there are only 300,000 colonies in the entire state, the almond growers last year had to import more than 100,000 colonies of bees, some hauled all the way from Montana in large tandem trailer trucks.

Wisconsin agronomists have found that cranberry production can be tripled with efficient

bee pollination, and a perhaps more important consideration is the fact that a new soybean hybrid—which would double production of this second most important of the country's feed crops—needs honeybees for pollination. Full soybean production of the hybrid would require half the present bee population of the entire country!

Meanwhile beekeepers, who have protected and cared for bees over countless centuries, are diminishing in number. They are fighting a losing battle, it seems, despite ingenious devices to keep pesticide-poisoned pollen out of the hives. "Something's got to be done," said a representative of the National Wildlife Federation, "but we're not sure just what."

Apart from such economic considerations, caring for bees can be fascinating. Youngsters who take part in a beekeeping project, whether at home or in school, are likely to be drawn to the rich literature on the subject. Good reading would include Maeterlinck's famous book, Hilda Ransome's *The Sacred Bee*, and the works of Karl von Frisch—see especially his article on bee "language" and communications in *Science* for Aug. 23, 1974.

Another application of Gandhi's idea might grow out of the "energy crisis" and the diminishing world food supply. How much of the recent scare about oil shortages was propaganda to silence the environmentalists will probably be debated for years (see Desmond Smith in the Nov. 9, 1974, *Nation*), but people interested in taking individual action and in educational programs that involve the young in restorative work should send for a copy of the latest issue of the *Journal of the New Alchemists* (New Alchemy Institute, P.O. Box 432, Woods Hole, Mass. 02543, \$6.00), and start with John Todd's "The Dilemma Beyond Tomorrow."

After noting the trumped-up aspect of the "fuel shortage," he says:

The pseudo-crisis has had an educational value with frightening portent. I should like, at this point,

to make four statements about energy in relation to society and then discuss them a bit more fully, beginning with the last point first.

1. Energy and its use is critical to the fate of society.
2. Our knowledge of energy is primitive and lacking in wisdom.
3. Even if the present crisis is the result of manipulatory activities, the forces which enable Oil and others to be manipulative are growing. Within our lifetimes a terrible scramble for the remaining cheap energy will take place. This almost certainly will mean war and oppression.
4. Contemporary "advanced" societies have built themselves a humpty-dumpty civilization based on a crude understanding of nature, energetics and society. The scary thing about this is that megatinkerers, oil barons of whatever nationality, could actually collapse the whole industrial world without meaning to, merely by playing their narrow-interest power games. I shall give a brief example of what I mean, but it should not be forgotten that there are at the same time comparable events that could be, and are, occurring in many other sectors of society.

Mr. Todd goes on to discuss why food shortages occur and will grow more serious. He ends:

We are, whether we like it or not, confronted with the awesome and unprecedented task of reconstructing human societies so that they come into line with the laws of nature. Hopefully we can do it in a way that extends rather than constricts the human experience. In short, to change the world we are going to have to change ourselves. The beginnings are tangible and concrete, and there are guides including ecological concepts.

Practically all the projects going on at the New Alchemy Institute could be (and are) used as vehicles for education. The backyard fish farm is a possibility for some. Greenhouse agriculture doesn't take much space. Both these projects are freighted with associations and meanings that the people of tomorrow will *have* to understand. Children who take part in such undertakings will naturally learn to think in a new way.

FRONTIERS Trends and Hopes

WHOLE EARTH EPILOG (Penguin, \$4.00)—latest venture of a publishing project that has been far too successful to terminate is enormous. It has 320 pages (14½" x 11") and covers the universe of current change-minded interests. Impossible to review, this encyclopedia of tools for alternative ways of living offers sampling accounts of books, ideas, products, and methods. A random (very incomplete) run-down on the contents might refer to sections on: composting and organic gardening (with basic manuals listed), growing roof gardens in the city, owner-built homes, plans for solar heating; bibliographies on solar heating, wind-power, and methane; and traditional crafts including spinning, weaving, basketry, ceramics, woodworking and leatherworking. There is a lot on food and its preparation, a section on boats, on bookmaking, and on guitar-making. A number of pages are devoted to finding out about what is happening in China—how the people live, and their agricultural methods and industrial projects.

A good thing about *WEE* (a misleading acronym) is its frequent review-by-quotation. For example, there is a long passage by E. Phillip LeVeen of the University of California on "The Social Costs of Agricultural Technology." After a terse account of the ruin worked by industrial agriculture on the rural areas of the country—noting the replacement of human-scaled economies with large, bureaucratic organizations—Prof. LeVeen considers the possibilities for change:

These trends could, in theory, be reversed. New Technology might be developed to make small-scale, labor-intensive agriculture profitable. Farmers might join in building small cooperatives which would encourage cooperation in buying and selling products and the sharing of machinery and information. Such organizations have been successful in other parts of the world in maintaining a viable small-scale agriculture.

He also speaks of possible government measures to foster family-size farms, but remarks that all such changes would mean "the

displacement of a politically and economically powerful set of interests by less powerful ones, which means that they are not likely to occur voluntarily in this country." Yet there may be changes. Prof. LeVeen lists the impersonal factors pressing for change toward better relationships with the earth:

The energy crisis is an example of the type of natural forces which are increasingly going to play an important role in determining the way we produce food. Fossil fuels are not only used to drive the tractors and reapers, but also to produce the fertilizers and pesticides, and the power to run irrigation works. As energy sources decline and costs continue to increase, human labor will become a viable substitute for these other types of energy. New types of pest control, which will require skilled labor, will increasingly replace our dependence on chemicals; we will learn to use less fertilizer and irrigation water and to use urban wastes in maintaining our soil fertility more effectively. . . .

In conclusion, it is becoming clear that our dependence on modern agricultural technology has led to false economies which will become an increasingly heavy burden in the future. This is true not only in the United States, but also in many developing nations which have recently adopted the similar technology of the "Green Revolution." While we cannot dispense with the agronomist and other agricultural scientists, we must begin to understand that the solutions to the problems posed by resource scarcity and environmental decay do not lie solely in the laboratory, but rather in fundamental reforms of our social, political, and economic institutions. Such reforms threaten established groups and therefore will not come about easily. However, we have little choice: we cannot continue in the future as we have done in the past, and we have run out of technological solutions.

For follow-up reading on the Green Revolution, see an essay by George Borgstrom in *Focal Points* (MacMillan, 1973). And for a survey of towns and cities in America which now process wastes for agricultural use, see an article by Jed Stansbury in *Living Wilderness*, Spring, 1974. "Most of these treatment systems," Stansbury says, "are in the arid Southwest where the incentive to recycle water has always been strong, and most of them were launched with no

help from the water pollution bureaucracy in Washington."

In George Borgstrom's critical analysis of the Green Revolution (available in a reprint from CIDOC, Apdo. 479, Cuernavaca, Mexico), there is this prediction:

In both the Western world and the countries involved it has frequently been pointed out that if the Green Revolution finally achieves what has been promised it will become a red, i.e. bloody, revolution. The tensions between the hundreds of millions of peasants in the world and the few blessed growers who ride the crest of the wave of the Green Revolution will be ominously heightened. The former are being deprived of their small but nonetheless important markets since they can no longer compete. Naturally the immediate result of such harvest increases is declining market prices and lower income for most small growers. The poor get poorer, the rich become richer. . . . Simultaneously a select few are enjoying not only abundant harvests but also a whole range of subsidies, contributions, and cost-free assistance, partly paid for by public tax funds, to which the poor have been forced to pay from their tiny incomes. This kind of support might be necessary for progress, but if misery and even hunger results for those left in the void, the progress is illusionary.

Who besides a few college professors and some hardpressed communitarians are working on this problem? Well, E. F. Schumacher's Intermediate Technology Development Group (9 King Street, Covent Garden, London WC2) has an active information and aid program, and there are various land reform groups in America. Latest to surface on the West Coast is the Northern California Land Trust (P.O. Box 156, Berkeley, Calif. 94701) which has just issued a booklet on its activities. It provides a brief statistical picture of the decline in the California farm population and the increase in the cost of land, and gives background on regional land trusts in India, Israel, and the United States. The Northern California Land Trust was established to provide land for people who want to farm and who need some help. The objective: To locate approximately 600 families on subsistence farms by 1980.