

A TASK OF RECTIFICATION

EARLY in this century Western scholars—in particular theological scholars—began to realize that the partisanship of Christian apologists had gravely distorted the content of the works of ancient philosophers and the pagan religions, and some of them undertook reparation, endeavoring to do even justice to the thinkers and the religions of antiquity. *Pagan Regeneration* (University of Chicago Press, 1929) by Harold Willoughby is an illustration of this resolve. The author was led to a study of the "mystery religions" and their approach to individual regeneration by his effort to understand the mystical element in the teachings of St. Paul—who, as another writer has pointed out (Ray Knight, in the *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1938), disclaimed all interest in a Christ of flesh and blood. "The Christ of his inspiration is not the Galilean prophet but a spirit akin to the Socratic daimon." Knight exclaims in his conclusion:

It is strange that so little notice has been attracted by the strongly contrasted presentment of Christianity in Gospels and Epistles. The Gospels are wholly occupied with the words, deeds, and sufferings of Jesus, but the Epistles—admittedly the earlier writings—with a metaphysic barren of reference to Jesus except as the divine man crucified, raised from the dead, and ascending into heaven. These features had no novelty in A.D. 30. Egypt, Phrygia, and Greece mourned the death and rejoiced in the resurrection of Osiris, Attis, and Adonis. Phoenician legend had told of the alone-begotten son of El sacrificed to save his people, Plato of the Just Man scourged and crucified, steadfast in innocence to death, Hebrew scripture of the Suffering Servant and the Just Man sent by his enemies to a shameful death. The myth was translated into drama in a ceremony enacted all up and down the Mediterranean world, when a scapegoat laden with the people's sins—the *Agnus dei qui tollit peccata mundi*—was driven forth beyond the city walls to suffer death. That and no more than that was the original Christian belief, and Paul's interpretation of the story attracted numbers of the educated classes to the Church. But zealotry was

looking for an all-conquering Messiah who should fulfil the promise to Abraham by putting down the mighty from their seats and placing Israel on the Caesar's throne. These preached the creed of *Weltmacht* personified in Satan, the Different Gospel with its Christ of strife and envy—strife against the Roman, envy of his power. "All these things will I give thee," said the Tempter, "all the kingdoms of earth and the power and glory of them, if thou wilt fall down and worship me," a gospel so abhorrent that even an angel from heaven who should preach it was accursed, as Europe is learning to her sore distress.

Here is illustrated the maturity, sophistication, and intensity of scholarship at a time when war clouds were darkening over all Christendom. Willoughby's book, published nine years earlier, might be taken as a representative example of the spirit of impartial scholars. He examines what is known of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Orphic rejection of Dionysian revels, Iranian Mithraism, the Hermetic teachings, and the mysticism of Philo. Willoughby's canon of judgment is well put in the first sentence of his last chapter: "All religious systems deserve to be evaluated by the pragmatic test of their functional significance for human society."

During the fifty years since the general adoption of this attitude we have had a veritable flood of translations and commentaries and interpretations of ancient religious literature and philosophy. There seems a sense in which a *world* religious philosophy is now in gradual formation, with contributions drawn from all the major sources of the past. Especially noticeable in America in recent years has been the infusion of Hindu and Buddhist doctrines, to which Jacob Needleman gave attention in *The New Religions* (Doubleday, 1970), and on which Huston Smith (who was born in China) had earlier supplied to the general reading public his clarifying volume, *The Religions of Man* (Harper, 1958), Smith's appeal was to what he called the greatest need of

the modern world—the need of *listening*—of listening to and entering into, as far as possible, the convictions of others. He then gave voice to a feeling that has become close to all-pervasive today:

We must listen in order to further the understanding the world so desperately needs, but we must also listen in order to practice the love which our own religion (whichever it be) enjoins, for it is impossible to love one another without listening to him. If then, we are to be true to our own faith we must attend to others when they speak, as deeply and as alertly as we hope that they will attend to us. We must have the graciousness to receive as well as to give. For there is no greater way to depersonalize another than to speak to him without also listening.

In addition to adopting something of this attitude, scholars have gone a step farther, endeavoring to correct the commonly unconscious biases of contemporary assumptions and language. In his paper, "Prologue to a History of Philosophy" (*Concord and Liberty*), Ortega laid down the rules for fruitful investigation of past teachings and beliefs:

Life is concrete, and so are circumstances. Only after having reconstructed the concrete situation and the function of the idea in it can we hope for a true understanding of the idea. But when we take the idea in its abstract sense, which in principle it holds out to us, the idea will be a dead Idea, a mummy, and its content that vague suggestion of human form peculiar to a mummy. . . .

To sum up: History must abolish the dehumanized form in which it has offered us the philosophical doctrines. It must incorporate them again in the dynamic interplay of a man's life and let us witness their teleological functioning in it. What if all the inert and mummified ideas which the customary history of philosophy has presented to us arose and functioned again, resuming the part they played in the existence of those who wrestled with them? Would not all those patterns of thought light up with a universal *evidence* to gratify us, their historians who revived them, as they gratified the original thinkers and the students around them?

A sustained example of this approach is found in a book by Herbert Fingarette (author of *The Self in Transformation*) on the thought of

Confucius. This study, *Confucius—the Secular as Sacred* (Harper & Row, 1972), while simple enough on the surface, goes behind the conventional readings of leading Confucian ideas in order to grasp what these conceptions meant to the man who recorded them. Prof. Fingarette says in his preface:

When I began to read Confucius, I found him to be a prosaic and parochial moralizer; his collected sayings, the *Analecets*, seemed to me an archaic irrelevance. Later, and with increasing force, I found him a thinker of profound insight and with an imaginative vision of man equal in grandeur to any I know. Increasingly, I have become convinced that Confucius can be a teacher to us today—a major teacher, not one who merely gives us a slightly exotic perspective on the ideas already current. He tells us things not being said elsewhere; things needing to be said.

Looking back on what he had read, Prof. Fingarette remarks that the early translators of Confucius, both Catholic scholars and missionary Protestants, had admired Confucius much as they had admired Socrates—"one who, though pagan, was near saintliness in his dedication. . . but who, alas, aspired to what only Christian Revelation can bring to fruition." Their translations naturally favored meanings which approximated Christian ethics and theology, so that interpretations of Confucius were often "unself-consciously bound by thinking in Christian terms, in European terms." Although more lately the specifically Christian elements are omitted in translations, "the European background assumptions remain."

In short, what Prof. Fingarette has tried to do is give us *Confucius* on Confucius, not a Western commentary, not a partial conversion of Confucius to some approved contemporary mode of philosophizing. (Another book of this character is Robert E. Cushman's *Therapeia*, Chapel Hill, 1958, a study of Plato's philosophy, in which the author finds in Plato himself sufficient light to explain obscure passages. It is Plato on Plato. There should be more of such books.)

In *Confucius—the Secular as Sacred*, the author focuses on the first fifteen books of the twenty in the *Analects*. What are the *Analects*? The *Britannica* says:

The *Lun-Yii*, or *Analects*, "Discourses and Dialogues," is a compilation in which many of his disciples must have taken part, and has great value as a record of his ways and utterances; but its chapters are mostly *disjecta membra*, affording faint traces of any guiding method or mind.

For Fingarette's purposes, this defect—if it is a defect—does not seem to matter. He is after the leading, characteristic, Confucian ideas, and in the *Analects* the supply is ample. The author deals first with the obvious popularity of Confucius as a no-nonsense humanist thinker who "never talked of prodigies, feats of strength, disorders, or spirits." He seems to stress a "this-worldly, practical humanism" calling mainly for persistence and effort. What disquieted Confucius was "leaving virtue untended and learning unperfected, hearing about what is right but not managing either to turn toward it or to reform what is evil." But there is another aspect which—for obvious reasons—has been neglected, and Prof. Fingarette wants us to read Confucius whole, not in a one-sided, cleaned-up "modern" version. He says:

Yet, in spite of this dedicated and apparently secular prosaic moralism, we also find occasional comments in the *Analects* which seem to reveal a belief in magical powers of profound importance. By "magic" I mean the power of a specific person to accomplish his will directly and effortlessly through ritual, gesture and incantation. The user of magic does not work by strategies and devices as a means toward an end; he does not use coercion or physical forces. There are no pragmatically developed and tested strategies or tactics. He simply wills the end in a proper ritual setting and with a proper ritual gesture and word; without further effort on his part, the deed is accomplished.

Fingarette's point is that there is nothing spooky about this, yet the potency is genuine.

Confucius saw, and tried to call to our attention, that the truly distinctively human powers have, characteristically, a magical quality. His task, therefore, required, in effect, that he reveal what is

already so familiar and universal as to be unnoticed. What is necessary in such cases is that one come upon this "obvious" dimension of our existence in a new way, in the right way. Where can one find such a new path to this familiar area, one which provides a new and revealing perspective? Confucius found the path: we go by the way of the notion of *li*.

Encountering this word, *li*, in Mr. Fingarette's text was like meeting an old friend, for a couple of years ago, in the MANAS review of the short version of Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilization in China*, it was said that *li* is the Chinese name for natural law, "which the sage kings and the people had always accepted." Needham tries to explain:

The full force of the meaning behind *li* was profound, and could not be divorced from the customs, usages and ceremonies which epitomized it. The significance of these was deep, lying not merely in the fact that they had arisen because they agreed with the instinctive feeling of rightness experienced by the Chinese, but also in the conviction that they accorded with the "will of Heaven," with the structure of the whole universe. Hence the basic disquiet aroused in the Chinese mind by crimes, or even by disputes, since these were felt to be disturbances in the Order of Nature.

Indeed, a legal code operative from the seventh to the tenth century warned that "he who leaves *li* will fall into *hsing*"—the latter being laws made by man with legally fixed punishments. One who abides by *li* avoids being caught in "the net of criminal law."

In a way, Prof. Fingarette's little book is a treatise on the content of *li*, and *te*, or human excellence, and *jen*, each a word with a world of meaning. He says:

One has to labor long and hard to learn *li*. The word in its root meaning is close to "holy ritual," "sacred ceremony." Characteristic of Confucius's teaching is the use of the language and imagery of *li* as a medium within which to talk about the entire body of the *mores*, or more precisely, of the authentic tradition and reasonable conventions of society. Confucius taught that the ability to act according to *li* and the will to submit to *li* are essential to that perfect and peculiarly human virtue or power which can be man's. Confucius thus does two things here: he calls

attention to the entire body of tradition and convention, and he calls upon us to see all this by means of a metaphor, through the imagery of sacred ceremony, holy rite.

But what is "magical" in all this? It is the miracle of a non-miraculous collaboration among intelligences who are in harmony with both nature and themselves. There is a synergistic "flow" of what needs to happen, it simply comes about—it *has* to happen because it is called for and right. Prof. Fingarette gives illustrations which we won't spoil with abbreviated quotation. Then he says:

For Confucius moral education consists in learning the codes of *li*, in studying literature, music and the civilizing arts in general. One's own effort provides the "push," but it is the intrinsic nobility of the goal that provides the "pull." It is by *being* a spiritually noble man that the teacher—or Prince—draws others into the direction of the Way. It is the Way that has power, and this power is effortless, invisible, magic. It is characteristic of the *Analects* that in every case, except for one clearly late "Legalist" insertion, the use of sanctions and punishment is explicitly contrasted as the undesirable alternative to the use of virtue (*te*), of humaneness (*jen*), of ceremonial propriety (*li*) and of such related strategies as "yielding" (*jang*).

Confucius seems to approach the task of human development in the mood of a craftsman rather than as a moralist: "The proper response to a failure to conform to the moral order (*li*) is not self-condemnation for a free and responsible, though evil, choice, but self-reeducation to overcome a mere defect, a lack of power, in short a lack in one's 'formation'." The human being, one might say, has been allotted some crude, raw material to refine and perfect, and his life is the theater of action for doing it. The difficulty we have in understanding Confucius—or the reason for too simplistic a reading of him—seems to lie in the fact that the fundamental conceptions of his thought—*li*, *te*, *jen*, and *Tao*—are each comprehensive complexes of felt meaning which the Chinese people were saturated with, so that they knew those meanings in a way that we cannot duplicate except by an extraordinary exercise of the imagination. *Li* seems to contain much of the

meaning that *dharma* has for the Hindus, and *jen* and *te* perhaps suggest the content of the Greek *arete*—a word with which we have similar difficulties. It means the appropriate *excellence*.

In other words, the project of understanding Confucius involves an attempt to create for ourselves an inner environment of feeling and idea revealing that nature, the universe, has *meaning*—a macrocosmic meaning which we need to match in some microcosmic way. Then everything will work for good. The project is to recreate through deliberate thinking a past sense of meaning—a psycho-moral cosmology that was intuitively accepted by all, and on which high tradition was based—and to realize that the modern view of "tradition" as something outworn, filled with superstition and meaningless forms, is only a tough-minded reaction to the dying shell and corruptions of a once-living tradition.

It is Prof. Fingarette's purpose to help us to accomplish this in relation to the teachings of Confucius.

Thus, in Confucius's thought, the formal mode (narrative of a meaning-generating "past") fused with the content of his teaching (the crucial role of tradition); he could talk in a way that was perfectly suited to arouse that deep reverence and loyalty to tradition that was the content of his ideal.

To see Confucius's teaching in this light is to rescue it from the status of a historical curiosity for Western man and to keep it as a teaching with relevance to all men. We began by considering the problem of culture conflict for one who teaches a "return" to the Ancient Way. But now we see that the teaching need not require having a tradition that is both authentically historical, internally coherent and totally adequate. Instead, the burden of the teaching can be what in effect it was as Confucius taught it: to seek inspiration in one's own tradition in such a way as to reveal a humanizing and harmonizing interpretation for the conflictful present. "He who by reanimating the Old can gain knowledge of the New is indeed fit to be called a teacher."

The aim of "reanimating the Old" may seem to be a euphemism for irresponsible or self-serving tinkering with actual traditions, a species of hypocrisy and rationalization. Confucius certainly denied this.

He claimed: "I have been faithful to and loved the Ancients." That is, the interpretation of tradition had to be rooted in genuine love and respect for one's past. Confucius, Jesus, Gautama Buddha are examples of men who genuinely and profoundly and self-consciously reanimated their traditions, but the many Confucians, Christians, and Buddhists who merely pick and choose among the bits of tradition for whatever saying or practice suits their present purposes represent the natural (but not inevitable) misuse of this approach. And those who hold rigidly and uncritically to traditional forms and ceremonies, no matter how inadequate these may be to the present, are likewise to be contrasted with these three profound reanimators of their traditions.

The constant reanimation of the Old as a way of knowing what is new is not a parochial ideal. It has relevance for all men always. . . .

A disciple once asked Confucius what was the most important thing a ruler might do. He answered, "The rectification of names." His point was doubtless the same as Wendell Berry's in his recent article (Winter 1980-81 *Hudson Review*), "Standing by Words." We need to know the meanings of our words and use them with full responsibility. And this, in a sense, is what Prof. Fingarette is doing in his book on Confucius—taking his terms and turning them in the kaleidoscope of thought until all their implications and nuances are made to appear. This is what Plato did with "Justice" and what Ortega did with "History," and what we need to do with all the charged and operative words of our language, until our speech and writing becomes as responsible as that of Confucius and Plato, Buddha and Christ.

REVIEW

ATLANTIS—MORE THAN A "MYTH"

TEN years ago, in *At the Edge of History*. William Irwin Thompson dared to predict that the time was not far off when anthropologists and other scientists concerned with the cultural and the geological past would be obliged to endure the shock of admitting that a great land mass, popularly known as "Atlantis," once existed where now the sea divides Europe and Africa from North and South America. He referred to the frequent discoveries, reported in the press, of architectural and other evidences of a now submerged Atlantic civilization, pointing out that no "reputable" scientist has felt able to allow that such finds may indeed be traces of a former continent, mainly because of the extravagant claims of the Atlantis enthusiasts. Yet, he went on to say, when myth—as in Plato's story of Atlantis (in the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*)—collaborates with suggestive geological and cultural evidence (which keeps cropping up), the likelihood of an ancient Atlantic continent becomes difficult to resist.

Over hundreds of years, various islands in the Atlantic have been held to be former mountain peaks or remnants of Atlantis, and for evidence that eminent thinkers have been attracted by the idea, there is this closing passage in the eleventh edition of the *Britannica*:

After the Renaissance, with its renewal of interest in Platonic studies, numerous attempts were made to rationalize the myth of Atlantis. The islands were variously identified with America, Scandinavia, the Canaries and even Palestine; ethnologists saw in its inhabitants the ancestors of the Guanchos, the Basques or the ancient Italians, and even in the 17th and 18th centuries the credibility of the whole legend was seriously debated, and sometimes admitted, even by Montaigne, Buffon and Voltaire.

Thompson's discussion of the question makes a good introduction to the book we now have for review, since he is a serious cultural historian, yet wholly free from academic prejudice, and one who

recognizes the vital role of myth in the themes of history and the way in which old legends and stories, long regarded as pure invention or fantasy, may be shown to have a substratum of truth. The book is Ignatius Donnelly's *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*, an extraordinary compendium of nearly five hundred pages of evidence of a long submerged Atlantic continent. The author, who was born in 1831, served eight years in Congress as a representative of Minnesota, and apparently spent much of his time in the Congressional Library gathering the data for this book, which appeared in 1882, becoming a "best-seller" and going through edition after edition. During the early years of this century his work was ignored, when not mocked, by scholars, although it enjoyed a vigorous half-life in the twilight world of the second-hand book stores. Then revival of popular interest led to publication of a dozen or more "Atlantis" books, catering to the tastes of persons unimpressed by scientific denials, but hardly any of them, however, approach in thoroughness and scholarly care the excellence of Donnelly's work.

It is a sign of the times, then, that this year Harper & Row has brought out another edition of *Atlantis*, which sells in paperback for \$6.95. A good writer, a tireless researcher, and a historian with a special talent for putting two and two together, Donnelly makes provocative reading. Actually, to "research" the matter of Atlantis by reading him is to risk becoming a convert to his claims, or at least to acquire a mind wide open on the subject. Another result might be puzzlement at the systematic neglect of the evidence here presented, and so long disdained by all but a few in the scientific world, although Thompson's explanation seems reasonable enough when you consider the penalties of departing from scientific orthodoxy.

Donnelly's most impressive argument hits the reader even before page 1, in his frontispiece, a profile of the bottom of the Atlantic, as revealed by the soundings of the British ship *Challenger*

and the U.S. *Dolphin*, which collaborated in laying the Atlantic cable. The Azores are shown to be mountain peaks of a vast body of undersea land, a thousand nautical miles wide at its base, nearly three thousand fathoms beneath the surface of the sea. Another diagram based on deep-sea soundings shows the conformation of three prominent undersea land masses, the northern ridge running parallel to Central America, the southern halfway between South America and Africa, the two being connected by a large ridge at right angles to both. The geology, in other words, is there, if you choose to recognize it, undismayed by the plate theory of present-day geological accounts of the "fit" of the continents. Then, chapter by chapter, Donnelly weaves together the implications of "deluge" legends and traditions, offers botanical and zoological evidence of Atlantis as the common source of species on both sides of the ocean, and piles up the innumerable correspondences in folk tradition, language, religious and mythic doctrines, all relating to a great continent and civilization, now submerged, but which had once sent out colonies in every direction.

Donnelly begins by reprinting the entire Atlantis "fable" from Plato's *Critias*, and later shows that virtually all the mythologies of the Old World are capable of interpretation as stories of Atlantis, even to recognizing the Greek pantheon and the gods of other cultures as Atlantean kings. Much material is drawn from ethnologists who studied the pre-Columbian civilizations of America, and reports by investigators of North American Indian lore are equally rich in suggestions of Atlantis. Drawing on the findings of George Catlin, who studied the American tribes early in the nineteenth century, Donnelly writes:

Among the Mandan Indians we not only find flood legends, but, more remarkable still, we find an *image of the ark* preserved from generation to generation, and a religious ceremony performed which refers plainly to the destruction of Atlantis, and to the arrival of one who escaped from the Flood, bringing the dreadful tidings of the disaster. It must be remembered, as we will show hereafter, that many

of these Mandan Indians were white men, with hazel, gray, and blue eyes, and all shades of color of the hair from black to pure white; that they dwelt in houses in fortified towns, and manufactured earthenware pots in which they could boil water—an art unknown to the ordinary Indians, who boiled water by putting heated stones into it.

Another passage shows how Donnelly connects mythic history and tradition with the geologic record:

The Central American books [pre-Columbian] translated by De Bourbourg, state that originally a part of the American continent extended far into the Atlantic Ocean. This tradition is strikingly confirmed by the explorations of the ship *Challenger*, which show that the "Dolphin's Ridge" was connected with the shore of South America north of the mouth of the Amazon. The Central American books tell us that this region of the continent was destroyed by a succession of frightful convulsions, probably at long intervals apart; three of these catastrophes are constantly mentioned, and sometimes there is reference to one or two more.

"The land," in these convulsions, "was shaken by frightful earthquakes and the waves of the sea combined with volcanic fires to overwhelm and engulf it. . . . Each convulsion swept away portions of the land until the whole disappeared, leaving the line of coast as it now is. Most of the inhabitants, overtaken amid their regular employments, were destroyed; but some escaped in ships, and some fled for safety to the summits of high mountains, or to portions of the land which for a time escaped immediate destruction." (Baldwin's "Ancient America," p. 176.)

This accords precisely with the teachings of geology. We know that the land from which America and Europe were formed once covered nearly or quite the whole space now occupied by the Atlantic between the continents; and it is reasonable to believe that it went down piecemeal, and that Atlantis was but the stump of the ancient continent, which at last perished from the same causes and in the same way.

The fact that this tradition existed among the inhabitants of America is proven by the existence of festivals, "especially one in the month of *Izcalli*, which were instituted to commemorate this frightful destruction of land and people and in which, say the sacred books "princes and people humbled themselves before the divinity, and besought him to withhold a return of such terrible calamities."

Can we doubt the reality of events which we thus find confirmed by religious ceremonies at Athens, in Syria, and on the shores of Central America?

Those who have been led to believe that Donnelly was no more than a literary investigator indulging a romantic passion for a lost civilization would do well to look at responsible scientific reports during the days after Donnelly's compilation, but before the time when scientific prejudice against the idea set in. For example, a highly placed French geologist, Pierre Termier, contributed an article titled "Atlantis" to the *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution* for 1915, in which he described, along with a wealth of other geological evidence, cores brought up from the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, at a depth of about two miles (1,700 fathoms), which were found to be fragments of vitreous lava. They were crystalline formations which could only have cooled and hardened in *air* under atmospheric pressure, not under water! These crystals were discovered at a point "about 500 miles north of the Azores." The writer concludes:

We are here on a line which joins Iceland to the Azores in the midst of the Atlantic volcanic zone, in the midst of the zone of mobility, of instability, and present volcanism. It would seem a fair conclusion, then, that the entire north region north of the Azores and perhaps the very region of the Azores, of which they may be only the visible ruins, was very recently submerged, probably during the epoch which the geologists call the present because it is so recent, and which for us, the living beings of today, is the same as yesterday.

In other words, a few thousand years.

Like Donnelly, Termier starts by quoting Plato, remarking that as Leon Bloy said, "poets are sure of only what they dream," but adding that, when the evidence for Atlantis is thoroughly inspected, "it may be, indeed, that the poets were once more right."

In his conclusion, after a summary of diverse scientific findings, Termier declares that it remains for anthropology, ethnography, and oceanography

to make contributions leading to a final answer. Then as a last word he says that "not only will science, most modern science, not make it a crime for all lovers of beautiful legends to believe in Plato's story of Atlantis, but science herself through my voice calls their attention to it."

It seems probable that such voices have not received the attention they deserve.

COMMENTARY KERNEL AND HUSK

THERE are, one might say, two sorts of teachers, those who provide rules or laws—necessary tracts for the time—and those who speak of an order of intelligence or understanding in human beings beyond all rules. (Sometimes, of course, the rule-makers hint at this higher synthesis.) The contrast between these points of view is illustrated by comparing Lao tse with Confucian tradition. There is this passage in Holmes Welch's *Taoism* (Beacon):

In the *Tao Te Ching* we read: "The more knowledge people have, the harder they are to rule. Those who seek to rule by giving knowledge are like bandits preying on the land." What can Lao Tzu mean by this? Does he simply refer to the political fact that a people who are ignorant of how miserably oppressed they are, as well as how to organize against their oppressors, will be unlikely to revolt? He refers partly to this. Lao Tzu liked the violence of revolution no better than any other kind of violence. But revolution is not his chief concern here. Rather, it is the damage to man's character which results from ambition and greed. . . . What he wants to keep the people ignorant of is "rare, valuable goods" that will give them "sleepless nights" and cause them to "feed life too grossly." He wants to keep them ignorant of the thrill of power, which will tempt them to violent struggle for high position. He wants to keep them ignorant of "favour and disgrace," both of which will drive them out of their senses. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, he wants to keep them ignorant of Confucian morality, with its 3,300 rules of etiquette, such as the right occasions for using *wei* and *o* (formal and informal words for "yes"). This makes hypocrites of men who were once simple-hearted, for they outwardly conform while they inwardly rebel. "Banish learning," says Lao Tzu, "and there will be no more grieving. Between *wei* and *o* what after all is the difference?" Conformism can only lead to aggression: ". . . The Rites are the mere husk of loyalty and promise-keeping and are indeed the first step toward brawling."

Confucius told his disciples:

"I understand how birds can fly, how fishes can swim, and how four-footed beasts can run. Those that run can be snared, those that swim may be caught with hook and line, those that fly may be shot

with arrows. But when it comes to the dragon, I am unable to conceive how he can soar into the sky riding upon the winds and the clouds. Today I have seen Lao Tzu and can only liken him to a dragon."

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

ON HOME INSTRUCTION

ANOTHER chapter in the argument about schools—their virtues and defects, and whether parents should try to do without them—appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor* for April 22. The writer, Scott Armstrong, begins by reporting colorful dialogue among the members of a family whose children are taught at home, then declares that "an estimated 10,000 to 30,000 families are believed to be involved in home schooling today—and the number could double in the next two to three years." The bedrock of the movement, Scott Armstrong says, "is the belief that children can learn as much at home as in school—and probably more." He gives figures of interest:

At least 32 states have legal provisions allowing schooling outside the classroom. Yet in most cases the home-instruction program must still be approved by local school authorities. Cooperation has prevailed in many areas, with a few hometaught children even continuing to participate in band, choir and other extracurricular activities at school.

As often as not, however, it has led to legal tussles or threats of legal tussles over an issue as basic as reading, writing, and arithmetic: the parents' right to control their own children vs. the state's right to ensure an adequate education. As yet, the courts have not yet blazed a clear-cut ideological path, experts say.

On the "argument":

Do the children learn enough at home? Many teachers and parents think not. Keeping children at home only insulates them from a valuable slice of everyday life, they argue, not to mention the extracurricular activities—everything from band to basketball—they may miss out on.

Further, critics say, few parents are capable of teaching subjects such as algebra and chemistry. And even if parents do have qualms about the quality of public education, there are plenty of other options—private schools and professional tutoring, for instance—short of mother's becoming a school marm.

"I believe the school is something larger than supplying what the ABCs are," says Roger Lulow, assistant superintendent for public instruction with the Ohio Department of Education. "It is learning to get along with other people. It is socializing. A youngster gets deprived of that when not in the school building."

"Going to school is something special," adds Robert Snider of the National Education Association, the country's largest teachers' union. "You make friends. You make enemies. It's a miniature world. A kid deprived of that experience is going to miss out on a lot."

Well, there are a lot of answers to these comments, but they are all "individual"—that is, they apply only to the cases cited. Take for example Abraham Lincoln, who had only six months of schooling. He didn't suffer much deprivation from this. He taught himself. And so on. Other autodidacts had similar success without needing to go to school. But then, someone will say, those were *extraordinary* people, and he would be right. What worked for Lincoln might not be the right prescription for others. Yet that is in itself significant. The argument for schools is almost entirely an argument for "ordinary" children. But the critics will reply, with considerable justice, that a curriculum statistically based on ordinariness does something bad to them all—not just those who are not ordinary. Some teachers may be watchful and able to prevent some of this effect, but these are no doubt *extraordinary* teachers.

On the other hand—and in any such argument there are dozens of "on the other hands"—there will be those who in later years will become educational reformers, and how could they do this work without having gone to school? You need to know at first hand what you are attempting to change.

But one point in what the school defenders say may be replied to here—the claim of "socialization." This socializing process begins in nursery school, and we remember one little girl whose chief gain from socialization seemed to be the least attractive clichés of the nursery school

set. Her mother decided, wisely we think, to keep her at home. Of course, there may be circumstances where a good nursery school is a blessing indeed, so here, too, generalizations from examples will apply only in spots.

The *Monitor* writer gives other replies to the critics of home-teaching who say that the children "miss out on a lot."

Not so, home-schoolers argue. In fact, some contend that hometaught children mature much faster than other youngsters. But what about that algebra? Parents say they will either learn it themselves or find someone who does know it. Home schooling isn't for everyone, they add, but it should be an option.

"Home schooling gives the impression that the kids are shut up inside the house," says John Holt, a maverick educator, author, and philosopher-king of the home-schooling movement. "But they go more places, see more things, and do more than the kids locked up inside schools."

"Most learning is not the product of teaching," Mr. Holt adds. . . .

This seems a not inappropriate place to work in some quotations from a recent book, *Learning After College*, by Nevitt Sanford, edited by Craig Comstock, and distributed mail-order (\$9.95, paper) by Montaigne, 99 E1 Toyonal, Orinda, Calif. 94563. In the section on "Moral Character," the author says

Everybody is, in some sense, moral. Thomas Jefferson thought that man was "endowed with a sense of right and wrong." This sense, he wrote, "is as much a part of his nature as the senses of hearing, seeing, and feeling. . . . State a moral case to a plowman and a professor. The former will decide it as well as, and often better than, the latter because he has not been led astray by artificial rules." . . .

The question is, What are people moral about? What values are being upheld or espoused? And what is the basis for these values—most essentially, how far are they rooted in human character?...

The professor who teaches his subject with a view to his students attaining mastery of it, and who conveys some sense of what it means to be in love with a subject, is making a contribution to student development. Educators interested in moral development should think about how much character

it takes to meet the demands of (say) mathematics or a foreign language, or better, of how the attainment of the required precision of thought and expression is character development. . . .

Unless the values are upheld there is little point in even discussing conventional education procedures. It is much easier to see the consequences of their neglect than to describe their positive effects—just as the consequences of breathing impure air are more noticeable than the consequences of breathing pure air. We have to think of ways in which devotion to these values may be developed in students, and other people. Obviously it is no good simply preaching at them. Here, probably more than anywhere, teaching had to proceed by example. . . .

Trust-worthiness in administrators and faculty members ought not to be regarded primarily as a character trait which some have and others lack, . . . The inconsistent or impersonal behavior that students observe is due less to personality than to the various and sometimes conflicting requirements of the roles and statuses of faculty and officials. These men, in other words, are caught in a system—one in which virtues like trust-worthiness apparently are becoming irrelevant.

Most parents are happy if their sons and daughters simply receive the vocational training that will enable them to go up in the world, and the great majority of students come sooner or later to see the advantages of adapting themselves to the system.

What, one wonders, would be the point of discussing education before such an audience? Or going for anything besides mere information to such a college?

FRONTIERS

It's the Same the Whole World Over

EACH issue of *Asian Action* (publication of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development—ACFOD) is devoted to some region of the Far East, and No. 26 was prepared for and in Malaysia. The lead story tells about the high accident rate in Malaysia's rapidly growing steel industry. On the opposite page is a review of a book, *Kuala Juru*, issued by the Consumers' Association of Penang (27, Jalan Kelawai, Penang, West Malaysia—postpaid \$3), which describes how 300-odd fishermen and their families created a new socio-economic base for their lives after some disastrous pollution. The villagers united to rebuild their shattered economy by embarking on a cockle project (the cockle is an edible bivalve).

After it was decided that the project would be owned collectively, they set up a system where everyone puts in equal labor and receives equal benefits. Then they established a common fund deriving its capital from the incomes of all the fishermen. This fund has been utilized for many collective enterprises such as the building of the village school the establishment of a sundry and coffee shop, for helping the needy, and even for reinvestment.

Their new approach to organizing the village has brought about quantitative changes. The unemployment problem has been solved, income has been increased, and there is little social or economic disparity between rich and poor.

Then, after a story on how thousands of fishermen in the coastal waters of Penang are being impoverished and terrorized by large illegal trawlers which not only drive them from their traditional fishing zone, but also destroy their nets and gear and damage the breeding grounds of fish by dredging the seabed, there is an article on "Vanishing Seeds." It begins:

Much of what we eat today comes from the indigenous plant varieties in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Today we face the grave danger of losing these genetic resources, mostly through the

uniformity of crops brought about by the Green Revolution and the multinational corporations that have driven their wedge into the seed trade in a big way.

After only two decades, there has been a massive discarding of local plant varieties—in which 10,000 years of genetic diversification is stored—in favor of a few high-response varieties. . . . It is true that the monocultures of grain fed much of the world for a century with success, and have brought about much needed increases in food production, but not without drawbacks. . . . developing countries are growing more and more reliant on the industrial nations for supplies of crops which in the beginning had been their own natural seed resource. . . .

As seeds are becoming a valuable commodity, a number of multinational corporations have got into the act. The biggest seller of seeds in the world today is Shell—the Anglo-Dutch petroleum and chemical giant. And just four companies, Dekalb, Pioneer, Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy control two thirds of the maize and hybrid sorghum seed market in the USA.

Not only are seed stores diminishing; monocrops are vulnerable to changing weather conditions and pests and plant diseases. For example—

In 1963, in Iran, where initial reports of impressive yields in other lands led to the introduction of "miracle" wheat, a new strain of virulent wheat rust began to flourish. The new varieties of wheat which were supposed to be rust-resistant began to fall victims to the rust and many farmers lost their entire crop. There were reports of widespread hunger.

Within a short period of 3 years, the development of brown plant hopper in rice to a "key" pest has wiped out millions of acres of rice crops in South and Southeast Asia. These species tend to be monocultures with inherent fragility which comes from inability to respond to unsuspected environmental challenges like climatic changes and crop diseases.

Malaysia was not spared this experience either. In 1977, a brown-hopper invasion destroyed the padi crop in Tanjung Karang and in 1979, it was the turn of the Muda area in Kedah and Perlis. One farmer died and at least 30 others were hospitalized from pesticide poisoning. Crop losses are severe.

The main form of threat to species is habitat destruction especially in the tropics. Habitat destruction includes agriculture and forestry to settlement schemes, highway construction, pollution, hunting, and a long list of man's activities.

A report by Kai Bird in the *Nation* for March 14, on a rural revolt in India, is of related interest. The Congress Party of Indira Gandhi, he says, is urban in outlook:

There have always been two nations in the Indian subcontinent: urban India, where all political and economic power resides, and rural India, a forgotten land where invisible millions toil to produce enough food to feed themselves and the cities. The vast majority of the 560 million people in rural India make a bare subsistence living in a feudal agricultural system that is marked by absentee landlords, extortionate sharecropping and bonded labor.

Urban India is an immensely wealthy nation. Its cities harbor both the ostentatious rich . . . and a large middle class with an insatiable hunger for all the consumer goods a modern industrial economy can offer. Urban India's industrial plant is quite capable of producing almost anything from household appliances to nuclear energy plants.

But today, Kai Bird says, after the empty claims of Mrs. Gandhi's "socialism" have been exposed, rural India is awakening. There is a strong peasant movement, made up of "marginal farmers, sharecroppers and landless workers who constitute a majority of India's population." These people are demanding an end to the favoritism toward the cities, pointing out:

Agriculture receives only 27 per cent of the national development budget.

Nearly 20 per cent of the central Government's expenditures go to a bloated military establishment.

Only 11 per cent of the country's bank loans are allocated for agricultural purposes.

India's wholesale food distribution system is riddled with arcane restrictions on the transport of food goods which encourage profiteering and rice smuggling. For example, fish priced at two rupees per kilo in the state of Gujarat is sold by traders on the Calcutta market at 25 rupees.

The urban outlook, quite plainly, brings the destruction of rural culture. It is the same everywhere. In *Rain* for last April, Richard Merrill wrote on "The Suicide & Rebirth of Agriculture," detailing agricultural decline in the United States, and finding the remedy in decentralization of the country into big-regions.