VOLUME XXVI, NO. 20
MAY 16, 1973

THE TERMS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

THERE is a kind of reading or literature which helps a person to stand apart from himself, to get out of the cavern of his everyday thoughts and to stretch his mind toward that which some hidden part of him has been yearning to reach. This reading generates philosophical self-confidence—the sense of being *able* to think widely and deeply without gross self-deception. There comes an end, of course, to this sort of inspiration; eventually circumstances close in, making books seem empty, but this may sometimes be because the reader has not, while reading or studying, begun to develop the capacity for independent flights of the imagination, and has fallen into the mistake of supposing that truth is really hidden in books. Or he may have been content merely to pasture his mind in fields of great ideas, neglecting the law that the end of thought is an act. Unused ideas grow sterile and tautologous after a while.

Then there is the trap of fashions in "serious" reading, which make the reader suppose that because he is able to take part in the current small-talk, he participates in the vanguard of human development. This is not to suggest that fashions in reading have no significance, Actually, whatever is able to capture the public imagination is likely to speak, however obscurely, to some deep human need, but the new ideas, simply by becoming fashionable, are soon rendered almost useless by the extravagance of partisans and the simplifications of self-seeking promoters. Then, if the ideas still have attractive power, they are packaged by commercial interests and made into courses by the numerous psychology-and-growth-and-therapy centers which have sprung up around the country—not to mention the more "liberated" colleges and universities. Even so, despite all these diluting and distorting influences, something worthwhile may filter through, especially when some responsible writer or teacher makes a point of going back to the *sources* of the new ideas—or to ideas which, although suddenly of interest, are not new.

Good ideas did not always have to run the gauntlet of this sort of exploitation in order to spread around; in other centuries they gained currency much more slowly, but perhaps remained more faithful to their originals, and had possibly greater final effect. The comparison can hardly be completed because of the irrelevant and distracting "noise" and visual pollution of our vast systems of communication, which are the price we pay for having so many easily accessible books and other things to read. This is now a condition of life and we have to make the best of it. *How* to make the best of it is the problem.

Because of our sense of not knowing what to do, we read books. The good books are written by persons who feel that they have found out a little something in answer to the question and think it would be useful to write it down. Telling whether they really know something or not becomes the problem for the reader. Some books seem to set the mind and the heart of the reader ringing with their truth. But he still must ask, What *part* of the mind and the heart respond? Some books are responsible for starting readers on the way to great thoughts of their own; others lead to the formation of churches and sects. Do we really *need* churches and sects? The fact that we have them is not an adequate reply. We have and do many unnecessary things. Yet people differ enormously in their needs, so the question is a difficult one.

A few things, however, can be said. For example, the greatest of teachers addressed men, not organizations. The Buddha wandered India, speaking to all the people. Socrates wanted to talk to anyone whom he encountered in the

market place, and would listen and answer his questions. Followers start churches, not founders. But founders have "disciples." And Plato had an "Academy." Well, those who select themselves by their commitment have their strength within themselves; they do not rely on an "institution." They may put together a library, and devise a few practical mechanisms to aid them in their work, such as a place to gather and talk or lecture, but that is no more a church or a sect than is the cooperative unity of a body of men who get together to explore a mountain or the stars. There is no Platonic Church. There is no Emersonian Church. And it is possible to study Buddha's teachings and Krishna's teachings without involvement in the churches or religious organizations established in their names. No "organization" owns any of the great ideas which are the heritage of mankind.

This does not settle the question of whether we need sects or churches, but it may help to clear the air.

The foregoing may be taken as preface to some notes on a book issued in 1970 in Japan—*Zen and American Transcendentalism,* by Shoei Ando (Hokuseido Press, Tokyo). The linking in this book of the insights of the Zen masters with the ideas of the New England philosophers of the last century gives the truths in both sources a universal quality; the reader is made to feel that the same truths might well up in himself, and that there are no patents or copyrights on this kind of knowing. On the other hand, no one is permitted to think that reaching such understanding is in any way "easy," in spite of the apparently "magical" illuminations that seem to take place in the Zen allegories. The book helps the reader to see for himself that the truth is neither Eastern nor Western, but a universal human resource. The foundation for this conviction is laid in many ways. Emerson wrote in "Literary Ethics":

> All men, in the abstract, are just and good; what hinders them, in the particular, is, the momentary predominance of the finite and individual over the general truth. *The condition of our incarnation in a private self* seems to be a perpetual tendency to prefer the private law, to obey the private impulse, to the exclusion of the law of universal being.

Emerson was an emancipated Unitarian, and the Unitarians were reformed Puritans. He left all those old shells of his past behind, and what remained were forms of speech and intent which spoke to the moral and intellectual longings of his countrymen. The Zen philosophers were born to another culture and in another tradition, and for them the awakening to the real self was the supreme goal. Yet behind the forms we are able to see the unity of ideas. In his chapter, "What Is Zen?" Prof. Ando says:

> When Bankei, a great Zen master in the Tokugawa Period, was staying in Edo, he was visited by Zeshin who, having just recently been enlightened in Mt. Yoshino, was eager to see and tell the master his inner metamorphosis to ascertain whether or not his enlightenment was approvable. The visitor explained his experience of *Satori* to his master. Bankei asked him: "What is it after all?" Zeshin, looking dubious, lowered his head three times and said: "Is there anything else to add to it?" The master said: "You don't know how to use it." Zeshin asked: "How should I use it?" Just then a nightingale sang in the garden. Bankei instantly said: "When a nightingale sings, we hear it." The disciple, unconscious of himself for joy, made a bow thrice.
>
> After all, the essential Self must be made to reveal itself like this through every faculty of the conscious self in our day to day life in order to make this life an ideal one filled with truth, goodness, and beauty.

Another sort of awakening is illustrated by another passage:

> Basho was probably the greatest poet in the whole history of the *Haiku* (seventeen-syllable poem) in Japan. His *Haiku* poems are expressive of his inspired experiences of sudden awakenings to the real Self through the medium of the sense of hearing, seeing, smelling, or touching. For instance:
>
> The old pond!
> A frog jumped into it;
> The sound of water.
>
> The world of Basho was one of great serenity. He was more fond of serenity than anything else. He was standing beside the old pond, surrounded by the

atmosphere of serenity. He was one with the surface of the pond. In the essential Self, the outside and the inside, were entirely one. When we are in such a mental state, it seems to us that we are amidst white clouds. There is no distinction between the outside and the inside. There is just a self-oblivious, enchanted state of consciousness. Therefore, there is no clue to inspire the poet to the creation of beauty. In order that we may begin to create beauty, there must be some impact to make us awake to the essential Self and stimulate us to a striking sense of beauty.

Opportunely a frog jumped into the pond; the absolute silence was suddenly broken. Because of the sound of the water when the frog jumped into it, the sense of the silence was the more strikingly emphasized. Basho was naturally and instantaneously guided to the essential Self by the sound of the water through his purified, calm, serene consciousness. His sense of beauty was freshly aroused. Thus this poem was naturally born.

In passing we should say that R. H. Blyth, in *Zen in English Literature,* discusses the rendering and meaning of this poem for eight pages, using a translation of his own as more appropriate. The point of mentioning this is that here, instead of Emerson's moral ardor, we see literary and perhaps theological criticism entering the picture, and a disagreement of experts. There is a bit of warning in this fact. The central emphasis, throughout all books on Zen, is the achievement of Enlightenment. All efforts are bent in this direction. The accounts of the pursuit of this absorbing task are filled with illuminating anecdotes and wise sayings, and the climaxes of achievement are wonderfully casual, and certainly there is point in these devices for the transmission of a tradition. However, this seems a good place to remark the difference between the theme of Enlightenment and the unutterable longing which filled the heart of Siddhartha and started him out on his long search for knowledge: *It was his compassion for the sufferings of others* which generated the resolve for the quest. While sympathy and compassion are frequently spoken of in the literature of Zen, they seem to be by-products of the pursuit of enlightenment, not the primary motive. Zen, moreover, is a discipline of the monasteries and the occupation, primarily, of monks, while the Buddha was beyond all orders and degrees. So, when we find truth in Zen, it is truth through a lens which is different for these reasons, stepped down, so to say, from the sublime Bodhisattvic objective.

Shakespeare wrote for a far wider audience, using imagery to touch the feelings and imagination of his hearers—with less precision, perhaps, although in a cipher containing the same substance of truth. From an obscure play:

"Why should my birth keep down my mounting spirit?
Are not all creatures subject unto time?
There's legions now of beggars on the earth,
That their original did spring from Kings,
And many monarchs now, whose fathers were
The riff-raff of their age. . . ."

And to himself the poet made a more sombre preachment, in what Masefield called "the noblest of his sonnets":

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Fool'd by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why cost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

Only he who, feeding on death, devours it, need have no fear of dying, for he has already died out of mortality and lives by "terms divine."

Mr. Blyth suggests that the lover of Shakespeare, after absorbing the Zen tradition, returns to the playwright with deepened understanding.

William Blake, too, speaks in a way that is recognized at once by the Zen philosophers: "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite." Prof. Ando

has a large collection of stories from the lore of Zen to illustrate such ideas:

> If we want to find the final destination, the immortal, real Self, we must necessarily go out of the conscious self into boundless space through the annihilation of our attachment to the conscious self. In connection with this, we have an interesting story about Tokusan (780-865), a great Chinese Zen master of the T'ang dynasty. Tokusan was a great scholar. Especially, he was versed in the *Diamond Sutra.* He was proud of being able to lecture upon it, although he was not yet really awake to the essential Self. Hearing that Zen was in great vogue in the southern parts of China, he went on a journey there in order to show his scholarship to the masters and scholars he might see there, and, when necessary, refute them.
>
> On the way there, when he was taking a rest at a tea-hut, the aged hostess, catching sight of the case he carried on his back, asked him: "What do you have in that case?"
>
> "I have the *Diamond Sutra* and writings in praise of it in this case."
>
> Then the old woman asked him again: "I know that in the *Diamond Sutra* we can find the following passage:
>
> The mind of the past is unseizable, the mind of the present is unseizable, and the mind of the future is unseizable.
>
> Then what kind of mind do you intend to catch hold of?"
>
> Sad to say, the great scholar of the *Diamond Sutra* could not answer her at all. Being much embarrassed, he asked her humbly: "What is the name of your master who has initiated you in such an abstruse truth of Buddhism?" She told him that her master's name was Ryutan.
>
> Tokusan immediately called on this great Zen master and talked with him about the essence of Zen till late at night. The master said: "I think you had better go to bed in another room." Tokusan, bidding good-night to the master, was about to leave the room, but it was pitch-dark outside. So he told the master that it was too dark for him to go to his bedroom. At that, the master, lighting an oily paper-string, offered it to the scholar. Tokusan, relieved that he would have a light, was about to take it, when the master, all of a sudden, blew it out. In one moment, darkness took the place of light. At that very moment, Tokusan came to himself; he went out of the framework of the conscious self, and became awake to the original Self—the eternal, immortal, universal Self, which is quite different from, and simultaneously one with, the conscious self.

The idea of two selves, the real and the superficial, is found all through Emerson, in Thoreau, and in Emily Dickinson. It is wonderfully expressed in Edward Bellamy's Religion of Solidarity, written when he was twenty-four. Emerson wrote after his return from his first trip to Europe:

> I recognize the distinction of the outer and inner self; the double consciousness that within this erring, passionate, mortal self sits a supreme, calm, immortal mind, whose powers I do not know; but it is stronger than I; it is wiser than I, it never approved me in any wrong; I seek counsel of it in my doubts; I repair to it in my dangers; I pray to it in my undertakings.

And Emily Dickinson:

> If my Bark sink
> 'Tis to another sea—
> Mortality's Ground Floor
> Is Immortality—

Again, Emerson, in "The Over-Soul":

> What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love.

In "Self-Reliance":

> What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? This inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote the primary wisdom an intuition. . . . In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin.

There are sections in Prof. Ando's book on Whitman and Thoreau, with several passages from the latter which appeared in the January issues of MANAS. It is obvious that the Transcendentalists

were drawn to the same inward perceptions as the old Zen masters, although outside the monastic tradition and therefore expressed in another language. Important, here, are not the fine metaphysical distinctions, nor the somewhat too specific accounts of the reaching of *Satori,* but rather the sense of the omnipresence of the enduring within and around the unenduring, and the certainties of the heart which are born in minds gradually freed of the attachments so common in the world.

The finest utterances are often those which have no aim or end but are spontaneous outbursts of discovery, as in the case of Maslow's account of his vision on a university Commencement Day, or Jung's insistence that a thought, to be worth something, must have something of the Infinite in it. The very spirit of Zen was incarnate in Thoreau when he declared: "Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere"; and, again, when he wrote:

> I wish so to live ever as to derive my satisfactions and inspirations from the commonest events, everyday phenomena, so that what my senses hourly perceive, my daily walk, the conversations of my neighbors, may inspire me, and I may dream of no heaven but that which lives about me.

And Whitman, too, when he said (in *Notes and Fragments*): "Behind all the faculties of human beings, as the sight, the other senses and even the emotions and the intellect, stands the real power, the mystical identity, the real I or me or you."

REVIEW
THE COMMON ELEMENT IN CHANGE

SOMEWHERE, Plato says that if you want to study something large and complex, you have to find its joints, or natural division points, so that you can move from one area to another in your investigation and not be overwhelmed by the grand totality. Thinking about the incredible pace of change going on all around us, these days, we picked some joints—or rather, review material which came in suggested them. These joints are represented by people—some of whom are changing in the way they *think* about the world; others are changing rapidly in the way they *plan* for a better world; while still others have changed radically in how they are *acting* in the world. So there are these thinkers, planners, and doers who make the joints in the subject of change. We have only a few "samples" for illustration, but they seem rather good ones.

Wholly Round (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973) is by Rasa Gustaitis, a young journalist who has lived through the kaleidoscopic turns of the movement of rebel youth of the past ten years. She saw the People's Park struggle in Berkeley in 1968 from the inside, and her older readers may for the first time understand the feelings and longings and angers that were involved. There is a great deal of intelligence and insight in this book, even though some of its moods may seem incomprehensible. Slowly, out of the furious activity of the contemporary scene, there dawned on this writer a deep sense of the disorganizing effect of constant activity, and of the rain of impressions that never stops. In conversation a psychiatrist remarked to her about the unnaturalness of places which advertise that they "never close," never take a rest. The author mused:

> He told me some of his patients drive for hours along freeways with no destination in mind, spend whole days wandering through shopping centers and at those starkly fluorescent places. They themselves are afraid to close, he says, afraid to let go lest the lump in their throats escape in a scream. The momentum, they feel, is so great that to stop would mean instant disintegration.
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> But the speed fix will work only so long, then the body rebels. Like all other organisms, we must have cycles and rhythms. Our technology has allowed us to detach ourselves from the natural ones—for a while. But giving them up, we need pesticides. When people cannot live naturally, they resort to other things—fast cars, constant motion, drugs.
>
> So it is that *Librium* has become the top-selling drug on the legal market. Some schools are giving tranquillizing drugs to children considered "hyperactive." More and more, the society is relying on psychoactive drugs—legal and illegal—for stimulation and relief, speeding up and slowing down. The drug problem, then, is inseparable from the sense of time disorder which, like many other social problems that are now so acute, arise out of disorder in natural balances and rhythms.

It might be remembered that Rasa Gustaitis also wrote *Turning On,* a few years ago.

One senses in this book a generation-wide movement to turn from radical politics and activism to personal practice of what the individual can do to get back into harmony with the world and its rhythms. This change in feeling is spelled out in many ways, through accounts of visits with friends who are in communes of various sorts, and by frequent quotation from Gary Snyder.

This is both a bewildering and informing book, but careful reading helps. It is bewildering because of the obvious flux in thinking, and because any great change in human attitudes involves both shock and vacuum, followed by the pain that comes with any new growth, not to speak of the casualties which false starts leave along the way.

The "thinkers" have their difficulties, too. Today the young want to "find out" in some larger sense, but if they go to institutions of higher learning looking for help they find themselves routed into box canyons. In a paper offering some suggestions for overcoming these academic

confinements, "Phenomena as Interdisciplinary," Lorin Loverde (International Center for Integrational Analysis) illustrates the problem:

> Let us imagine a scenario, where a student was given a special badge, a "Truth Seeker" security clearance, and the social prestige which would open all doors to his questioning mind. Let us assume that he, himself, is not at all sure what this important new status means—he simply finds that everyone wants to be as helpful as they would be to a Congressional Investigator out to approve a funding program.
>
> Suppose that the student asks the President of the university a question about the most immediate thing which sounds profound enough to ask a university dignitary—what is the nature of man? Since the student has the Truth Seeker badge, he is not rebuffed in the ordinary way, but is immediately given an Anthropology pass. "You must go to the Department which studies man," he may be told, and so off he goes. In the inner sanctum of Anthropology, he is politely asked for a clarification of his question, something which will make it a little easier to relate to other things. "How about man in relation to the universe?" At which point, predictably, he is given an Astronomy pass. There he meets a distinguished professor who explains that the universe is made up of billions of stars, formations, inter-galactic dust particles. . . . "But I also want to know about man here on earth, he's a living, breathing animal too, you know." Instead of quarreling over his discipline, the astronomer smiles and hands over a Biology pass. There in the Biology department, the student tries to explain why he has come, and he is told about the marvelous workings of man's cell structure. A little daunted, the student agrees that man is made up of such biological foundations, but he asks what is the foundation of that organization—and he is given a Chemistry pass. Then in the Chemistry department he begins complaining: "All right, cells are formed out of chemicals, but that's not the kind of 'foundation' I meant, I want to know about man, not chemicals. After all, there are people out there in the world working and starving—they're not just chemicals." And he is given an Economics pass.
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> We can easily imagine this little scenario continuing: when the Truth Seeker complains about the sterility of numbers, he may be sent to English. Complaining about the isolation of English, he may be sent to Foreign Languages; seeking depth, he may be sent to History; seeking accuracy, he may be sent to Mathematics; seeking presuppositions, he may be sent to Philosophy; seeking ultimate materiality, he may be sent to Physics; seeking the consequences of power, he may be sent to Political Science; seeking the mind of the beast, he may be sent to Psychology; and seeking the overall impact, he may be sent to Sociology.
>
> Like the Medieval hero, Everyman, our Truth Seeker may not be disdained, but neither can he find anyone to travel his path with him, for Truth, like Death, is hard to confront.

Mr. Loverde proceeds with an illuminating discussion of how man's awareness of himself is through the lenses of various levels, each of which may have only a relative or transient reality, such as that found in the compulsions of custom and inherited belief, or in the preconceptions inherent in the organized data of a scientific discipline. So a study of man, to have meaning, must investigate also the modes of self-perception, and each of these modes will tend to be transformed by comparative analysis. The final mode is that of basic presuppositions, which play the part of first principles. To bring these to consciousness is, after all, the Socratic enterprise.

But the quest, as a whole, is truly liberating in spirit and represents a conscious emancipation from the bonds of past thinking, while retaining the critical value of its rigor. One thought that kept recurring while we read this paper was the answer given so forthrightly to the student's question, first by Pico della Mirandola at the end of the fifteenth century, and again in the twentieth century by Ortega y Gasset in *Man and Crisis.* In his *Oration On the Dignity of Man,* Pico declared man to be the being who generates his own nature—that is, it is his nature to decide for himself what sort of being he is to be. The implications of this capacity account in a basic way for all the rest of man's magnificent traits or capacities, while the world and *its* qualities and condition account for the problems and obstacles which confront human beings, presenting them with endless decisions and the need for self-knowledge and self-development. So, as Ortega said, I am myself and my circumstances. And he spoke of man as being that sort of being, who, in

order to be himself, finds it continually necessary to ask himself what he should do next, what he should *choose,* and to equip himself with the best reasons he can find for these decisions.

The point of bringing this in, here, is that if an individual deliberately adopts this point of view about himself, his life takes on a particular sort of coherence. He has an over-riding purpose which enables him to measure everything which comes to him to do, and to originate as well as to react. He has become a man with a sense of mission, animated by a great and enduring purpose, and every small act in his life is somehow infected with the vision he has of this Odyssey—infected by the wonderful contagion of an initial self-discovery. He sees with another sort of "objectivity"—and the thought that seems important to consider is that this *feeling of purpose* may be the only means of gaining a "true" sense of objectivity toward the entire panorama of experience. For if one takes a stationary position—as a hypothetical, uncommitted observer—this may be the initial and decisive distortion of the reality of his being, a choice which distorts *all* his subsequent observations.

The material we have on "planning" is an article in the March *American Institute of Planners Journal*—"Foundation for a Radical Concept of Planning," by Stephen Grabow and Allan Heskin. This is a short article, and entirely abstract, but by being general it is able to go to the heart of the question in comparatively few words. The writers point out that conventional present-day planning is (1) elitist, (2) centralizing, and (3) change-resistant. It is elitist because it calls for the manipulation of "other people" by experts who suppose they know what people should do and how they should arrange their lives. It is centralizing because control exercised over other people's lives requires central direction; and it is change-resistant in that when planners make up their minds on a pattern of living they try to prevent other unpredictable things from happening, since such developments would be out of control and "synonymous with undesirable change." The writers comment: "But history has taught us that significant change is always unique, unpredictable, and unrepeatable; change is an open-ended creative process; in the rational-comprehensive model, it is precisely the creative sources of social change that are not and cannot be taken into account."

Planning, for these writers, means evolutionary experimentation. Its deliberate aspect, they say, should be founded on the ecological ethic. Experimentation involves risk, but with the purpose of learning. The project is to learn how to deal with complexity. Learning means assimilating the meaning of experience as you go along, and applying it at the next step, each stage of progress involving reformulation and reintegration of what we know. The writers conclude:

> What we mean by planning is a *synthesis* of rational action and spontaneity: evolutionary social experimentation within the context of an ecological ethic. In this radical definition of planning, who is the planner? In our view, the planner is active: a radical agent of change. He or she is not, as are so many of today's professionals, a creature of divided loyalty, one who owes as much or more to the profession as to the people. Instead, the job is to facilitate social experimentation *by* the people. The radical planner is a nonprofessional professional: no longer one with a property right entitled "planning," but rather an educator and at the same time a student of the ecological ethic as revealed in the consciousness of the people. Such an individual strives for self-actualization of oneself and of the others with whom he lives. Finally, he or she is not apart from the people: the "planner" is one of us, or all of us.

There seems a strong, common note bespeaking the same sort of change going on in these three sectors of human activity—doing, thinking, and planning.

COMMENTARY
AN ILLUSTRIOUS EXAMPLE

THERE seems a sense in which the man who really wants to reach to wisdom or final knowledge—or, as some might say, to salvation—has to carry the world along with him; that is, he diminishes his goal by being willing to leave the world behind. Personal liberation means acceptance of isolation, in contrast to the man who refused to enter heaven or nirvana because his dog had to stay outside.

Such a man, even if he can't assume the burden of the "sins" of the world, will be ready to take on its "blindness," since in order to be heard by others he must use their language, although by doing this he is likely to make it *shine.* The Buddha, for example, didn't really *need* to spend all those years wandering over the earth, since he had earned the right—or the capacity—to enter the nirvanic paradise many lives before.

There is this difference, then, between the one who refines the imperfect modes of communication of his time—as, say, Emerson did—enriching it with the speech of a high human nobility, and the one who travels on ahead, inevitably losing touch with the great majority who are still locked in position in Plato's cave.

The author of the book considered in this week's lead, *Zen and American Transcendentalism,* in his concluding chapters uses certain confessional passages in Emerson and Thoreau to support his claim that these Transcendentalists were still captives of the illusion of separate individuality—that their hearts were still tinged by "selfishness." In terms of technical Buddhist metaphysics, he may be right. Yet both Emerson and Thoreau made a *heroic* use of their feeling of individuality. They spoke to ordinary people far and wide—and still speak to them. The fruit of their thinking reached around the world—bringing vision and sustaining strength to others working *in* the world for the good of their fellows. Regardless of the technical truth of the matter, this rating of their "spiritual" status seems unnecessary, even tasteless.

We live in a time of pain and cruel accountings, an age so arid in its moral qualities, so desperate in its fears, that even grief fails to bring catharsis. What then of this preoccupation with *Satori,* which, unless it comes unsought, is likely to be some sort of spiritual fraud so long as the world's woe is forgotten in the process? The psychology may be grounded in fact, but its application remains open to grave questioning from even a Buddhist point of view.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
MISCELLANY

GOOD material comes to this Department by what seems a rather wonderful extension of the free association process by which it is edited—that is, readers call attention to the material or mail it in. For example, we have just received from a reader a sheet prepared by the Clearinghouse on Adult Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, telling about a book on Paulo Freire by eleven contributors, which includes quotations and a bibliography. In the book is a paper by James A. Farmer (Graduate School of Education, UCLA), describing a class session at UCLA in which a member said he was a former priest who had worked with Freire in South America. From this experience he told how Freire proceeded:

> Freire would go to a village and enter into conversation with people. He would ask them to help him to observe the village life. He would have them help him take pictures of scenes of village activities which were familiar and common to most of the villagers. The villagers would then come together to see the pictures. Freire would ask them to describe what they saw in detail, writing words under the pictures as they reflected on what they were seeing and feeling.
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> Then Freire would question the villagers about the contradictions in the explanations they were giving about why things were as they were. For example, in one village, the people described the harvest as being very poor. Freire asked them, "Why?" Some of the villagers said: "Because the land is tired." Freire asked them why some of the land seemed very productive and other parts of the land seemed tired. They explained that the rich farmers had fertilizer and they didn't. Freire asked them how that was the case. The questions and answers continued, leading to issues relating to their life situation. The topics discussed ranged from those which were primarily theological, political, or economic in nature to those which were basically philosophical in nature.
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> Frequently, villagers gave fatalistic answers. Freire would always come back to the contradictions which the people themselves had exposed. The people then began, as a result of this process, to think for themselves and to become aware of alternative ways of viewing and coping with what had seemed to be insurmountable problems for themselves and their communities.
>
> In the process, people learned to read, to care, and to have a sense of worth. Freire called what happened *conscientizacao* (conscientization) .

Mr. Farmer identifies this process as Freire's approach to adult education, which means, in practical terms, to assist people to pass from a state of oppression into a state of greater personal freedom, by growth in awareness and in their own capacities. Readers who recall Sugata Dasgupta's book, *Social Work and Social Change,* will recognize the similarity of conditions and attitudes between South American and Indian villages, and the close relation between the approach of the Gandhian Constructive Workers and that of Paulo Freire. Meanwhile, we'll have more on this Freire book when a review copy arrives. The title is *Paulo Freire: A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator,* $4.00, from the Library of Continuing Education, 107 Roney Lane, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210.

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A useful extract from *Play, Drama, and Thought* by Richard Courtney, 1968, comes in the form of a clipping from the *Christian Science Monitor,* sent by a reader:

> Athenian education in the fifth century B.C. was based on literature, music and physical play. Literature included reading, writing, arithmetic and recitations from the poets—particularly Homer. . . .
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> Dancing was stressed as it was central to every religious and dramatic ceremony; the form it took was intensely dramatic and it involved great skill. Wealthy citizens trained the chorus of the religious festival and the children, often poor, went through a rigorous programme of poetry, religion, singing and dancing—a coordinated programme, in fact, which expressed the individual's harmony of thought through rhythmical exercise.
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> Further, the theatre itself was a great educational instrument because it disseminated knowledge and was, for the populace, the only literary pleasure available. The dramatists themselves were considered by the teachers to be of equal importance with Homer, and were recited in much the same way.

> Drama, in all its aspects, was a major unifying and educational force within the Attic world. ...
>
> Drama is the basis of all creative education. From it all arts flow. . . . The child "pretends" and in his "make-believe" he needs the art of music, dance, art and crafts. Dramatic expression provides the other arts with meaning and purpose for the child. Spontaneous creativity is based upon sense experience and, whether we approach it psychodramatically or synthetically, spontaneity is based on the dramatic imagination.

For more on the virtues of Greek education, Herbert Read's *The Redemption of the Robot* would be good reading, and for critical consideration of the use of Homer and the mimetic poets, Eric Havelock's *Preface to Plato* is a "must." The point, here, is that an education of this sort gave play to the imagination, while the discipline necessary to the practice of the arts provided the sense of limit which is essential to all well-constructed form, whether in literature, philosophy, or life.

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Despite the fact that the argument about the public schools—not so much how good or bad they are, but how much can be done with and through them—is not really about education at all, but about social justice, it seems a good idea to report on how it is going, now and then. An article by Godfrey Hodgson in the March *Atlantic* makes this comparatively easy. The main point of Mr. Hodgson's review of this argument is that for many years social scientists have believed that society, people, children, could on the whole be improved by substantial investment in the schools. Then, along came the Coleman report with findings that seemed to upset this conviction. In the summarizing sentence of Seymour Lipset, Coleman found that "schools make no difference; families make the difference." This was of course a simplification, but with enough accuracy in it to be deeply disturbing to those who had been convinced for years that social inequalities could be rectified by special educational efforts. The more measured judgment now is that schools, if improved, can help, but not as much as we thought. Hodgson writes in summary:

> When other things were equal, the report said, factors such as the amount of money spent per pupil, or the number of books in the library, or physical facilities such as gymnasiums or cafeterias or laboratories, or even differences in the curriculum, seemed to make no appreciable difference to the children's level of achievement. Nothing could have more flatly contradicted the assumption on which the Administration in Washington, and urban school boards across the country, were pouring money into compensatory education programs.
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> As we shall see, the report exploded with immense force underground, sending seismic shocks through the academic and bureaucratic worlds of education. . . .

The balance of Mr. Hodgson's article is concerned with what has happened since. There was the Jensen paper implying that "heredity" is more important than educational effort, which stirred vigorous and indignant response, and Richard Herrnstein's article in the *Atlantic,* which seemed a mild confirmation of Jensen's views in some respects. A critic said: "His [Herrnstein's] essay questioned the traditional liberal idea that stupidity results from the inheritance of poverty, contending instead that poverty results from the inheritance of stupidity." One easily sees how "education," in these terms, becomes a hot socio-political issue. Well, the controversy is far more complicated than we have been able to indicate, here, and Mr. Hodgson's outline is a splendid means of catching up on several years of current reading on the subject. He devotes careful attention to later researchers such as Christopher Jencks, Daniel Moynihan, David Armor, Thomas Pettigrew, and David Cohen, finally reaching the conclusion that the intellectual assumptions supporting the liberal education policies of the past few generations are in bad trouble. But perhaps the most significant point was made by Pettigrew when he said:

> Never once was it said the schools make no difference. The belief that Coleman hit was the belief that you could make a difference with money. . . . Americans are crazy in the head about money; they think you can do anything with money.

It remains to be seen whether anyone will make constructive use of this startling discovery.

FRONTIERS

Exchanges

THE proportion of "good things" that arrive in the mail seems to be increasing. From the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence, founded in Carmel, Calif., in 1965 by Joan Baez and Ira Sandperl, and for the past several years located in Palo Alto, comes the second issue of a new journal, with major emphasis on present conditions in Vietnam. There are still 200,000 political prisoners in South Vietnam. According to an article in the *Journal:*

> Operation Phoenix, devised by the U.S. to neutralize by any means whatsoever opponents or suspected opponents to the existing regime, continues in operation. Ambassador William Colby, then Deputy to the Commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam and head of the CORDS (Civil Operations & Rural Development Support) program, testified in Congress in 1971 that over 20,000 persons had been assassinated under the Phoenix program. These assassinations have now accelerated. . . .
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> Since 1967, funding of South Vietnam's prisons and police systems has come from the CIA, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Defense. Projected AID funds for these prisons for 1973 are two million dollars more than for 1972. Two U.S. "Public Safety" advisors and three advisors from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons are scheduled to work in "corrective centers" in Vietnam during fiscal year 1973. One hundred sixty-eight U.S. Public Safety advisors are scheduled to work with the National Police of South Vietnam. Of the 300,000 Vietnamese "maintaining order" in South Vietnam, only 122,000 are paid for through the South Vietnamese budget. The U.S. has provided 553,000,000 plasters for the additional security police. (This sum is about six times the Vietnamese national budget for education.)

The article notes that the text of the proposed peace agreement includes the statement that "The United States is not committed to any political tendency or any personality in South Vietnam and it does not seek to impose a pro-American regime in Saigon." It should be added that many of the prisoners in the prisons have suffered torture. In one major prison, 79 per cent of the prisoners are Buddhists. A governmental decree of a year ago made it possible for any one who was suspected of being merely neutralist or anti-Thieu could be arrested, condemned as guilty by the arresting official without trial, and imprisoned for a maximum of two years. Informers are encouraged to report offenders, and one accusation is sufficient to bring arrest. Extracts from accounts of the torture practiced on these prisoners, some taken from the *New York Times,* are gruesome and sometimes almost obscene. While the war in Vietnam is supposed to be over, its anguish and suffering are not over at all for a great many people in Southeast Asia. These *other* prisoners are not being released.

Subscription to the Institute's *Journal,* which comes out every two months, is $5.00 a year—Box 1001, Palo Alto, Calif. 94302.

Our first issue of *Mother Earth News* arrived recently, and people who don't know about this big (130-page) magazine devoted to rural community life, organic style, may be missing something very good. It is essentially engaged in reviving the lore of living on the land and is filled with what seem eminently practical "how to" directions about a great many things. The letters are interesting, also the swap column and the people-looking-for-places and places-looking-for-people department, which goes on and on. There is too much diversity in the paper to comment on, and we'll probably return to it soon. Format and editing are professional. Year's subscription (six issues) $6.00; single copies, $1.35. Address: P.O. Box 38, Madison, Ohio 44057. The paper is folksy without being sticky. One of the pleasantest thoughts *Mother Earth News* inspires is the idea of all those people out there on the land, who support this magazine and help it to succeed, for it certainly seems to be a success.

We marked up several recent issues of *Not Man Alone* (issued monthly by Friends of the Earth, 529 Commercial Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94111) for quotation, but have space for only the most important material—an article by F. H. Bormann in the April issue. (Prof. Bormann

teaches at the Yale University School of Forestry and is past president of the Ecological Society of America.) His discussion is mainly on the psychological awakening that is developing with the realization of what we are doing—have done to the natural environment. Everything he says fits in with and supplements the point of Lynn White's now famous paper, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," which appeared in *Science* for March 11, 1967 (reprinted in *Machina Ex Deo,* MIT Press, 1968). Prof. Bormann says:

> All of us feel a rising anxiety because we live close to the brink of obsolescence and because ever-growing technology needs to create disaffection with present conditions to promote ever greater consumption. The dignity of labor has declined because two centuries of technological innovation, in the name of efficiency, have reduced artisans, craftsmen, and clerks to machine minders. This is because labor is considered a dis-utility, while all output is considered a utility and hosts of efficiency experts work at reducing the ratio of labor to output without the slightest regard for social consequences. Further, things that tend to get done in modern industrial society are those particularly conducive to economic growth. This is almost the sole consideration determining the crops we sow, the style of our houses, the shape of our cities and landscapes. The result, among other things, is the dreariest possible uniformity.
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> In sum, the technologic conditions of industrial, business, and agricultural production evolve in response to output efficiency and are not chosen to enhance man's experience of life. . . .
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> Obviously, this cannot go on forever. Sooner or later, limiting factors will halt the growth syndrome. The major question is whether or not control of the growth syndrome will be achieved by rational, carefully planned human action or by sledge-hammer blows of factors quite out of control such as massive famine, epidemic disease, decay of social structure, destruction of some vital aspect of the life support system, or simply by nuclear war. . . .
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> Given the exponential growth rates of technology and population-based problems, I suspect that within a decade, the realization will be clear to all that the main problems of the environment do not arise from temporary and accidental malfunctions of existing economic and social systems. On the contrary, they will probably be seen as warning signs of a profound incompatibility between the deep-rooted beliefs in continuous growth and the dawning recognition that the earth is limited in its resources and vulnerable to thoughtless mishandling.

We live at a time when other, better beliefs are taking root, and other, more harmonious practices are struggling to survive and expand their influence. They all need support, help, and greater numbers.