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MODEL AND INGREDIENT

EARLIER this year, two competent writers, one well known and illustrious, the other a journalist, examined and evaluated the trend toward regionalism in present-day society. Rene Dubos, in his essay in the Spring *American Scholar,* found it an emerging development throughout the West, and in general strongly approved. Kevin Phillips, who writes of the trend in the United States, sees it as a narrowing of loyalties which may lead to social dissolution. His article in *Harper's* for May is titled "The Balkanization of America."

Before considering the expectations of these writers, let us ask: By what canon of human good do such observers make up their minds? What differing goals or objectives determine how they view a far-reaching cultural change?

At issue, quite plainly, is the conception of fulfillment. What is achievement of the good for human beings? Is it individual and characterological—or "spiritual," as some might say—or is it social and historical? If you decide as common sense dictates, that men of good character will almost certainly generate good social relations, the comparison still needs to be made, since the decision is not either-or, but one of priorities. There are also those who will argue that a properly constructed society will produce good human beings, and there is obvious truth in this. Yet we still must determine which is the more important goal.

Meanwhile, there are subtleties. All will admit that the virtues of strong character and individuality don't count for much unless they serve the welfare of the whole. Good men are not really good if they ignore the good of their fellows. So there is an evident social component in good character, just as a strong and well integrated society is not even imaginable without strong and integrated individuals to make it up.

The addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution by the Founding Fathers was a vote for the importance of the individual and his development. Lincoln's devotion to preservation of the Union, by which he justified the Civil War, seems to have been a defense of a broad social ideal which he saw embodied in the unity of the United States. Both themes are to be found in the work of Lincoln's contemporary, Ralph Waldo Emerson. While Emerson, as Martin Duberman says, "asserts the absolute claims of the self," if you turn a page in his writings you find him demanding "that attention be paid to the claims of the world and action be taken against social injustice."

Are there epochs, one wonders, when community independence and separation afford the best environment for human growth, but also times when joining with others in large numbers and having to learn the difficult art of collective action is a necessary balancing experience? In short, even if small is beautiful, are there occasions when bigness sets other problems which need comprehension and mastery?

Large teleological assumptions lurk behind these questions. It seems completely normal for human beings to look for instruction from the common as well as the individual experiences of life. Yet it is equally natural for us to withdraw from massive corporate action when it becomes evident that there are vital elements of human good which large-scale organization either shuts out or systematically neglects.

Freedom is the good which leads Rene Dubos to regard favorably the trend to regionalism:

> We may be freer politically than our ancestors were but we are increasingly subject to rules determined by anonymous forces which are the expressions of economic and technological imperatives. The youth movements of the 1960s were

largely directed against this new form of regimentation, which is the more resented because it is imposed by a society that most people find highly materialistic, technologically too complex, ecologically unsound, and so bureaucratic as to be completely impersonal . . . .

All over the world, provinces and regions try to recover their individuality by cultivating their folklore and their traditional ways of life, their literature, and their arts. Provinces and regions even try to recapture some degree of political independence by developing their special economic assets. Regionalism is thus emerging as a political force in nations that have long been highly centralized, such as France and Great Britain, and even in the Soviet Union. In the United States too, and still more in Canada, the various regions are affirming the characteristics that make them different from the rest of the nation—whether these characteristics derive from their geography, their history, or their ethnic composition.

Dr. Dubos wonders whether the counter trend "toward standardization for the sake of technological efficiency" will block the "flowering of regional freedom," but notes that both affluence and technology itself are strengthening the regional trend:

. . . more and more people can now afford to select the region where they settle. Furthermore, many people are not only place seekers, but place makers, interested in the cultural potentialities of the place where they have elected to settle. Whereas many people long to relax on a Florida beach, others would rather saw firewood in New Hampshire. There is, furthermore, some likelihood that population mobility will decrease in the future, not because of economic difficulties, but because of changes in behavior patterns. The eagerness for mobility may not last. It may be toned down by the belief that civilization does not depend on constant movement, and indeed is more likely to flourish when populations are anchored on the earth.

Meanwhile the scarcity and higher cost of fossil fuels are a direct encouragement to regionalism:

Fossil fuels, however, will probably soon come to be more scarce and more costly. It is therefore probable that efforts will be made to derive energy from other sources that are renewable and not polluting—such as solar radiation, the wind, biomass, the tides and waves, et cetera. All these possible sources of renewable energy are highly localized, a fact that will probably bring about changes in the geographic distribution of various industries.

The concentration in a few areas of the world of large-scale food production (both crops and animals), Dr. Dubos thinks, may be a reversible tendency:

Complete dependence on external sources of food is fraught with dangers even in the United States. Some people in the northeastern states, for example, are beginning to fear that California, Texas and other food-producing states may become so heavily populated that they will consume most of the food they produce and have little to export. Furthermore, shipment of certain kinds of food over long distances may eventually become prohibitively expensive because of energy costs, and undependable because of labor difficulties. These prospects point to the possibility that, at some time in the future, it will become desirable once more to produce the kinds of crops and livestock best adapted to regions where agriculture has been all but abandoned. There is evidence, in fact, that a partial degree of independence with regard to food production is being considered a matter of national security in many parts of the world.

Psychological changes, Dr. Dubos thinks, are bringing a kind of climax to these factors for decentralization:

The retreat from excessive interdependence may be accelerated by the general feeling that the human mind cannot cope with the problems of management when the social, economic, and technological problems are on a global scale. Other difficulties . . . are that global systems are vulnerable to failure or sabotage affecting any component of the megasystem and that globalization will almost inevitably interfere with social innovations. In contrast, both safety and creativity will be favored by the existence of multiple small ecological and cultural systems, aware and tolerant of each other, but jealous of their autonomy.

In contrast to Dr. Dubos' hopeful tone, Kevin Phillips regards the trend toward decentralization of authority and the rise of local autonomy—or demands for it—as a loss of heart and a failure of nerve. Taking his title from James Schlesinger (now Energy Secretary), who a year or so ago

said that the energy crisis might bring about the "Balkanization" of America, the *Harper's* writer gives the tendencies described by Dr. Dubos another coloring:

> For the past several years the symptoms of decomposition have appeared throughout the body politic—in the economic, geographic, ethnic, religious, cultural, biological sectors of society. Small loyalties are replacing larger ones. Small outlooks are also replacing larger ones. . . .
>
> At this point, let me admit that regionalism, separatism, fragmentation, and rampant ethnicity are hardly new in the United States. On the contrary, they are as old as Jamestown, New Amsterdam, and Plymouth. But the critical historical distinction must lie in tidal flow and ebb: From George Washington's day through the Trajan-like imperial highwater mark of the early 1960s, Americans retrospectively can see ethnicity, regionalism and states' rights yield before growing concepts of global optimism, the melting pot, equality, homogeneity, and centralization of (benign federal) power. Since that time, however, the re-emergence of ethnicity, regionalism, states' rights, and political splintering has occurred in a very different psychological climate—amidst the *end* of optimism, the *collapse* of Manifest Destiny, the *failure* of the Great Society, the failure of the melting pot, and of all the other hopes and slogans of America's national rise.

In other words, today's Balkanization—or Decentralization—is *different.* Mr. Phillips finds the trend little more than a hardening of the attitudes of separatism, reducing national issues to squabbles about local rights and interests. The Indians want to own and run their own reservations, and in the Southwest, as the Hispanic population grows and grows, there is talk of "a *reconquista*—literally a Spanish reconquest of the once-Spanish Southwest." In the East there is talk of redrawing state lines and even regional secession from one state to join another. The Far West is not immune:

> In California during 1977, residents of eastern San Bernardino and Riverside counties urged formation of a new desert county, while some northwest Los Angeles county residents continued their campaign for a new "Canyon County." Just across Lake Tahoe in Nevada, residents of one stretch of lakefront would like to secede from Washoe County (Reno) and establish a new Lake County. Parallels exist in other states.

Mr. Phillips multiplies examples of centrifugal tendencies—cultural as well as ethnic, economic as well as ecologic—and sees in all this a sign of national decline—"a fundamental reversal in the American experience." He thinks it means a loss of *élan vital* and the "failure of creativity" predicted by Arnold Toynbee. Disputing the claim that small-scale renewal is going on, he argues:

> *Decomposition is just not the same thing as revitalized diversity.* Moreover, in the present-day context of U.S. and world affairs, small-is-beautiful is likely to be overshadowed by small-is-divisive or even small-is-dangerous. An ineffective 1978 U.S. political system is not like a loose, immature 1878 U.S. political system. Under current circumstances, a Balkanized United States is likely to lose headway externally, in the world of nuclear missiles and global oil supplies, as well as internally, in the minds of the American people.

But what if the time has now come for "a fundamental reversal of the American experience"? If the failure, decline, and collapse the *Harper's* writer sees on every hand are indeed occurring, and if the "twilight of authority" spoken of by Robert Nisbet is at hand, then it seems at least likely that some far-reaching change is needed, and that the widely recognized signs of health and energy at the grassroots level are invisible to Mr. Phillips because of his anxiety over the breakdown of existing institutions.

For the *Harper's* writer, quite plainly, the issue is the welfare of the national state. The various sorts of fragmentation within the body politic are for him a composite threat to the power of the state to pursue its ends. All local autonomies are seen as schisms which interrupt the smooth functioning of governmental processes: "The heterogeneity of America will become a burden, the constitutional separation of powers crippling, the economy threatened, the cohesion of society further diminished." He hardly notices the cost in human terms of the

expanding power and ruthless intentions of the national state. Past wrongs to the American Indians, for example, are not even mentioned when he sees cause for alarm in their drive for "sovereignty" over reservation lands; instead he quotes a Congressman who speaks of "the prospect of *two hundred and sixty Quebecs."* Essentially, Mr. Phillips is asking: How can our nation get on in the world, protect its interests, prosper its affairs, increase our benefits, when it is breaking up into little pieces, each one animated by only local purposes?

Dr. Dubos has another outlook. Considering the lives and affairs of *people,* he suggests that the decentralizing movement will bring more human freedom, safer lives, and spontaneous economies as a result of the harmony achieved with nature. Implicitly, he is ready to question the familiar purposes of the nation-state if pursuing them in the way we have brings one socio-biological disorder after another. What if we do "lose headway" in the world of nuclear missiles and global oil supplies? War may be, as Randolph Bourne declared, the health of the state, but war is also the ravaging and lethal ill of mankind. Should we pause at all in choosing between the weakening of the state and the prospect of another world war?

These may seem large and pretentious phrases, yet they apply accurately enough to the human situation in the present. The wars of the twentieth century have taken lives counted by the million—fifty or sixty million in each major conflict—and the think-tank statisticians casually estimate in scores of millions the "acceptable" number of deaths in some nuclear war of the future. These are predictions for a world which relies—or pretends to rely—on the United Nations to preserve international peace. How long should this reliance go on? Are there not better ways of entering into relationships with other peoples?

Yet Mr. Phillips is troubled by the decline of the UN:

> Far from becoming an effective world confederation, the United Nations is being made less useful by the rise (and U.N. admission) of dozens of small states and mini-states. The collapse of colonial empires has created nearly a hundred new nations, many of them barely credible.

It does not seem in the least remarkable that the credibility of states has lost its importance for an increasing number of people. Where is the evidence that we can *ever* believe what the political representatives of nations have to say? The skill of diplomats in the pursuit of self-interest is all that the papers find worthy of report, these days.

In short, behind the trend toward local autonomy—whatever the surface symptoms and partisan motivations feared by critics—is a deep and abiding determination to rescale human affairs in a less complicated system of relationships—in which open processes can be better understood and more or less controlled, where deception or misrepresentation becomes increasingly difficult, and where natural harmonies can be recognized, preserved, and joined with human harmonies. The decentralizing movement is toward forms of association in which the moral qualities of human beings have at least a chance to assert their strength. This is a key idea in the reasoning of E. F. Schumacher.

Further rhetorical questions are in order. If we cannot get along with others working through the corporate identities of nation-states, can we do so as smaller social units which can be fruitful at both economic and cultural levels without threatening anyone at all? The ecologists would say we can do this easily. They point to the manifest symbiosis between the order of nature and the practical morality of regionally-sized human groups. Moreover ethical insight on the part of human beings seems to lead directly to the most productive and least harmful relations with nature—to ways of living which are on the side of life.

Not power, but harmony, is the end for human beings. How do we get along with nature, our neighbors, our families, ourselves? These are the radical questions now being asked. They relate to processes, not distant goals. They are questions we have been both driven and inspired to ask. The driving is by the failures of what we have been doing for several hundred years. The inspiration may have been begun by pain, but it is continued by vision.

What is the ultimate vision behind human longing and striving? It seems best not to try to speak of it in too familiar terms. Pretentious verbal facility is the Achilles heel of concrete applications of vision. A better question might be: How do we measure our efforts to achieve the vision we inarticulately hold in our hearts? There seems only one way that we can rely upon: Do our efforts increase the harmony of our lives, or generate more psychic disorders and splits? Is the community our habits have formed a good one, or is it a hot-bed of disaster? Are our most vital relationships strengthened by the way we live, or are they made bloodless and dissatisfying?

How far can we go with such questions? There seems always the possibility that at this level we will lose track of what we are talking about. To be fundamental, alas, is to become abstract. Socrates tried to overcome this difficulty by reducing the issue of relationships—what they are like, how they work—to the relationship of a human being with *himself*. If, he said, I am at odds with myself, all the other harmonies I seek will play me false. The soul, he said, is a harmony, and the world wild always jangle at us if the soul gets out of tune.

But the soul is invisible, while wealth and power and glory are objective goals or "rewards." There are all those things a person can seek harmony with, while ignoring the harmony with himself. Socrates might have argued that if we can achieve harmony with ourselves, all the other harmonies will naturally come about. He would have had to add—"but it takes time." Yet there is an *intermediate* harmony—if we can achieve it—that will give us time. In our practical, pragmatic language, this means mastering an intermediate technology which gives scope to the harmony natural in community life a harmony that comes closer to the harmony we seek—or need—with ourselves. Small community is not opposed to world community, but both its model and its ingredient.

REVIEW
LOOK FOR A HERETIC DOCTOR

IN his contribution to *Disabling Professions* (London: Marion Boyars, 1977, $4.95), John McKnight explores what happens when a professional service, such as medicine, which has some legitimate claim to authority, identifies its activities and defines its ends in the terms of an economic system evolved to distribute goods. Medicine is only one example of this trend, which affects all the service professions. Mr. McKnight says in an opening paragraph:

> Professionals and their managers now speak of educational "products," health "consumers" and a legal "industry." Clients are defined as "markets" and technocrats—an entirely new breed of professionals—are developing methods to "market" services, using business accountancy systems. Computers measure and store psychological "inputs" and family "outputs." There are "units served" and "units of service" and sophisticated economists, statisticians and planners deal with the production and consumption of social services in the same way as the production, consumption and maintenance of physical goods is accounted for. Furthermore, and this is of central importance, every modernized society, whether socialist or capitalist, is marked by the growing percentage of service in its Gross National Product, not only of services such as postal deliveries, catering, car repairs, etc., but social services such as marriage guidance, birth control, counselling, education, legal arbitration, care of the young, the adult and the old in all its ramifications, and all that falls under the general heading of social help.

Now comes a crucially important point: the basic difference between goods delivered and services rendered:

> This stage of economic development is distinguished by its unlimited potential since service production has none of the limits imposed by goods production—limits such as natural resources, capital and land. Therefore, the social service business has endless possibilities for expansion as there seems to be no end to the needs for which services can be manufactured.
>
> Modernized nations are therefore best defined as service economies. They are serviced societies and they are peopled with service producers and service consumers—professionals and clients.

Mr. McKnight offers, in effect, a statistical analysis of how all this works and what it leads to. That is, he doesn't argue the merits of these services, looking at them in particular and testing their benefits to the clients, Instead he looks at the over-all picture and asks these questions (which have occurred to others):

> Why are we putting so much resource into medicine while our health is not improving?
>
> Why are we putting so much resource into education and our children seem to be learning less?
>
> Why are we putting so much resource into criminal justice systems and society seems less and less secure?
>
> Why are we putting so much more resource into mental health systems and we seem to have more mental illness?

The average person has little idea of how to cope with such puzzling challenges. The average person thinks of the time his son broke his arm and how the doctor set it so efficiently, or of a maiden aunt who had to be hospitalized—permanently, what else could they do?—wondering only a little about the figures in the papers on drug use and alcoholism. Things are tough all over, he says to himself, while paying those ever-increasing insurance premiums. They're probably doing the best they can, and doctors have problems, too—look at the premiums *they* have to pay!

But Mr. McKnight has more to add:

> As if these questions were not troubling enough, a new group of service system critics are asking whether we are putting more resources in and getting out the very opposite of what the system is designed to "produce." In medicine, this question is most clearly defined as iatrogenesis—doctor-created disease. The new critics' question is not whether we get less service for more resource. Rather, it is whether we get the reverse of what the service system is supposed to "produce." In the terms of Ivan Illich, the question is whether the systems have become counterproductive. Do we get more sickness from more medicine? Do we get more injustice and crime

with more lawyers and police? Do we get more ignorance with more teachers and schools? Do we get more family collapse with more social workers?

He then asks: What will happen "if the populace perceives that the service system hurts more than it helps—that professional service can become disabling help?"

Mr. McKnight is no witch-hunter. He points out that the professional who brings his services to the public may be absolutely sincere. He believes in what he is doing. Naturally, the people he helps feel his good intentions and are confirmed in their trust. He is giving care—a kind of love—and we are grateful.

This applies, however, to individuals. What about "the system"? Again Mr. McKnight addresses himself to the over-all picture:

> In a modernized society where the major business is service, the political reality is that the central "need" is an adequate income for professional servicers and the economic growth they portend. The masks of love and care obscure this reality so that the public cannot recognize the professionalized interests that manufacture needs in order to rationalize a service economy. Medicare, Educare, Judicare, Socialcare and Psychocare are portrayed as systems to meet need rather than programmes to meet the needs of servicers and the economies they support.
>
> Removing the mask of love shows us the face of the servicers who *need* income, and an economic system that *needs* growth. Within this framework, the client is less a person in need than a person who is needed. In business terms, the client is less the consumer than the raw material for the servicing system. In management terms, the client becomes both the output and the input. His essential function is to meet the needs of the servicers, the servicing system and the national economy. The central political issue becomes the servicers' capacity to manufacture needs in order to expand the economy of the servicing system.

Well, this seems pretty ruthless criticism, especially to one who is thinking of the nice doctor and motherly nurse who took care of that broken arm. But the dismaying thing is that, in other ways, the criticism seems to fit. If you don't feel good, you may be in for two whole days of "testing" in the hospital. You feel greatly relieved when the doctor says they can't find anything really wrong. And the insurance company pays. And you of course pay the insurance company for as long as you are able. Meanwhile, there is the anonymous voice of all those doctors out there, telling you about new things that may be wrong with you, and about all they know or expect to find out very soon to guard you (or the next generation) against disease and ill-health.

What is ill-health? It is the statistical condition—the sum of the conditions—for which medicine has remedies to apply. The authorities define everything to do with human well-being. All you have to do is agree, pay, and be grateful.

Mr. McKnight finds all this upsetting. It seems very close to being a problem without a solution. Meanwhile, unless you look at the over-all picture, everything the spokesmen for the professionals say sounds so *reasonable:*

> While it is clearly disabling to be told you can't decide whether you have a problem and how it can be dealt with, the professional imperative compounds the dilemma by demonstrating that you couldn't understand the problem or the solution anyway. The language of modernized professional services mystifies both problem and solution so that citizen evaluation becomes impossible. The only people "competent" to decide whether the servicing process has any merit are professional peers, each affirming the basic assumptions of the other.
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> While there are fascinating inter-jurisdictional disputes among servicing peers, these conflicts rarely break the rule that it is only the professional who understands the problem and the solution. The internal conflicts are power struggles over which professionals shall be dominant. A professional who breaks the rule of professional dominance will be stigmatized by all the disputants and lose his place on the rungs of the ladder to success. The politics of modernized professional power is bounded by peer review. Modern heretics are those professional practitioners who support citizen competence and convert their profession into an understandable trade under the comprehensible command of citizens.

That is Mr. McKnight's solution—more lay and professional heretics to bring all the services

we need back into proportion and under our review and control. Alas, the fate of determined heretics at the hands of the democratic masses is known from history and does not make an inviting prospect.

What else can be said about this vast problem? Mr. McKnight's essay, and the work of Ivan Illich (who edited *Disabling Professions*), offer searching and revealing criticism. Criticism can do one or both of two things. It can list what is wrong, and sometimes it can tell *why* it is wrong. The listing is easy, but the explanation difficult, since you have to compare what is wrong with what would be right. The explanation implied in Mr. McKnight's essay is that a good society would never even think of allowing love and caring to be bought and sold. Which is to say that they would never allow quantifying economics to become the defining science of human reality. The ills this writer describes will continue and get worse until we refuse to allow economic terms, methods, and customs to govern the incommensurable decencies on which our lives depend. This is the program the heretics will have to adopt. Some of them, of course, have done it already.

COMMENTARY
HOW DOES ONE HELP?

RENE DUBOS is a mild-mannered writer who draws the reader's attention to developments which seem to him promising and good. He is mainly interested in the formation of judgments. He believes, one could say, that people are on the whole well-disposed, and that if they learn to think more clearly they can be trusted to do the right thing. The fundamental value, therefore, is freedom, as quotation from Dr. Dubos in this week's lead article suggests. This is consistent with his thinking about the nature of man, which embodies the keynote of Renaissance Humanism. In *Beast or Angel?* (Scribners), he said:

> At the beginning of the Renaissance, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola expressed the genius of humanism when he affirmed that man was given by God the latitude to remain a beast or to become an angel: "With freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.
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> The creation of humanity evoked by Pico is the history of civilization.

There are others who, while more or less agreeing, say that people also need help—a lot of help—in figuring out what is right. Sometimes you just have to tell them. Life has become very complicated and the ones who see what is right must organize the energies of the rest, who are mostly confused or indifferent. You have to stir them up, get them mad, train lobbyists, get out the vote.

Well, there must be some truth in this contention, democratically speaking, since so many people believe it. But we remember a thoughtful radical fraction working in Chicago, years ago, that ran a candidate for once in the city government; one of the "activists" said later that in fighting so hard to win the election they lost track of what they believed. Winning and achieving, they concluded, are not the same thing. Musing along these lines, Arthur Morgan once distinguished between "builders" and "trigger men." The trigger men expend what the builders accumulate. Sometimes pulling triggers consolidates gains, but more often not. We need to know more about how things get done. Cincinnatus may have had an answer. E. F. Schumacher was perhaps one of his descendants.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
TEACHING AND TESTING

A VERY large part of what is now written on teaching and learning seems to start out as an investigation of how children learn, but soon becomes a critique of what the schools are doing wrong. Educational practice, the critics say, is based on the apparently plausible but erroneous guesses of influential theorists of the past. It is also based on a political sort of response to what parents demand of teachers, and what the parents want often has little to do with the spontaneous or natural goals of human life.

Drawing on current brain research, Leslie A. Hart writes in the February *Phi Delta Kappan* on what has been found out about the way people—children and adults—learn. He starts by rejecting a familiar idea first formulated by John Locke:

> The brain was long thought to be passive, a *tabula rosa,* a blank on which instruction could be inscribed. This notion gave rise to the structure we try to employ—of subjects courses, and curriculum—all expressions of the belief that if X and Y are taught, X and Y will be learned. Mountains of evidence tell us that doesn't happen. Now we can see more clearly why: The human brain is intensely *aggressive.* Each brain is highly individual, unique, it seeks out, demands, and will accept only what it needs next to "make sense" of surrounding reality. This fact means that group instruction in an elementary subject is certain to fail.

Why will it fail? Because it ignores the difference between a human being and the behaviorist model of a human being. Mr. Hart draws on the Proster Theory of brain operation, saying:

> In providing a model of the *human* brain, the new theory departs sharply from the "rat psychology" of stimulus-response and reinforcement that teachers commonly find of little use. A person is not an oversized rat. Our human brain is billions of times more complex and meets very different needs.

The human brain seems to work something like a computer, but Mr. Hart is concerned mainly with the *difference* between a brain and a digital computer. While the computer apparently conforms to Lockean theory and operates very rapidly, the human learns in another way and at another pace:

> In contrast to an electronic computer, the brain works very slowly. Where the computer essentially works along just one sequence at a time, the brain processes along thousands, even millions, simultaneously. It deals not with "hard" step-by-step logic (such as one uses in applying an arithmetic procedure) but by perceiving *patterns.* Here we see why a teaching effort that tries to use a hard-logic approach can fail so distressingly. When we visit class-rooms, we find this "logical" approach in constant use—a method that ironically is suited to electronic computers but is very wrong for the infinitely flexible, superbly subtle human computer.

In computer language, a pattern is a program. A program, therefore, corresponds for humans to a sense of meaning, a purpose or direction. And since the basic impetus in all learning, as "mountains of evidence" make plain, grows out of motivation, methods which ignore this reality are monumental failures:

> Students do not acquire programs by being talked at, explained to, or prodded for "right answers," nor by doing them incorrectly and then being scolded, verbally corrected, re-explained to, given low marks, or failed. Tragically, we see teachers, coerced by classroom traditions, spending much of their instructional time making precisely these futile efforts.

The brain, Mr. Hart shows, is a pattern-recognizing intelligence, or the instrument of a pattern-recognizing intelligence. This is a way of saying that people don't learn except through the discovery of meaning. Wanting to know is the problem. When the desire to know is aroused, the rest follows more or less naturally. For a definition of learning Mr. Hart uses the implication of Proster Theory: "the *process* of learning can be defined as *the extraction of meaningful patterns from confusion."* What sort of patterns interest the young?

Illustrations are in order. One that seems appropriate is Eda LeShan's account of her own childhood experience:

> I have always been a terrible test taker, I get nervous as soon as I hear the word "'test"; my mind wanders, I cannot concentrate, I think of answers that are very original but have nothing whatever to do with the subject at hand.

In other words, Eda LeShan was so healthy and alive as a child that she couldn't *stand* the irrelevances of education theory. Those tests had nothing to do with the patterns she was interested in.

> At the age of six, when I was given my first intelligence test for entrance into a progressive school, I was later asked by my mother what I thought of the test. I reported that it had been all right, except for one very puzzling question. I said that the teacher had asked me to draw a lion between a chair and a pail drawn on the test page, I didn't think I could draw a good lion, so I had drawn a daisy instead. When my mother said, "But Eda, they probably wanted you to draw a *line,* between the chair and the pail," I replied, "Oh, that would have been too *easy!"* It was a testament to the school's faith in human potential that I was admitted especially since it later developed that on a simple arithmetic question, "When the fox ate two little rabbits, and then he ate two more little rabbits, the fox had eaten . . . . little rabbits." I gave as my answer, "the fox ate the *poor* little rabbits." When my mother suggested that I should have said "four rabbits," I replied, "Oh Mommie, the *poor* rabbits!"

Apparently, Eda LeShan was an unintimidated child, for which we may be thankful, since when she grew up she wrote a very good book, *The Conspiracy Against Childhood* (Atheneum, 1968), from which we have been quoting.

Now and then the effects of intimidation are effectively exposed. In "The Cult of Measurement" (*Working Papers,* March-April), Joseph and Helen Featherstone tell this story:

> Children at one site in the Deep South made a phenomenal 30-point average gain on the Stanford-Binet IQ test. They showed no improvement on any of the other tests. What happened? In the first weeks of the fall, while the three- and four-year-olds were still shaking their way to school, a large and flinty-eyed man had arrived to administer (as they say) IQ tests. The children were black, and it is a good bet that few had ever been alone with a white man before. The tester took one child at a time out of the classroom, like the terrible giants in the old fairy tales. The average IQ score for the group was about 65 points—in the mentally retarded range.
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> In the spring a different tester appeared. She was a jolly black lady who sat the children on her ample lap before bringing out her games and puzzles. When a child hesitated over a question the child got a big hug—"Of course you know that, honey." Thus the phenomenal gains in the test scores.

This is a "happy ending" sort of story, but intimidation, if continued as a policy, can become monstrously destructive. The *Los Angeles Times* for Nov. 10 of last year reported on a wave of suicides among Japanese children for whom the terrors of death became less threatening than the examinations of a fiercely competitive educational system. A Japanese child may feel doomed for life if he fails entrance examinations set by leading schools and universities. More than 25 per cent of Japanese 3-to-5-year-olds are sent to private cram schools to assure that, ten or twelve years later, they will have the guaranteed success resulting from admission to an elite institution such as Tokyo University. For some of these children, being "scared to death" is no rhetorical exaggeration:

> In 1976 more than 700 children and teen-agers are thought to have killed themselves, although the national police agency said precise figures have not been kept. However, the apparent increase in the number of such deaths has led police to begin keeping statistics on suicides of teenagers and children for the first time and the police agency has recorded 398 deaths, among them a 9-year-old girl, between March and August of 1977. In a period of only 10 days recently, 11 children committed suicide. They included a 17-year-old who hanged himself because he was no longer top of his class, an 11-year-old who did the same because colds had kept him from school, and a 14-year-old, apparently unable to cope with examination pressures, who jumped in front of a speeding train.

The age-level of suicide among Japanese children is apparently going down: "In 1965 the number of suicides among children aged 10 to 14 was 46, but last year (1976) the number jumped to 83."

It is sometimes said that the Japanese study the West and then do more efficiently the things that have made us so "successful." The sales figures of Toyotas and Datsuns are a handy example. This may or may not be true, but an anecdote by Eda LeShan might support such reasoning:

> A nursery teacher and I were having a conference recently with the mother of a perfectly charming normally endowed four-year-old girl. We had nothing but good things to say about Jessie; she was friendly, spirited, enthusiastic and happy in school. Her mother was pleased if not ecstatic, and finally she said, "In other words, you're really telling me I have an average child." She sounded so crestfallen that I found myself feeling somewhat ashamed, as though I had insulted her child. She went on to tell us that in her neighborhood all the mothers knew their children's I.Q.'s, and as it came closer to the time Jessie would enter grade school and be tested, she was getting more and more nervous about having to know "the verdict" as to how smart the child was. "Suppose it turns out she isn't as brilliant as her father thinks she is"? she asked. I confess to having lost my professional objectivity when I snapped back, "Well, there's obviously only one thing you *can* do—throw her back and try for another"!

FRONTIERS

On Getting Things Done

IN America—and everywhere else, although most evidently in America—if you want to get done things that will be good for everybody, you are told to form an organization. The fabric of American life is publicly defined by the hit-or-miss interrelationships of a vast network of organizations. As James Burnham pointed out years ago in *The Managerial Revolution,* the forgotten man in the United States is the man who does not belong to any organization. Only an organization can look after his "interests." In our society, there is little difference between interests and identity.

If you read the "cause" magazines—and they include most of the good ones—you soon realize that reformers and idealists place their hopes in organization. Through organization people are able to make their opinions felt. The press takes note of organizational action. Decision-makers are responsive only to groups which seem to stand for voting power. And so on. It is hardly necessary to explain an idea which began with the Committees of Correspondence in Colonial days, and became the highly publicized secret of success for the Labor Movement in this century.

In consequence, we think we know how much can be accomplished through the power of organization. But how much do we know about the things that organization can never bring about?

This is the subject of a long quotation in *Rain* for June from Wendell Berry's *The Unsettling of America.* Mr. Berry is not an enemy of organization. He belongs to one or two. But he has become very much aware of the misuse of organizational methods and their limitations as an instrument of change. He says:

> The only real, practical, hope-giving way to remedy the fragmentation that is the disease of the modern spirit is a small and humble way—a way that a government or agency or organization will never think of, though a person may think of it: one must begin in one's own life the private solutions that can only *in turn* become public solutions.
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> If, for instance, one is aware of the abuses and extortions to which one is subjected as a modern consumer, then one may join an organization of consumers to lobby for consumer-protection legislation. But in joining a consumer organization, one defines oneself as a consumer merely, and a mere consumer is by definition a dependent, at the mercy of the manufacturer and the salesman. If the organization secures the desired legislation, then the consumer becomes the dependent not only of the manufacturer and salesman, but of the agency that enforces the law, and is at its mercy as well. The law enacted may be a good one, and the enforcers all honest and effective; even so, the consumer will understand that one result of his effort has been to increase the number of people of whom he must be aware.

Example? Well, read the history of the Food and Drug Administration in James Turner's *The Chemical Feast* (Nader Report series, Grossman, 1970). And read what Nicholas Johnson has to say (in various articles) about the control or improvement of television programs by the Federal Communications Commission, of which he was a member. Mr. Berry continues:

> The consumer may proceed to organization and even to legislation by considering only his "rights." And most of the recent talk about consumer protection has to do with the consumer's rights. Very little indeed has been said about the consumer's responsibilities. It may be that whereas one's rights may be advocated and even "served" by an organization, one's responsibilities cannot. It may be that when one hands one's responsibilities to an organization, one becomes by that divestiture irresponsible. It may be that responsibility is intransigently a personal matter—that a responsibility can be fulfilled or failed, but cannot be got rid of.

Mr. Berry develops what he means by "responsible consumer"—a person who consumes less and less, and who himself produces more and more of what he does consume—and concludes:

> It is possible, then, to perceive a critical difference between responsible consumers and consumers who are merely organized. The responsible consumer slips out of the consumer

> category altogether. He is a responsible consumer incidentally, almost inadvertently; he is a responsible consumer because he lives a responsible life.

Here we shall be required to insert a loud and emphatic "but." *But* the really important changes require political clout! We have to organize to open the way even to responsibility! Mr. Berry might reply by asking if we know how to organize without being *organized.*

Argument will never settle a question so filled with paradox, but an illustration might help. In the June-July *Not Man Apart,* a former lobbyist for Environmentalism, Carl Pope, speaks of a curious change that has come over the California Environmental Movement since Jerry Brown's governorship. Mr. Brown delighted the Environmentalists by putting some of their best and most articulate spokesmen and activists in State jobs. But thereafter the Movement seemed to lose its muscle. Why?

Mr. Pope thinks that the leaders who have accepted office are so busy holding conferences, making plans, and meeting with policy-makers that they have no time left for talking to plain people. He says:

> The function that lost out was that of providing information to the environmental constituency. Not only environmental leaders, but key volunteers put enormous amounts of time into meetings with the Brown administration. Such meetings can be exciting; they have the aura of power and influence about them. Letting the membership know what is going on and working to involve them in the political process, on the other hand, is less glamorous.
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> Once cut adrift, the constituency lost its momentum; getting the subliminal message that "someone else is taking care of things," constituents stopped writing angry letters and telegrams. The grassroots structures collapsed as the amount of action decreased. The quality of leadership changed; since local networks seemed less important, fewer activists who wanted to bring about change developed as local leaders.

This is all in the language of organization, but the parallel with what Wendell Berry says seems obvious. Their conclusions, however, are not the same. Mr. Pope declares:

> We need to take up the old labor cry, "Organize! Organize"! We need to hire agitators and organizers to balance our lobbyists. We need to give communication with our constituencies a real priority.

Mr. Berry's counsel is on another wave-length. He is seeking the development of people who, by becoming responsible, can no longer be classified as consumers or activists or members of a constituency. These are people no longer dependent on receiving the right information. The responsible consumer is no longer a "consumer," but a person whose responsibility has made him free of many familiar dependencies. Such a person "changes both his life and his surroundings."