VOLUME XX, NO. 10
MARCH 8, 1967

THE MODERN JUNGLE

A DISCUSSION of the effects of "decadence" (in the *Journal of Human Relations,* Fourth Quarter, 1966), by Henry Winthrop, throws light on the "powerlessness" felt by so many. While Dr. Winthrop's article is generally concerned with the social pathologies resulting from political over-centralization, this passage on decadence is especially valuable for its psychological analysis of the confusion which now pervades very nearly all thinking about human ends. Dr. Winthrop, who teaches at the University of South Florida, writes:

> An English philosopher, Joad, has proposed that decadence exists when the view is widespread among thoughtful persons, that experience is to be valued for its own sake, regardless of its quality or content. Derivatively, according to this philosopher, decadence may be said to exist *in a society* when its convictions about the good life, about morals, politics, art and society are simply expressions of this same point of view about experience, but modified for special contexts. Finally, for Joad, decadence will include those scales of values and those modes of taste which are associated with the expression of the view already stated about experience. Joad has criticized the modern posture which approves of decadence and which expresses it by what he calls "dropping of the object." By this phrase Joad refers to the refusal to ask oneself to what ends the experience one seeks are to be put and the even more important refusal to recognize that some ends are appropriate to the quest for experience while others are not.
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> In this way one avoids the normal problem of a choice between good and evil or even the problem of having to ask the question, "What values are worthwhile?" Joad notes three consequences of such a posture: (1) experience will be valued for its own sake, since it cannot be for the sake of anything else; (2) experience will be judged only by the standard of how much pleasure it provides; while (3) we shall tend to hold that the more intense and varied our experience, the better it is.
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> Joad then goes on to show that the dropping of the object is expressed in a variety of contexts. It occurs in politics where the pleasurable experience sought is the increase of power and where only rarely does the power-seeker ask himself to what ends he proposes to put all the increases of power which he hopes to achieve. Even more rarely does the power-seeker, alienated from moral ends, count the consequences which his exercise of power produces upon thousands of individuals who are remote from him in space, social conditions, and ways of life.

"Empirical" evidence that the condition here called "decadence" does indeed exist is provided by the fact that calling attention to it usually generates immediate opposition. The man for whom *intensity* of emotional experience is the highest good naturally turns away from chilling criticism. To be engorged with the fulfillments of feeling provides a sense of "really living," but its partisanship is threatened with exposure by any form of dispassion. At this level there can hardly be dialogue about comparative values. Emotional authority never suffers self-examination well. People who gain their direction from the "wholeness" of emotional intensity will use the methods of reason only as devices of self-justification, and the familiar relativist argument from basic human uncertainty will be introduced to deny the validity of all but personal and private value judgments. Nobody really *knows.* No canons will be allowed.

Argument, in this context, is vain and wasteful. This general situation recalls a lesser one on which Joan Baez has probably made the most useful comment, in an interview in the January *Redbook.* Speaking of the young who have been caught up in the "drug culture," she said:

> It only *seems* like those "free" kids are "free." All I have to do is look at their faces, and after that nobody could convince me that they're having a good time. . . . I can't imagine what any drug would do for me. Also, from seeing the people who take it I feel that it must be worthless and frightening.

The stimulation produced by drugs is of course only a small part of the broad social scene covered by Joad's general definition of decadence reflecting the view "that experience is to be valued for its own sake." The same immunity to criticism is claimed by the True Believer and every sort of emotional partisan. When an entire culture is absorbed in a constellation of views which are welded together by strong feeling, you might personify it in the terms of Havelock's description of the Homeric image of Achilles, saying that here is "a man of strong character, definite personality, great energy and forceful decision, but it would be equally true to say, here is a man to whom it has not occurred, and to whom it cannot occur, that he has a personality apart from the pattern of his acts." So with cultures held in monolithic unity by strong feeling.

Yet it seems wrong to characterize Achilles as "decadent." There is a sense in which a hero like Achilles is the very antithesis of the decadent man. Decadence, then, must mean the posture into which a man falls when he is not living up to his capacity for self-awareness; similarly, the patterns of a decadent culture are patterns which glorify partisan emotional expression in order to rationalize habitual neglect of the synthesizing and critical intellectual powers. For a lurid picture of patterns of decadence, one has only to read in Hannah Arendt's study, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* the pages devoted to the culture and political mood of Berlin in the 1920's. This was a time when—

> Vulgarity with its cynical dismissal of respected standards and accepted theories carried with it a frank admission of the worst and a disregard for all pretenses which were easily mistaken for courage and a new style of life. In the growing prevalence of mob attitudes and convictions—which were actually the attitudes and convictions of the bourgeoisie cleansed of hypocrisy—those who habitually hated hypocrisy and had voluntarily left respectable society saw only the lack of hypocrisy and respectability, not the content itself. . . . What a temptation to flaunt extreme attitudes in the hypocritical twilight of double moral standards, to wear publicly the mask of cruelty if everybody was patently inconsiderate and pretended to be gentle, to parade wickedness in a world, not of wickedness, but of meanness!

Decadence, of course, does not always present this obviously ugly face. The exhilarations of drenching oneself in "experience" represent a style of life which moves from intensity to intensity, and some of these may seem innocent enough. A "go for broke" abandon gains spontaneous approval from what William James called "the *Yes* function in man." It makes him feel as though he were "for the moment one with truth." But increasing disdain for dispassion and comparative analysis gives only the narrowest of theories concerning the full range of experience and values. In every complicated situation, where differentiation and distinction are required, the worshipper of "intensity" longs for an easy solution. He has the habit of following One Simple Rule, and is unlikely to acquire either the background or the patience needed for understanding the views of other men. Decadence thus conditions society for an easy, sliding transition into nihilistic solutions for any and all conflict situations. Men who cannot be persuaded to think critically about what they feel to be "good" are even less likely to deliberate when it comes to solving problems of evil. From seeking "kicks" to making "bangs" is a very .short step.

Let us look at the scene of a decadent society in another way. It is a society in which "morality" is haphazardly taught as a mosaic of old, inherited beliefs to which, except for quite uncomplicated people, there is only a superficial, reflex allegiance. And in this setting—filling, as it were, the vacuum left by waning moral conviction—have grown up a number of power-struggle situations. Where no rules are remembered or thought to apply, the law of the jungle soon prevails, with tacit agreement on the part of those who enjoy practical control that this is the way things *ought* to be. Such men have dark, arrogant, semi-secret theories to justify their views, and these theories have a way of getting around. So a man who thinks of himself as quite "respectable" may find himself gripped by

emotional resistance if, for example, he happens to see a play or a film which has in it a tender love scene between a man and a woman whose skin-color is different from his own. If, almost without knowing it, he has regarded people of another color merely as objects, as "things,"—except for specified areas concerning which he has been drilled in correct opinions—he is now suddenly invited to recognize that he hasn't ever thought of Negroes as people who fall in love just as he does, know sorrow as he knows it, and who long for achievement and dignity as he has longed for it all his life. He is on the verge of discovering that he has only a managed, not a principled and thought-out righteousness, and this may be too much for him to bear.

This man's civilization has given him no over-arching framework of continuous wondering about what is good and right and befitting to a man. It is not that anyone should be expected to "tell" him about such matters; on the contrary, that is part of what has been wrong with him—he thought he knew because someone *had* told him, or rather insinuated to him the only "practical" view. It is the cultural judgment that no inquiry need be made into "what values are worthwhile" that has made him so vulnerable to his unknown or hidden prejudices. It is always the unexamined life which, if trouble comes, moves from one compulsively righteous act to another; and when, slack-jawed and aghast, the man is at last confronted by the full extent of his crimes, he feels himself the victim of inexplicable conspiracy, and says wonderingly, "What else could I do?"

A society which is decadent—which lacks a general dialogue concerning the ends of life—is fragmented into dozens of loosely related sub-cultures with conflicting or competing motivations. Each man vaguely adopts his own short-term, rule-of-thumb ideas of value. And, as Robert Paul Wolff suggests in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance,* from this simple "psychological egoism" it follows that "each individual must view others as mere instruments in the pursuit of his private ends." In a society made up of millions of such individuals, there are no universal reference-points to which the individual may turn in trying to understand his frustrations and defeats, nor by which he may learn to temper his triumphs. Except for the coarse restraints of the law, and a few inherited notions of right and wrong, he has only his inexperienced conscience to guide him, to which may be added, in the passage of time, some occasionally instructive but more often bewildering feed-backs which come from life itself.

Men sometimes wonder, as they reflect upon the fact that they wish no one ill, and regard what they conceive to be their well-intentioned lives, why there continues to be *war*—this obsessive, monstrous, obscene intrusion which gives the lie to all our public declarations and mocks at our high moral claims. The question might be asked: How much day-to-day attention have we given to the requirements of a truly impartial ethics? If we count the generations and centuries during which men have been schooled in the partisan moralities of race, creed, and nation, and listen to the emotional snarling of people who find themselves in some small way deprived of familiar conveniences, it would almost appear that a certain sluggishness in human conduct has been a better safeguard against war than the pretended admiration of peace. Brock Chisholm has written effectively on this:

> It has been said, and I think quite truly, the worst thing that could happen to the next generation is that they might turn out like us. It is true. We have been and are the kind of people who have fought each other in every generation throughout human history. Most of us are still the same kind of people. . . . A great problem is our conscience in this regard: the fact that we, most of us, do earnestly believe that when we are frightened, the way to overcome that and to increase our feeling of security is to kill more people—because this has been inculcated into us very early and very firmly, and most of the members of the human race do still believe that. . . . many people throughout the world do believe that if we could arrange to be able to kill everybody in the world,

including ourselves, say, ten times over, in some queer way we would be more secure.

What, then, is the relation of such attitudes to the state of mind C. E. M. Joad calls "decadence"? This is a question commonly left unexplored because of the equalitarian dogma. We may note that when Dr. Chisholm speaks of faith in "overkill" as the means to security, he says that "many people" have this faith; he does not say *all.* This means that there are some who know better, but from timidity or self-indulgence do not speak out. It means there are some who exploit the tough, militarist credo for political advantage and as the path to demagogic power. And it means, finally, that there are some who stand out against the tide of popular emotion and try to point to a more enduring, more humane faith. Among these latter are the Tolstoys, the Gandhis, and other less famous but courageous men.

How can there be even the beginnings of a reconstructive social psychology without recognition of the reality of these differentiations of moral intelligence? There is of course tacit recognition of them in all utopian expressions, in every advocacy of broad change for the better, every dream of evolutionary social change. *Somebody* has to bear responsibility for initiating the changes, for learning the social and educational dynamics involved, and for proclaiming the ideals to be pursued. In Plato, the Guardians were charged with this responsibility, and the education sought out in the *Republic* was intended to make them equal to it. For Gandhi, this responsibility fell to the Satyagrahi, the Sarvodaya workers—self-disciplined and wholly committed men. Every *serious* proposal for social reconstruction has involved the development of cadres of such responsible individuals. For Lenin, it was the Bolsheviki.

Heroic leaders can of course be either right or wrong, and for distinguishing between the right and wrong in revolutionary proposals we have recourse to the principles of philosophy and the instruction of history: taken together, these should be enough, if we regard them seriously and impartially. The difference between heroic leaders and decadent men who succeed in playing leadership roles is that the latter cater to weakness, to passionate intensity, in their appeals for support. The decadent leader submerges the idea of allegiance to principles in some engrossing self-righteous emotion. He whips up feeling. He knows and uses the imperial compulsions of aggrieved self-interest. He seduces with the promise of a vast historical orgasm. He may even be astute enough to invert some of the rules of high religious discipline and propose a kind of political asceticism to be adopted by the revolutionary élite. And these things may be done with an intoxicated "sincerity" that engulfs his followers in blind devotion while making others think he is simply mad.

There seem to be all grades of such men, including strange mixtures of insight and demagogic skill. It was Huey Long who said, "Sure we'll have Fascism, but it will come disguised as Americanism." There were clear threads of human understanding and compassion in some of the words of Malcolm X. It begins to dawn on the reader of such books as Frederick Kneller's *Educational Philosophy of National Socialism* (1941) and Stephen H. Roberts' *The House that Hitler Built* that the susceptibilities of human beings to vast historical betrayals lie in the area of the moral emotions and that the habit of making over-simplified blanket judgments does little more than facilitate the endless repetition of such betrayals, generation after generation. The here-and-now emotion does not learn from, has no memory of, the past.

The dread simplicities of ideological righteousness are familiar tools of the leader who knows how to hide all that ideology leaves out with a sweeping emotional gesture. An obscure biographer once pointed out that the young Karl Marx lost his first job as editor of an economics journal because he couldn't make up his mind about an issue which required a firm "stand." Alas

for precious ambivalence, which in matters essentially uncertain is equal to integrity. For Marx, another rule apparently prevailed: If you want to activate a world revolution, you have to be *sure.*

Today the seats of power are filled with men who vacillate over the wrong issues. They vacillate in questioning the prosecution of a murderous war. Our best leaders show a fine temperance and express modest doubt of their own opinions when they question the war in Vietnam. But where was this delicate indecision, this philosophic uncertainty, during the days when we were getting involved in this utterly compromising adventure? Then, surely, was the time for a Milton to make himself heard, or a John Brown or a Zola, but sweet temperance stood in the way. In a decadent society, the habitual virtues work in reverse.

It is important, however, to recognize this inversion of principle as a collective ill, and not a disease of leaders alone. When a man *does* cry out his irrepressible convictions on the question of this or any war, it is not only possible but easy for the mass media to identify him as a "fanatic" simply because the common standards of judgment lie in the realm of *habit.* Opinions are based not upon principle but on the forms of past policy, and what a great nation "expects" of loyal citizens. Our young are not schooled in honest questioning, but in the reflexes of partisan dogma. What wonder if, under the incredible provocations of modern life, there are elements of angry and irrational rejection in their revolt? From whom should they have learned the patterns of patient understanding? The justifiers of *napalm?*

These are days when everyone who likes to think of himself as responsible feels the need to improvise a definition of "righteousness," and when almost no one seriously asks how anyone, boy or man, in this society can be expected to find out the truth for himself. This is the situation which confronted Socrates. After more than two thousand years of history, it has hardly changed.

REVIEW

FROM NOISE TO MEANING

SIGN, SYMBOL, IMAGE, another volume in the George Braziller Vision + Value series (six in all, $12.50 each) edited by Gyorgy Kepes, is a heroic attempt to order the chaos of twentieth-century ideas about "knowledge." A wide gamut of contemporary thinking on the subject—from John E. Burchard's precise definitions of terms to a poetic reverie by Ad Reinhardt, plus some wonderful doodling by Robert Osborn—presents a broad invitation to wondering how and if we know all that we think we know.

There are twenty contributions in all. While high points of this book will vary with the reader, the essays we shall return to again and again are those by Lawrence K. Frank, S. Giedion, Abraham Maslow, Edmund Carpenter, Paul Riesman, and Ludwig von Bertalanffy. To find a thread of unity in these diverse offerings, it helps to start out with the idea that Marshall McLuhan's conception of an "anti-environment" haunts most of the pages. The central theme is suggested in the opening paragraph of Lawrence Frank's introductory article:

> The world, as Norbert Wiener once remarked, may be viewed as a myriad of To Whom It May Concern messages. The significance of this statement becomes apparent when we recognize that everything that exists and happens in the world, every object and event, every plant and animal organism, almost continuously emits its characteristic identifying symbol. Thus the world resounds with these many diverse messages, the cosmic noise, generated by the energy transformation and transmission from each existent and event.

Every intelligence in the universe selects the signals that relate him to his environment, while ignoring all the others. Man, as distinguished from the rest, is able to relate these signals in *symbolic* terms, and what he terms "scientific knowledge" grows under elaboration into systems of symbols, of which mathematics is the most obvious example. Thus from science he gains comprehensive insight into the "how" of natural processes. Yet at the same time he is driven by an inner urge to try to manipulate the symbols in a way that will reveal their "why." In the present, man is experiencing a basic frustration from his apparent inability to answer his "why" questions out of scientific knowledge.

Because of this frustration, all the taken-for-granted meanings of symbols are being subjected to critical scrutiny. Especially the "total" explanations are being questioned. Inevitably, in such a period, large human certainties tend to collapse, so that the psychological afflictions which observers find common in our time—anomie, anxiety, frustration—can be understood as a natural effect.

What do men do in such a period—a cycle of decline and endings, as well as a period of psychological rebirth? One thing they do is to declare to themselves: "Well, if no one knows what life means, I at least know what *feels good."* The closing passages of Ludwig von Bertalanffy's essay relate to this trend:

> I am inclined to define the "revolt of the masses" as a return to the conditioned reflex. The unique characteristic of human behavior is the ability to make decisions at a symbolic level. This, of course, does not mean that conditioned behavior is negligible. Any human achievement, from toilet training to speech, driving a car, or learning calculus and theoretical physics, is based on conditioning. However, the dignity of man rests on rational behavior—that is, behavior directed by symbolic anticipation of a goal. In modern man, however, this *vis a fronte,* to use Aristotle's term consisting of goals the individual or the society sets itself, is largely replaced by the primitive *vis a tergo* of conditioned reaction.
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> The modern methods of propaganda, from the advertising of a tooth paste to that of political programs and systems, do not appeal to rationality in man but rather force upon him certain ways of behavior, by means of continuous repetition of stimuli coupled with emotional rewards or punishments. This method is essentially the same as that applied to Pavlovian dogs when they were drilled to respond to a meaningless stimulus with reactions prescribed by the experimenter. Not that this method is new in human history. What is new, however, is that it is applied

scientifically and consistently and so has an unprecedented power. The modern media of mass communication, newspapers, radio, television, and so on, are able to establish this psychological constraint almost without interruption in time, reaching all individuals in space with maximum efficiency. If a slogan, however insipid, is repeated a sufficient number of times and is emotionally coupled with the promise of a reward or the menace of punishment, it is nearly unavoidable that the human animal establishes the conditioned reaction as desired. Furthermore, to apply this method successfully, the conditioning process must be adjusted to the greatest common denominator; that is, the appeal has to be made to the lowest intelligence level. The result is mass-man—abolishment of individual discrimination and decision, and its replacement by universal conditioned reactions.

Here is reinforcement of a common moral judgment of our society from a biologist turned social psychologist. Dr. Bertalanffy's comment is both persuasive and valuable, but it must not be supposed that similar judgment is frequent throughout *Sign, Symbol, Image.* About all that the contributors have in common is the capacity of a specialist to introspect about his specialty (something fairly unusual), so that what emerges is a uniform psychological style.

Another situational diagnosis in psychological terms is given by S. Giedion:

Today the average man appears to have lost the key to his own being, even though he still believes that he knows what he likes and that he can express what he feels. The ruling taste of the times demonstrates the result of this loss, for it affects the entire sphere of emotional activity. The average man, whether governed or governing, has grown indifferent to the flood of surrogates, to *ersatz* in art and architecture, to falsity in expression; and this process has been called "the devaluation of symbols." For a century and a half it has been apparent, and it is still going on. The decline in our community life, our helplessness in finding forms for celebration or leisure, our lack of imaginative power to develop forms to counteract the maladies of our culture—all indicate the extent of man's present disorientation.

It is not difficult to understand how this has come about. The man of today has to bear an enormous and increasing load of intellectual knowledge, while at the same time his emotional world has been steadily atrophying. His emotional apparatus has shrunk to a mere appendage, quite unable to absorb and humanize the knowledge accumulated by his brain. He stands alone. It may be that from new developments in the communal sphere some new suprapersonal spirit will emerge. But at the moment, man must rely on himself. This situation may give us a clue to the nature of those symbols which are today emerging in the work of contemporary painters and poets.

For this reviewer, the most fascinating material in Sign, *Symbol, Image is* in the essays on Eskimo "art" (the term is very misleading) and culture by Edmund Carpenter and Paul Riesman. Another paragraph from Lawrence K. Frank's introduction gives a back-door entry into the discussion of the Eskimos:

The absence of values in nature has been deplored by theologians, humanists, and poets, who fail to realize that the absence of values has made it possible for man to create and continually revise and refine the symbolic goal values by which he has advanced his humanity. If nature had built-in unchanging values, like its basic processes, man would have been restricted to the elementary and archaic patterns of organic existence.

This somewhat confident statement shuts out consideration of what used to be called "religious" experience, but is now coming to be known as "peak experience," and it forecloses on the alternate view that man has not yet learned how to think in the universal terms that the "values in nature" require. Nor can we so flatly ignore the testimony of men who have been quite convinced that at climactic moments they were able to *feel* natural values. The entire primitive world, as Robert Redfield has shown, was convinced of the reality of the law of *immanent justice* in nature, and it may be only a bias of modern abstraction-making that contemporary man has lost this faith. After all, the general laws of the physical sciences were developed pragmatically for the purpose of manipulating matter; and, quite conceivably, to seek for value implications in laws which gained their beautiful simplicity by leaving value out may have been modern man's greatest mistake.

Further, to understand and participate in truly natural values may be the prerogative of only fully evolved man—a development still far, far in the future, especially for a species which so persistently crucifies, burns, or poisons the only examples it has had of this evolutionary possibility.

Paul Riesman, who teaches anthropology at San Fernando State College in California, tells the delightful story of the old Eskimo who, after being demandingly questioned about *why* his tribe practiced its rules of life and taboo customs, took the inquiring social scientist on a tour of the village The Eskimo asked him *why* the father of a cold and hungry family had caught no seal that day; he asked him why the Eskimo's sister was dying of a malignant cough; and there were other unanswerable questions. Then he said: "You see, you are equally unable to give any reason when we ask why life is as it is. And so it must be. All our customs come from life and turn towards life; we explain nothing, we believe nothing, but in what I have shown you lies our answer to all you ask."

The Eskimo's response was like the poet's insistence, "Don't make politics or religion out of what I say."

Yet there is that other insistence which we all feel, and which Mr. Riesman describes, in connection with the failure of science to tell us why things happen to us:

> All that modern science has done in this situation is point out the facts more clearly. Conventional reactions to science, for example, our faith in it, our belief in progress, together with social and technical developments, . . . have made it difficult for people to understand what is going on or what they can do about it. And yet in all times and places human beings have resisted the idea that they are nowhere for no particular reason and for no particular purpose. They have almost always managed to find a somewhere to be, and a reason to be there. The finding of these somewheres is an activity which is crucial to human life, for people seem to go to pieces when events force them to contemplate the ultimate nowhere of their lives. Then they act in ways which the majority of mankind would consider inhuman, ways which they themselves would consider inhuman from the point of view of somewhere.

Contrasted with the Eskimo's total submergence in and harmony with his natural surroundings—his bleak and frozen universe—modern man has assumed a larger and seemingly impossible project with, so far, very little success. Mr. Riesman writes:

> To the extent that modern man lives completely within his civilization, . . . he lives within a sterile dream world. The dreams are not his own dreams—he is afraid to dream his own dreams. Once fabricated, the forms of civilization have no power to grow in their own right and interact with the human beings who live in them. The only things which grow and change in themselves are organisms, whose meanings and purposes are unknown, to be discovered: this means people other forms of life, and the universe itself in all its aspects. Fabricated objects and meanings do not have this property. Growth is a process which can take place only in some kind of interaction or transaction between two different organisms. Thus man living in civilization stifles his own growth, and if he is sensitive to this, falls into deep despair.

The great question, not asked by Prof. Riesman, is whether man might be able to build a civilization of "fabricated objects" which would not have this stultifying effect. Could there be applications of technology sensitive to organic growth-processes? The only man we know of who has addressed himself to this problem is Buckminster Fuller.

COMMENTARY
IMMANENT IN MAN

THROUGHOUT the quotations from *Sign, Symbol, Image* in this week's Review is a single insistent theme—the need for a restoration of values, and at the same time the necessity of finding new sources of conviction concerning the values we adopt. The negative account of our problem is well stated in the passages from Ludwig von Bertalanffy, S. Giedion, and Paul Riesman. Put simply, it is that the modes of action which prevail in the technological society tend to unfit human beings to behave like human beings. The psychological stimuli of the technological culture are designed to frustrate rational behavior and to substitute the responses of the conditioned reflex.

We are beginning to know, in other words, what we ought not to do. But what we ought to do, and how to stop what we are doing—these are closely related and wholly unanswered questions. If the "mass-man" results from the suppression "of individual discrimination and decision," then, surely, whatever we do, it will not bring what we want unless these qualities are restored. Happily, one of the contributors to *Sign, Symhol, Image* not cited in Review devotes himself to just this kind of inquiry.

Dr. A. H. Maslow is a humanistic psychologist for whom scientific method will never dictate conclusions of the sort which result when method is a camouflage for metaphysical assumptions. It is of course a platitude that people see in the world what they bring to it in terms of attitude and feeling, but under Dr. Maslow's development—his paper is titled "Isomorphic Interrelationships Between Knower and Known"—this principle seems to grow into the foundation of a new scientific epistemology. He uses his studies of self-actualizing people to say a "last word about what I call B-cognition (cognition of Being)." Here, one could substitute the word Nature for Being without doing violence to the intent. Of Being-cognition, Dr. Maslow writes:

> This seems to me to be the purest and most efficient kind of perception of reality (although this remains to be tested experimentally). It is a truer and more veridical perception of the percept because most detached, most objective, least contaminated by the wishes, fears, and needs of the perceiver. It is noninterfering, non-demanding, most accepting. In B-cognition, dichotomies tend to fuse, categorizing tends to disappear and the percept is seen as unique.

It is reasonable to suggest that if there *are* values in the universe, around us, only this sort of perception has any hope of getting on their track.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
ON THROWING AWAY THE BOOKS

THIS Department has various helpers—readers and friends, that is, who send in printed material on the subject of teaching children and educating youth. A great deal of practical experience is compacted in this writing about children—about their innate human possibilities and their psychological needs—and judging from the amount of material which accumulates in our files, there are *vast* resources of information on the rearing and education of the young. All you need is a library card.

There is, however, a certain practical defect in much of this material. It contains, for example, not even a hint of such secrets as the one found out by a practicing psychologist whose case load in a public institution was so great that he "had to learn all sorts of tricks for doing psychotherapy in two minutes." Even in such impossible circumstances he was able to give some help. He found that a resourceful, healthy mother endowed with common sense and self-respect needed to be told something like this: "Throw away all the books; don't listen to the doctors; don't ask psychologists anything; follow your own intuitions. I guarantee you that they will work well on the whole, and, in any case, will work better than any instructions you get from other people."

But if, on the other hand, the woman who came to consult gave evidence of being confused, unstable, neurotic, and immature, she was offered a list of books to read, with possibly some further suggestions as to psychotherapy. How did the psychologist decide what to say? Well, he had to make a judgment based on insight distilled from experience; he had to decide whether the person who came for help could tell the difference between "the inner voices of authenticity and the inner voices of neurosis."

In two minutes? Why not? He hardly had a choice, since there wasn't any more time, and you can say his guess was probably better than most anyone else's. There is also the strong possibility that it wasn't really a "guess." Executive decisions are made every day on that kind of evidence. In any event, in that situation, there was nothing else he could do except quit.

The circumstances of this experience recall another kind of situation which happens every day in Los Angeles and probably in every other big city in the United States. Every night the police sweep up the drunks they find on the streets and every morning they are brought before some judge. A judge often has to make up his mind how to sentence or otherwise dispose of a hundred or more half-sobered-up people in the space of one morning in court. He has to do it right then, because more people are waiting to be brought before him. So he will make up some theories about drinkers and decide the best he can. Most of the offenders, in the case of one judge, got sent to an honor-camp jail out in the country. Fresh air, honest toil, the judge thought, would be good for such people. Maybe it is; and maybe the medical examiner at the camp won't be a top quality doctor who can tell at the glance he has time for that some of the men sent to the camp ought to be hospitalized. Then there is the matter of how much individual consideration a "drunk" has the right to expect from a technological society that is busily and efficiently making large quantities of liquor and other good things. Maybe sixty days of scraping brush off firebreaks will teach him to do his drinking more efficiently.

All through our society there are people who have to make such decisions about other people, *right now,* and then go on to other things. This is not the Beloved Community; it is not a Therapeutic Society; it is a tough, do-business, get-rich, warlike nation in which we snatch up the hindermost from final ruin only when he is easy to classify as having "failed," and deal with him quickly and leanly on a public welfare basis. He just didn't make it.

So, when you talk about education, you are talking about education in and for *that* society, with all the limitations this implies regarding the learning process. Thus there is this kind of secret, too, which doesn't get much attention from writers about child education—but actually, instead of being a real secret, it is only a great big fact which is ignored

because the people who write books don't know what to do about it, and neither do the parents who are going to read the books.

So there can't ever be a really good book on education that is at the same time both wise and comfortable. Which is to say that this is not a time in which a conscientious human being will *want* to feel comfortable, nor is it a time when a conscientious educator can write a book without generating some discomfort in his readers.

Here are some "comfortable" words on child welfare:

> The development of your child's native traits into his personality begins soon after birth, when he begins crying for nourishment and attention, cooing when his wishes are satisfied, screaming when he is denied or unattended. He develops habits of reacting to various influences.
>
> During his preschool years, he learns to conform to certain rules; otherwise he will be punished either by loss of love or spanking. At nursery school he learns that there are further laws of conduct which apply not only to himself but to all the other children in the group. He takes his first step in social conformity, and lessons he learns in conducting himself with other individuals may well influence his relations with other persons throughout his life. It may not be too far-fetched to say that the executive of a large corporation, whose success lies in getting along with people, learned how to do it on a sand pile.

Well, what's wrong with that? Maybe nothing. But maybe a lot. For example, take the idea of nursery school. This passage says that *of course* your child will go to nursery school. That's the thing to do with your child. We remember a little girl who went to nursery school and in a few weeks began coming home echoing all the little clichés and shallow semi-vulgarities of her peers. It was not the best possible experience for *her*. She survived, of course, and developed into a fine young woman, but at that age, before she went to nursery school, she had the qualities of a child brought up in a home where noticeable elements of delicacy and refinement were being absorbed by her through the somewhat exceptional environment which *belonged to* her. Just perhaps, going to nursery school was for her a mistake. Whole philosophies of man may be involved in a value judgment like this one, and what seems important to say, here, is that the evaluation of the nursery school experience is not a simple affair. The question has at least *two* answers. One is statistical and social; the other relates to individual need. The two answers should not be confused, nor should the fact that there are two answers ever be neglected. This is not said to cloud the fact that nursery schools have undoubtedly been a veritable salvation to countless small children. Yet one recalls Ralph Ellison's account of his own glorious childhood and the imaginative fantasies which he and his companions improvised on the streets of a middle western city. One doubts that Ellison, in retrospect, would exchange these wonderful years for the most beneficently controlled nursery school environment.

Then, on the matter of learning on the sand pile the techniques of how to become a successful Organization Man—well, by the time the child grows up, it may be far more important for the quality and fate of even his Corporation for him to have learned how to *differ* with people. Just a hint of this possibility would have helped.

Such matters may seem far too complicated to be charted in a book. Yet the parents will read the book, not the children. What the parents will do for their children, in preparing them for life, will surely depend in part upon whether or not they have absorbed nothing but comfortable stereotypes from books on child education.

FRONTIERS

Training for Adventure

THIS is an article intended for individuals interested in the conservation movement of the 1970's and 1980's. I write as a mountain-climber as well as a conservationist, for the subject is a new kind of school which fuses these two heretofore largely independent traditions.

The National Outdoor Leadership School began in 1965 as the only school of its kind. It uses the vast wilderness region of the Wind River Mountain Range in Wyoming for its summer "classes." The subject taught, as the school's name implies, is outdoor leadership, learned on rugged adventure trips which find their focus in the safe climbing of major mountains.

NOLS may not be unique for long. Impetus for the spread of this idea can be expected from the fact that this summer the University of Wyoming will begin to award two academic credits for graduation from the NOLS course. If even a small fraction of the universities in America follow this lead, wilderness leadership training will become a virtual movement in itself as well as part of the conservation movement.

Before examining the roots of NOLS in American mountaineering and conservationism—and before reporting on the program of its summer course—it may arouse interest to give one or two details about this winter's attempt on the Grand Teton (mounted from December 29 through January 5), which came within 350 feet of the summit. The mass media no doubt reported that 100-mile gale winds had a part in stopping the ten-man NOLS party short of its goal. Similar winds defeated the effort last year, but then the party was larger and less experienced, being obliged to stop about half way up after three days of climbing on skis. Under the same severe conditions, this year's climbers almost reached the top.

The hour was growing late on the summit-assault day when one of the climbers, John Hern, began to lead the crux pitch of the climb—the famous Owen Chimneys. I wonder if the newscasters spoke of the encounter with "black ice"? It was the treacherous "black ice" condition in the Owen Chimneys which ended the climb. Blizzard conditions alone would not have done so.

On the Grand Teton, "black ice" can be bad even in summer. Back in 1958, one of America's finest climbers, Yves Chouinard, devoted weeks to an attempted first route in the Black Ice Couloir on the Grand Teton. When he'd come down from his camp on Teton Glacier to change climbing partners, his description of experiences in the couloir would set my hair on end. No ascent was managed until three years later; when the conditions had changed. "Black ice" it was which stopped the NOLS winter party on the Grand Teton recently.

The Christmas vacation climbs on the Grand Teton serve in the NOLS program as advanced training and a test—and incidentally a reward—for the school's summer instructors. Later in the season the mountain is known to be easier to climb. Paul Petzoldt, founder of NOLS, led the first winter ascent in 1936, and the second in 1948. Now near 60, Mr. Petzoldt has been leading the recent winter ascents.

A full winter course is not yet offered by NOLS, although this is planned for the future. To date only the summer program has been in operation—three one-month courses in the Wind River Mountain Range. More than a hundred students graduate from the course each summer.

Essentially, the purpose of the course is to train outdoor leaders: a simple but potentially vital program in the overall American educational picture. NOLS teaches the absolute necessities in its one-month course, leaving out all else. Hand-in-hand with each skill taught, judgment is stressed—and at a level which makes for easy transfer from one situation to another. There are no "lectures"; climbing is talked about only in the

context of its accomplishment. And the practice of leadership, like judgment, is integrated by NOLS instructors with day-to-day experience in the field. On occasion, each student is given an interval of complete responsibility for his patrol of from seven to twelve individuals.

What are the "essentials" of outdoor leadership? Briefly, for the Rocky Mountains, they include knowledge of organization, supply, equipment, logistics, rock climbing, snow and glacier techniques, rescue, first aid, fly fishing, rationing, cooking, map reading, horse-packing, forest fire fighting, survival, advanced camping.

Social factors are of course involved. Social acceptability and a self-effacing disposition are important—plus a readiness to make decisions. Most important of all is reliability. The future leaders who attend NOLS learn to realistically appraise their own abilities and those of others.

Taking account of the fact that most wilderness skills must function in relation to other skills, NOLS instructors are careful not to teach any given technique in isolation. Put another way, this means that techniques tend to be taught bit by bit, spread over the entire month's course, not outlined in their entirety while related techniques remain unknown. This is one key to the development of judgment and the avoidance of dangerous "blank spots" in a future leader's training.

Readers may be familiar with the Outward Bound program for young people. Growing rapidly, Outward Bound now has twenty separate programs in Europe and six in the U.S. An acute shortage of competent wilderness leaders has hampered the progress of Outward Bound. In 1964, just prior to his founding of NOLS, Paul Petzoldt directed the original (Colorado) Outward Bound program—and the need for leaders which he experienced first-hand at that time was one of the reasons for the creation of NOLS. The many factors which assure growth of the Outward Bound movement portend the same for outdoor leadership programs.

Allow me to dwell for a bit on the importance, at the present stage of the conservation and mountaineering movements, of the kind of leadership which NOLS is endeavoring to produce. Anyone who has had a taste of mountaineering knows that skill and experience in the *leading* of wilderness climbing trips are no small matter. Lack of trained leaders is doubtless one factor which has caused the failure of groups such as the Boy Scouts in this area. On the other hand, the adult conservation movement—centered in groups such as the Audubon Society, Sierra Club and Wilderness Society—does manage to provide trained wilderness leaders, but as a rule adequate training has been given by these groups to their own leaders only. The bulk of money and attention goes into campaigns for legislation to strengthen the National Park and wilderness systems. Yet crucial though legislation may be in a time of spiralling population and economic pressures, some new factor must enter the picture if such legislative programs are to concern the *next* generation. One answer to this need would be a large body of citizens devoted to personal enjoyment and use of the wilderness, and for education of the young.

NOLS, with its 100 annual graduates, is obviously a small pilot project. But solidly managed and funded, NOLS may well be destined to envigorate for many years the movement to which it has given birth. For further information, write to Paul Petzoldt, Director, N.O.L.S., Box 779, Lander, Wyoming.

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