

## "GRAVITY BETWEEN MAN AND MAN"

SINCE the days of Galileo the Western world has grown increasingly confident that the method he devised for determining what is real, true, and worth knowing, is precisely what we need—and all that we need—to manage our affairs, improve our minds, and gain control over nature. We must, he said, take the deliveries of the senses and subject them to the measurements and ordering of mathematics. The senses present to us the world and its phenomena, but rational explanation results from mathematical demonstration, by means of which we correct the deceptions of the senses, while experiment gives final confirmation. Mathematical demonstrations, he declared in *Two Great Systems*, provide knowledge the same as that "which the Divine Wisdom knoweth," and while the Deity knows all intuitively, men through mathematics equal the divine in knowing matters of objective certainty.

Admiring certainty, as we all do, Galileo found it desirable or methodologically necessary to limit the real world to what is measurable in it. What you can't measure is merely subjective and unimportant. For Galileo, as E. A. Burtt puts it in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, "The reality of the universe is geometrical; the only ultimate characteristics of nature are those in terms of which certain mathematical knowledge becomes possible." All the rest of the qualities "are secondary, subordinate effects of the primary." By this means God, who could hardly be eliminated in Galileo's time—as to his sorrow he discovered—was nonetheless vastly reduced in importance. Burtt says: "God thus ceases to be the Supreme Good in any important sense; he is a huge mechanical inventor, whose power is appealed to merely to account for the first appearance of the atoms, the tendency becoming more and more irresistible as time goes on to lodge all further causality for

whatever effects in the atoms themselves." And we, now, after this banishment of God from the real world, "explain causality solely in terms of forces revealing themselves in the mathematically expressible motions of matter itself." In a concluding tribute to Galileo—in the sense of recognition of what he did, without approving the result—Burtt wrote:

Teleology as an ultimate principle of explanation he set aside, depriving of their foundation those convictions about man's determinative relation to nature which rested upon it. The natural world was portrayed as a vast, self-contained mathematical machine, consisting of motions of matter in space and time, and man with his purposes, feelings, and secondary qualities was shoved apart as an unimportant spectator and semi-real effect of the great mathematical drama outside. In view of these manifold and radical performances Galileo must be regarded as one of the massive intellects of all time. In every single respect of importance he broke the ground or otherwise prepared the way for the only two minds in this advancing current of thought comparable to his own—Descartes and Sir Isaac Newton.

This is the view that the best minds of the past twenty-five years or so have been rejecting. The world, we are gradually becoming persuaded, is more than a vast, mindless dynamo of forces. While the technological achievements of science and science-guided industry have been impressive, they are also increasingly frightening. And they are—given the short-term motivations so readily endorsed by hedonistic materialism—the only way to describe the "philosophy" of our age—manifestly out of control. In both war and peace the immeasurable threat of the boy-Fausts is plain enough, and some of them are candid in admitting that *they* are unable to control the proliferating capacities for anti-human "progress." A leading physicist recently pleaded in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* for non-scientists (the general

public, that is) "to realize that they bear the responsibility for the problems, and must somehow learn to control science and the technology it spawns if they are to survive."

There are deeper considerations. In his Preface to *New Knowledge in Human Values* (1959), Abraham Maslow wrote:

The state of valuelessness has been variously described as anomie, amorality, anhedonia, rootlessness, emptiness, hopelessness, the lack of something to believe in and to be devoted to. . . . we are reminded here of the "neuroses of success." People can struggle on hopefully, and even happily, for false panaceas so long as these are not attained. Once attained, however, they are soon discovered to be false hopes. Collapse and hopelessness ensue and continue until new hopes become possible.

We too are in an interregnum between old value systems that have not worked and new ones not yet born, an empty period which could be borne more patiently were it not for the great and unique dangers that beset mankind. . . .The cure for this disease is obvious. We need a validated, usable system of values, values that we can believe in and devote ourselves to because they are true rather than because we are *exhorted* to "believe and have faith."

Later he wrote:

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

The cultural criticism of Erich Kahler is pertinent here. Contrasting the high hopes of the men of the eighteenth century—who relied on freedom and science and education—with what actually happened as a result of the Industrial Revolution, he said (in *Out of the Labyrinth*):

A huge production of commodities, devices and conveniences arose, swamping the very presence and consciousness of man and hemming him in with a new and worse tyranny. . . . Entangled in such gigantic mass relationships, the individual sinks to hopeless insignificance, impotence and ignorance. In the tumult of our daily life and business in a metropolis, where press and radio, with their ceaseless waves of urgent news, sweep away even the experiences of yesterday—in this overwhelming turmoil, no sort of connected memories, and hence no coherent knowledge, can be built up. . . . What single scholar is capable of keeping in touch with the sciences immediately bordering on his particular field, let alone of achieving a general picture of our whole present-day knowledge? What single man, even in our governments and parliaments, has a comprehensive view even of the momentary situation, let alone of what is looming up from the depth and breadth of daily events to form the future? . . .

When knowledge of and orientation in the whole are no longer possible, then the individual must, in his consternation, be carried away by the nearest wave of impulse or opportunity. To whomever human history and events are no longer a living whole and a oneness, to him the brotherhood of man cannot have any meaning.

So, for most of a generation, people have been wondering how it might be possible to obtain (in Maslow's words) "a validated, usable system of values, values that we can believe in and devote ourselves to because they are true rather than because we are *exhorted* to 'believe and have faith'." We don't want to—we can't—go back to the Middle Ages. We don't want to—we can't—go on the way we are. A variety of moralists, humanists, religionists, and some thoughtful generalists have rushed into the breach, offering their best thinking. We have had a sudden flood of importations from the East, of both profound as well as picture-book quality. A vast eclecticism of new "faiths" is already available, and to judge from the magazines and books now published, are selling well. The ecologists and environmentalists seem to be working out an acceptable if somewhat earthy pantheism for their tacit inspiration, and there is, as we know, what seems a deliberately brutish expansion of the efforts of the "Fundamentalists" to fill the moral vacuum of the

times. Meanwhile, among the more thoughtful scientists, there are increasingly philosophical pronouncements, some of them recalling ancient convictions and inspirations. Werner Heisenberg, Erwin Schrodinger, and John Wheeler are physicists or cosmologists so expressing themselves.

What then of the inquiries of ordinary folk, persons whose work is not in the grain of a science or other discipline from which clues for investigation might emerge? For such there have been suggestions by the dozen, with great variety of appeal, judging by the letters received by MANAS from time to time. But the modern questioner or wonderer is usually cautious in taking leave of the familiar borders of rationalism. To embrace a metaphysical system seems a leap into the unknown, and even logical consistency joined with ethical substance seems to call for a wariness, an unaggressive skepticism—but still skepticism—while going in this direction.

How shall we know we are on the right track? Both Hinduism and Buddhism offer magnificently coherent metaphysical systems and intensive devotional disciplines, yet are pervaded by a monastic atmosphere that hardly fits well in the world of the twentieth century. And there are those who share Jacob Needleman's view (in *The New Religions*): "It is possible that for certain societies and people, a discipline can be *too* practical in that it provides experiences without the means to understand or value them." Perhaps for a similar reason, the psychologist, Ira Progoff—who says he has encountered "casualties" from various spiritual movements—has concluded that "eastern meditative techniques are impractical for western seekers."

The spirit and temper with which an unclassified individual may set out to find what are for him true values—on which he will resolve to live, and which are compelling enough to fortify this resolve—might be represented by the outlook of A. H. Maslow, who, indeed, wrote a book

about this quest—*The Psychology of Science*. In a middle chapter he said:

The path to the full truth is a rocky one. Full knowing is difficult. This is true not only for the layman but also for the scientist. The main difference between him and the layman is that he has enlisted in this search for truth deliberately, willingly, and consciously and that he then proceeds to learn as much as he can about the techniques and ethics of truth-seeking. Indeed, science in general can be considered a technique with which fallible men try to outwit their own human propensities to fear the truth, to avoid it, and to distort it.

The quest here described is for the humans of our time a deliberate return to square A. Our civilization has been through a terrible revolution against corrupt forms of dogmatic religion, and now it is trying to recover from the equally terrible consequences of a cycle of determined and finally dogmatic materialism. Aware of these changes in our intellectual and moral history, we want to preserve the impartial spirit of science, its insistence on validation, and at the same time to regain what was lost by the exclusion of all that is inward or "spiritual" from our conception of Reality. This was Maslow's position, stated in *Religion, Values, and Peak Experiences* (1964) and repeated in *The Psychology of Science*. In the latter book he spoke of his desire to include subjective experiences in the world of reality investigated by science, noting that one who starts out on this rocky path soon learns respect for the "embryology" of knowledge—one begins with vague feelings and imprecise ideas. In one of his chapters he contrasts "Taoistic Science and Controlling Science," saying: "The one thing I want to describe here is the Taoistic approach to learning about the nature of things, *not*, I must stress again, as an exclusive method or as a panacea or as a rival to active science." An aspect of the Taoistic approach is described in the following:

Creative persons have often reported their reliance on hunches, dream, intuitions, blind guessing, and gambling in the early stages of the creative process. Indeed, we could almost define the

creative scientist in that way—as the creative mathematician is already defined—i.e., as one who reaches the truth without knowing how or why. He just "feels" something to be correct and then proceeds *post hoc* to check his feeling by careful research.

Maslow's whole life is an example of what he regarded as "careful research," and he put as much of it as he could into this book.

Here, we have another plan—to turn to a study of Taoism that we have found to be the most fruitful reading on the subject—which is considerably more than a "subject." The book is *The Parting of the Way: Lao Tzu and the Taoist Movement* (Beacon Press, 1957) by Holmes Welch. We begin with what the author says about the extreme difficulty of translating Chinese characters into English. After reading the pages on this you wonder how any translation of Chinese is possible. Yet, if you read Lao tse's little book, you *know* that something comes through. Of Chinese poetry, the author says:

Some poems are little more than a patchwork of earlier literature, meaningless unless we recognize the sources. But even if we recognize the sources, we still cannot be sure what is meant. Perhaps the allusion is not to the content of its source, but to an event in the life of the man who wrote it, or to the place in which it was written; or perhaps, as sometimes happens, an attractive phrase has simply been appropriated without regard to its setting. By now it should be easy to see how, with most of the Chinese poetry and much of Chinese prose, we have to decide for ourselves what is meant, within more or less broad limits set by the text. To read is an act of creation.

This is the heart of the matter in the Taoist approach. The reader is involved in a continuous act of creation. In his Foreword the author explains his intentions—to present the philosophy of Lao tse in contemporary terms, showing how it may be applicable today. He points out that neither the many translators nor their readers can be sure of what the old philosopher was talking about. Mr. Welch explains that he has not added another translation of the *Tao Te Ching* to the

thirty-six already in English because it seemed unnecessary, and remarks:

The fact is that no translation can be satisfactory in itself because no translation can be as ambiguous as the Chinese original. However, because I have taken an analytical approach, I owe an apology to Lao Tzu. He believed that many of his most important ideas could not be put into words. That is why he so often sounds ambiguous. I shall attempt to express them unequivocally and directly, which is at best presumptuous. Lao Tzu's teaching methods were intuitive. He put a low price on system and formal logic. I shall attempt to give his philosophy a logical and systematic form, demonstrating that I have not learned one of the lessons Lao Tzu teaches, that "the good man does not prove by argument."

Lao Tzu wrote the earliest anarchist book in East or West. He has something to say to all who are troubled today by the growth of the State. His book is also the earliest we have that explicitly recommends the policy of returning good for evil. Since it does so on logical rather than religious grounds, it has something to say to all who would like to see that policy more widely accepted. Finally, here is the book, among all the world's scriptures, which addresses itself most specifically and radically to the problem of how to prevent war. Few people are likely to accept its proposals, but many may want to know what they are.

For the sake of ourselves and other Americans more or less at sea when it comes to pronouncing Chinese, we repeat the following note:

*Tao* (pronounced *dow* as in dowel) means "way"; *te* (pronounced *dir* as in dirty) means "virtue" in the sense of "power"; *ching* (pronounced *jing* as in "jingo") means "classic." *Tao Te Ching* means, therefore, "The Classic of the Way and the Power." As to the pronunciation of Lao Tzu, the *lou* in louse is close to "Lao." To approximate "Tzu," say *adz* without the "a," and prolong the resulting buzzing sound enough to make it a separate syllable.

Some readers, Mr. Welch says, wonder about the value of studying a book the author of which is barely known to have lived, whose date is argued about, and the translation of which is uncertain. He quotes a Sinologist who observed that many of us "prefer to work with things that are more tangible." Yet, from the viewpoint of

the present inquiry, we are not pursuing the tangible, but what is regarded by both science and common sense as the *intangible*. Lao tse may be just the one to help in this. And studying him may be an ideal way to *start out* in grappling with the intangible. What certainties or semi-certainties we arrive at will have been self-generated, and if some measure of truth should emerge, it will have to be self-validated.

Lao tse lived in the troubled times of the Chou Dynasty—born, according to legend, 604 B.C. There were ruinous wars among contending states, and it appeared that the known world "must finish as a wasteland." This, Mr. Welch suggests, was not the beginning for Lao tse's philosophy, but "is a good point of departure for understanding it." What might be done?

In his opinion the best method of coping with pillage, tyranny, and slaughter was to do nothing about them. Now, as in his own days, those who hear this doctrine for the first time are surprised, even exasperated. It sounds harebrained; worse than-that, dangerous. What would happen to the world if none of us did anything about evil?

Lao tzu means that we should "do nothing" in a rather special sense. The inaction he recommends is abstruse and difficult to practice. . . . Let us begin by considering four statements from the *Tao Te Ching*: *Such things [weapons of war] are wont to rebound. . . . The more laws you make, the more thieves there will be. . . . The Sage does not boast, therefore is given credit. . . . He who acts harms, he who grabs lets slip.*

What is the principle that underlies these four statements? It is a simple one: In human relations force defeats itself. . . . But how can inaction succeed?

It succeeds by being rather than doing, by attitude rather than act, by attraction rather than compulsion. . . . *the Taoist causes others to want what he wants.* Humility and compassion works like gravity between man and man. They bring into play the power of example, so that the Taoist "becomes the model for the world." Lao Tzu recognized that we intuitively sense one another's feelings, and that my attitude, rather than my acts, is the determining factor in your attitude and your acts. . . . our attention is being called not merely to the *fact* that the Sage relies

on actionless activity, but to the *basis* on which he is capable of doing so—the point of departure for his effective compassion and humility. Good and evil being subjective, he can consider the next step of "believing the truthful man and also believing the liar." . . . For "it is by not believing people that you turn them into liars." [The Sage] considers it as impossible for anyone to tell him the truth as it is for them to tell him a lie. . . . Ask two forty-year-old women their age. The first may answer: "I am forty." She answers this because, in fact, she is forty. The other may answer: "I am thirty-five." The reason she answers this is because she is afraid to lose her looks. From her lips "I am thirty-five" means "I fear old age." The listener who understands the Tao of human nature catches this meaning. Her use of symbols was oblique, but to him she has told the truth. . . .

Because [the Sage] knows that everyone is telling him the truth—if he can only understand it—he never becomes angry at their lies and he never finds it necessary to correct them. He does not commit aggression because of a difference of opinion—that first great cause of human misery.

Holmes Welch's book is filled with similar examples of Taoist insight and sagacity. There is also a rudimentary metaphysic, with ambiguity to match our uncertainty. It might be an ideal book with which to begin the quest.

## *REVIEW*

### BOOKS BY TEACHERS

WE have for review two books with similar titles but with contents almost opposite in mood. One is *A Way of Being* by Carl Rogers, perhaps the best known of the humanistic psychologists of our time, a man of extraordinary influence who has affected many thousands of other human beings for good. The other book is *On Being a Teacher* by Jonathan Kozol, who has been widely influential in another way. Kozol was catapulted to fame years ago by his description of the Boston public schools in *Death at an Early Age*. As a teacher in what can only be called a ghetto school, he bucked the system in behalf of the children and lost his job. He has been bucking the system ever since. The Rogers book is published by Houghton Mifflin at \$12.95; Kozol's by Continuum at the same price; both are worth reading.

What Carl Rogers has to say in this book seems mostly autobiographical. One might suggest that very nearly everything Rogers has written has been autobiographical or has this quality, giving the text an intimate touch with the reader's mind. The thing we remember best in his past work is some things he said during a discussion at Harvard on "Classroom Approaches in Influencing Human Behavior," published in 1958 in a quarterly issued by the Graduate School of Oregon State College. His title was "Personal Thoughts on Teaching and Learning," and over and over again he said things like this:

I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning. Such self-discovered learning, truth that has been personally appropriated and assimilated in experience, cannot be directly communicated to another. . . .

When I try to teach, as I do sometimes, I am appalled by the results, which seem little more than inconsequential, because sometimes the teaching seems to succeed. When this happens I find that the results are damaging. It seems to cause the individual to distrust his own experience, and to stifle significant learning.

A little later he said:

Such experience would imply that we would do away with teaching. People would get together if they wished to learn.

We would do away with examinations. They measure only the inconsequential type of learning. The implication would be that we do away with grades and credits for the same reason. We would do away with degrees as a measure of competence for the same reason. . . . It would imply doing away with the exposition of conclusions, for we would realize that no one learns significantly from conclusions.

These are some of the essentials of Dr. Rogers' outlook. They seem almost pure Taoism, and Socratic, too. A man with these views is plainly a utopian. A good utopian is one who finds ways of being true to his principles in a society like ours. Dr. Rogers, as a psychotherapist, and a teacher of psychotherapists, seems to have managed to do this, which accounts for the wide respect in which he is held.

How can utopians live and work in our "real" world? By, he proposes in *A Way of Being*, allowing that "multiple realities" are possible:

Suppose that instead of shutting out the realities of others as absurd or dangerous or heretical or stupid, I was willing to explore and learn about those realities? Suppose you were willing to do the same. What would be the social result? I think that our society would be based not on a blind commitment to a cause or creed or view of reality, but on a common commitment to each other as rightfully separate human beings, with separate realities. The natural human tendency to care for another would no longer be "I care for you because you are the same as I," but instead, "I prize and treasure you because you are different from me."

Idealistic, you say? It surely is.

But Rogers believes that changes are going on in idea and feeling. He finds hope in the vision of Lancelot Law Whyte.

It is his theory, in which he is not alone, that great steps in human history are anticipated, and probably brought about, by changes in the unconscious thinking of thousands and millions of individuals during the period preceding the change. He gives the example that before 1914, patriotism and nationalism were unquestioned virtues. Then began the faint unconscious questioning which built an unconscious tradition reversing a whole pattern of thought. This new perspective burst into the open between 1950 and 1970. "My country right or wrong" is no longer a belief to live by. Nationalistic wars

are out of date and out of favor, and even though they continue world opinion is deeply opposed. . . . Here lies the challenge to educators—probably the most insecure and frightened among any of the professions—battered by public pressures, limited by legislative restrictions, essentially conservative in their reactions. Can they espouse such a view of multiple realities as I have been describing?

If you read Jonathan Kozol's book, you will say that they can—or at least *he* can. He is an unfrightened teacher, one who speaks out. His professional life has been a continuous encounter with the rigidities of institutions that exert all those pressures and impose the confinements on both children and teachers, and in his view they are not about to undergo voluntary change. The mutation Carl Rogers speaks of may be proceeding, but institutions are apparently the last social formations to submit to change. Kozol has written a manual (of intellectual arms) for teachers who want to prepare themselves for trying to free the minds of the young in the schools. He says in one place:

In order to create a genuine free market, we have to find the courage to bring radical options into the consciousness of children—options which our supervisors, principals and school boards seldom have even dreamed about in years gone by and cannot be expected to approve.

The question, therefore, is how to go about it. Which options do we select? How do we choose them? How do we present them? With what intelligent and sensitive restraints? With what ambitious and compelling exaltation and imagination?

Many highly politicalized teachers that I know are ready and willing to bring into their schools a viewpoint which is clearly ideological but, unhappily, in no respect conducive to real competition—one, to the contrary, which is angry, aggressive and intolerant in its unadulterated imposition of a radical point of view. Teachers who do not choose to spend another year in selling the ten significant ideas of Henry Kissinger to their class, but then replace them by the ten major beliefs of Mao Tse-tung, rapidly find themselves in an untenable situation. . . . Once teachers have condemned the public schools for irresponsible indoctrination of the minds of children, those teachers end up in a dangerous position if they subsequently set out to sell to children their own exclusive body of beliefs instead—no matter how convinced they have become of the correctness of these views.

There are other objections:

The words grow wearisome to the students before long. The teacher's views, having no prompt and vigorous counterfoil (the textbook hardly qualifies as such), cease to be catalytic in their provocations and become instead a tedious catalogue of shopworn phrases which, at best, may hypnotize but, more frequently, serve only to sedate.

There is a final reason why I do not think "indoctrination from the Left" can be accepted as a viable answer to the bias now prevailing in the public schools. It is not a tactical matter, but a matter of fair play. For most students, as I have said, it doesn't seem to work particularly well. For a few however, it works entirely too well—and unwisely. Students have the right to some sort of exemption from totalitarian control.

Indoctrination-in-reverse is not the answer. But should teachers, then, have no opinions? This is not Kozol's meaning.

This is not to argue (after all that I have said already) that teachers should try to mute their own beliefs. It is to say that teachers must work very hard, and strive with all the ingenuity that they possess, first to steer away from propaganda, tyranny and unfair domination, second to build up a whole series of combative tactics in the consciousness of students long before we start to voice our own most forthright views, finally to provide those students with real substantive data, resources of every possible kind, in order to guarantee that their potential for revolt against our own rebellion will be serious—not token. . . . In order to create an atmosphere so vital and so strong, teachers need to make available a very broad spectrum of contradictory ideas, materials and leads to outside forms of information.

Teaching in this kind of classroom takes a lot more work than do traditional methods of instruction, but the rewards are greater—sometimes spectacular—and, so far as I can see, there is no other ethical option for a serious teacher in a time of torment and in an unjust and bewildered land.

Carl Rogers and Jonathan Kozol are working at opposite ends of the spectrum of what we call "education." Rogers works with individuals, Kozol confronts individuals in institutions and wears away at institutional assumptions as a militant critic, appealing to teachers to join him in his fight. Both tasks need doing.

## COMMENTARY

### GROWTH THROUGH COOPERATION

COOPERATION is of various sorts, and is sometimes contagious. The program of the TreePeople to plant a million trees in urban Los Angeles (see "Children"), for the sake of the city air, scenery and the people, got under way, the November-December *Seedling News* reports, with the gift of a hundred thousand trees (baby trees) by a Pomona (Calif.) nursery. National Guard trucks brought the trees to the TreePeople's grounds on Mulholland Drive in Beverly Hills, where volunteers placed them in containers in preparation for individual planting around the city. Learning that all these little trees would need watering while waiting to be planted, a Los Angeles plumber designed and installed an irrigation system, for the TreePeople nursery. Some of these Eldarica Pine (relative of the Aleppo Pine), a drought-resistant species, will be planted in parks and near schools. A native of the Middle East, Eldaricas grow three to five feet a year and as tall as forty. Other trees will be used in city schools classroom presentations on tree-planting. TreePeople plant trees and teach its importance.

In the *Berkeley* (Calif.) *Gazette*, an old paper that recently took on new life, Jon Bashor reports in its Nov. 2 issue on four collective businesses in Berkeley—the Juice Bar Collective, The Cheese Board, Uprisings Baking Collective, and the Nabalon Bakery—thriving cooperatives in which "workers are their own bosses and customers quickly become loyal."

The businesses are small, with membership ranging from nine to 16. Members usually go through a trial period, substituting for regulars. Long-term commitment is a must to fully learn the trade. As a result, turnover is low.

When business is good—as it usually is—the co-ops divide the extra money made among the members and also, by decision, contribute to worthy movements needing funds. This sort of enterprise is growing.

The Uprisings people recently hosted a conference of delegates from more than so like-minded bakeries. The collective scene in the [San Francisco] "Bay Area Directory of Collectives" . . . includes groups in the arts, transportation food, trades and communications." In Oakland, the regional branch of the National Consumer Co-op Bank provides financial and emotional support, and are encouraging experimental ideas.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves HE IS AVAILABLE

IT is natural enough that, over the years, people tend to think and discuss various problems only in terms of the institutions which society has evolved to cope with them. If a man steals and is caught, we think about policemen, courts, jails and prisons. If someone wants to learn something in particular, we ask if there is a "course" he might take in a school. But schools are not the only resources we have as human beings, and institutions embody on an organized scale all the limitations and bad tendencies which we, as a society, have developed, along with our capacities and virtues. It is a rather large mistake, therefore, to limit our thought about common problems to institutional remedies.

A collection of material—papers, magazines, books—we have accumulated reinforces this view. We said here, a while back, that one justification for schools was the teaching of special subjects not likely to be known to parents—such as Astronomy. Well, in No. 22 of *Growing Without Schooling* there is a long letter from a young woman in Georgia which begins:

I am a self-taught amateur astronomer using *Astronomy* magazine, the Astronomy Book Club, and most of all, the library. I'm 22 years old, a high school graduate, and oldest of five children. My brothers (ages 6 and 7) are as interested in astronomy as I am. They know all about the night sky and what's "out there." The 7-year-old is just out of first grade and all year he couldn't believe his teacher didn't care about astronomy (or any other branch of science). I'm so relieved he doesn't have to go back next year.

The point, here, is the variety of resources for self-education in which schooling plays little or no part. Parental attitudes are of course important during the early years. A Quaker mother writes on her family's "Experiment in Home Education" in the *Friends Journal* for September:

We started our home school with the hope that family-based education, which can flow in and out of the activities of society so much more easily than school-based education would provide us and our children with a strong sense of Quaker values, of community, of our special talents and contributions, and of the joy of discovery and development. Our intent has related closely to the ideal of self-empowerment: taking control of the institutions which affect our lives. As a family we seek this sense of control or at least of having a say in the areas of food, childraising and childbirth, and government, so it is a natural concomitant to seek it in the line of education for ourselves and our children. And we try to see that our children participate in decisions affecting their lives and learn how to work for constructive changes inside and outside the family. . . . We believe that the only way for a child to develop self-discipline or a sense of democratic process is to experience responsibility and control over decisions.

Some further comment:

We don't consider home schooling to be the ultimate answer in education, but rather one of the choices open to us. We decided initially (and have seen no reason to change) that we should not give our children a choice about going to school until they were eight years old, at which time they are ready to meet the challenge of public school without it unduly influencing their values and self-esteem. Last year Ada was approaching eight and she was ready to spend more time with her peers. We asked around about third-grade teachers and interviewed one who sounded like the best for Ada's needs. Ada visited her class one day last spring and decided she would like to go to school in the fall. We arranged for her to attend four days a week so we could continue with some of our home projects. . . .

In Michigan we discovered early on that the easiest way to keep kids home is to have a certified teacher to tutor them—and we were fortunate enough to have the time and money for me to go back to college and get a certificate by the time Ada was five.

There is the question asked by almost everyone about "socialization." (Most people seem to realize that academics, the supposed purpose of schools, are much better served by individual attention.) Many people who feel that children belong in school as a way to make friends are the same ones who dislike what children bring home from school—teasing, "bad" language, disrespect, and eventually the pressure to try drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, sex. The conflict between getting along with people "out there

in the real world" and learning to develop strong values which are one's own and not to be swayed by group pressure is a difficult one to resolve. I haven't reached a solution for myself or my children.

Countless resources for self-education exist throughout the country, although one may have to look around to find them. For example, in the first issue of a new paper, *Mendocino Country* (issued by the Rural Institute, 516 So. State St., Ukiah, Calif. 95482), Richard Johnson tells about the Community Garden sponsored by the Concilio Latino Americano of Mendocino County, on 1.6 acres:

Early this Spring, Concilio Garden Project Chairman Jesus Jacinto borrowed a tractor to level and disc the ground as his contribution to the effort.

Last year around 300 people benefitted from the program, figures Jesus, because the families were able to produce more vegetables than they consumed in the home, and ended up giving away the bountiful surplus. . . . Jesus is readily available to answer gardeners' questions and to mediate any disputes, should they arise. An atmosphere of friendliness and sharing pervades the garden, however, attesting to his capacity as chairman.

"We're making an offer to the whole community," says Mr. Jacinto, "that those who need a place to garden come forward and apply regardless of race, religion, language, or income. In this way we feel content because we can unite and work together. And if together we see that this is a big benefit for everyone, then let's join hands and move forward."

Then, in *Seedling News* (Sept.-Oct.), issued by TreePeople in the Los Angeles area, there is this announcement by Andy Lipkis, TreePeople founder:

Our new goal is to *plant one million trees in Los Angeles before 1984*. . . . a concentration and focusing of the ideals we've always pursued into a measurable and inspiring objective. Creation of the Los Angeles Urban Forest. . . . One million trees to heal the city by improving air quality, conserving energy, and producing food (fruit and nuts). . . . We will pursue a program of involving the citizens of Los Angeles in planting and maintaining trees where they are most needed. We will also present an aggressive public education program to motivate people to plant and care for their tree. Our job is to demonstrate that trees help to solve some environmental problems,

then show how the individual or family can help. (12601 Mulholland Drive, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90210.)

Complete with diagrams and explanatory text, Carl Baum tells in the *New Alchemy Quarterly* (237 Hatchville Road, East Falmouth, Mass. 02536) how to use waste water for growing food:

Fertile waters deserve perhaps as much attention as the compost bucket when it comes to reusing waste nutrients. Untold quantities of these essential resources are literally lost to our polluted environment in the form of domestic, municipal and agricultural effluents. What use can be made of these liquid wastes? It is possible to irrigate agricultural land with them, but this may not always be practical. Some good examples of resourceful ways to tap water-borne nutrients can be found in less well developed areas of the world. A long list of aquatic plant crops are cultured widely on fertile wetland in the orient. Water spinach, Chinese water chestnut, watercress and floating rice are but a few of these. At the opposite end of the globe, the ancient Aztecs of Mexico developed an ingenious means of growing food in water. Under the pressure of growing populations, they resorted to gardening on floating rafts, called *chinampas*, which were moored on the shores of lakes adjacent to the major cities. . . . The ancient Aztecs practiced an art that would be further refined by plant scientists in modern times.

What is he talking about? Hydroponics—"alias nutriculture, aquiculture, or soilless culture." Carl Baum writes six illustrated pages on this subject, describing in detail the construction and operation of hydroponic gardens, with a good bibliography at the end. At the New Alchemist headquarters on Cape Cod raising food fish is combined with hydroponic gardening. The result:

Most of the produce grown thus far in our systems has been of good to high quality. The Sweet 100 tomatoes were remarkably good tasting. European lettuces do quite well too. The winter celery crop, however, suffered from a severe aphid attack, possibly because the seedlings were somewhat old and weak at the time of transplanting. Their taste was generally thought to be "strong" (not fishy) when compared to the same variety grown in the soil.

## FRONTIERS

### Two Portraits

MOST serious writing is "mission-oriented"—that is, it seeks to draw the reader to some conclusion about the issues of the day, in order to get something done. Only in the novel do we find deft characterizations of existing states of mind and feeling, without the push of argument or the pull of ideology. It is here, in these usually unspoken attitudes, that the meaning of the epoch is revealed.

We have some quotations to illustrate. Trevanian's *The Man* (1976) is about an aging police lieutenant, a widower, who functions as "judge and jury, father confessor and avenging angel" in the underworld slum district of Montreal called "the Main." His name is LaPointe, and one day his attention is absorbed by a butcher shop break-in, the holdup of a news dealer, and vandalism at a construction site where a high-rise parking facility will replace a block of decaying row houses.

LaPointe tells the butcher to install better locks, but the holdup could have been a serious matter—someone might have been killed: the holdup man, not the victim. The offender was described as a kid with "a black gun with a tiny hole in the barrel," one of those "exact-replica waterguns the Montreal police have made repeated complaints about, to no avail." The policeman made some phone calls and—

Two and a half hours later, LaPointe is sitting in the cramped kitchen of a basement flat with the thief and his parents. . . . The kid sits at the kitchen table, picking at the oilcloth. His eyes lowered, he answers LaPointe's questions in a reluctant monotone. Once he makes the mistake of sassing.

In two steps, LaPointe crosses the room and snatches the kid up by the collar of his imitation-leather jacket. "What do you think happens if a cop chases you and you flash that goddamned water pistol? Hein? You could be killed for eight lousy bucks!"

There is fear in the kid's eyes; defiance, too.

LaPointe drops him back into his chair. What's the use?

It's a first offense. The Lieutenant can make arrangements, can find a job for the kid swabbing out some restaurant on the Main. The boy will pay the newspaper vendor back. He will have no record. But next time . . .

There will be a next time.

LaPointe lets the vandalism go.

He goes through the motions, but he does nothing. His sympathy is with the people who are losing their homes. . . . The residents of the Main are too poor, too ignorant, too weak politically to protect themselves from the paternal tyranny of city planning committees. The Main is a slum, anyway. Bad plumbing; rats and roaches; inadequate playgrounds. Relocating the immigrants is really for their own good. . . .

Although LaPointe knows that this blind striking out at the construction sites will change nothing, that the little people of the Main must lose their battle and ultimately their identity, he understands their need to protest, to break something. . . .

Our other quotation is from *Tiger in the Honeysuckle* (1965) by Elliott Chaze, the story of a born Southerner, another widower, who is a 43-year-old newspaper man in a Mississippi town. He does what he can to see that justice is done to the blacks who want to vote, and is hated by the town for his pains. He meets the federal prosecuting attorney in front of the courthouse where the Government is trying to convict a clerk of discriminating against blacks in voter registration. Chris Haines, the reporter, is approached by the Department of Justice man, John Moore, who says, "I hear you're with us." Haines replies:

"I'm not with anybody. . . . I'm going to tell you something, John. Most of what I've done in this town I've done because I'm sick of being pressured by my friends. Or by people who used to be my friends. I don't like for people to tell me if I don't think the way they do I'm trash. I think qualified niggers should be allowed to vote and that's the size of it. I don't think integration's going to work any time soon. I think it's

coming. And if I was a nigger I'd be bucking for it. . . ."

"I don't understand why you people believe it's going to change everything for you," said John Moore. . . .

"You folks are just as bad. You're just stupid in a different way. You think that anything done by way of boosting civil *rights* is a justified, wholly constitutional petition for redress of grievance. . . .

"No. I don't believe that all those who favor civil rights legislation are the Good Guys, wonderfully sensitive types with a nobler motivation than those against such legislation. I don't see anything noble about pissing on the floor of an Atlanta restaurant or wrecking the transportation systems of big cities or hollering freedom slogans while the President of the United States is trying to speak at the World's Fair. . . . There are hundreds of honest and sincere people here in Catherine who want to see the Negro race pull itself out of the muck, who believe a black man ought to be able to walk down the street and look a white man in the eye. But they think you civil righters are going at it wrong; that you're just as hypocritical as the racists. Legislative intimidation and terrorism won't get the job done."

"I know," John Moore sighed. "Just leave it alone, let it work itself out?"

"Maybe."

"Then why," said John Moore, "please tell me why in the hell did it never manage to work itself out?"

Haines can't think of anything to reply to that. Meanwhile, because he stands up for what he believes, he loses his job, and almost his life when a vindictive official sets a killer dog on him during a fire and a riot. Later he muses:

You didn't make a heap of money working for a small newspaper but there were fringe benefits and the fringe was a luxuriant fringe. People phoned you and told you things. You knew everybody and they knew you, or they used to. You knew who went to New Orleans and got drunk and who was suffering from piles and who was going to have a baby and who probably was not going to be re-elected. If you subtracted the racial situation, there was no friendlier bunch of people on the face of the earth than the people of Catherine. But, of course, you couldn't subtract it. The disease was in terminal stage, inoperable.