

THE BURDENS OF THE SPECIALISTS

WHERE does a praxis get its rules or guiding principles? Take education. Education is a specialty. It shouldn't be, since education is the matrix in which the young are supposed to get their preparation for life, but it works out in practice as a specialty which takes its guiding principles, its "givens," from sources external to itself. This is true not only of grade schools in areas with difficult problems and pressures. It applies to the higher learning, insofar as the universities of the land share in the view of Clark Kerr that these institutions ought to be known as "multiversities," since the technical complexity of the branches of learning has reached a point where, in this view, they cannot possibly be unified under one integrating theory of knowledge.

What ought a teacher, a high school principal, or a district supervisor, to take as the "givens" in his work?

In an article in the June *Atlantic*, "A Minority Nobody Knows," Helen Rowan asks how school officials "can summon the arrogance to brand young children as mentally deficient when it is the tests and the schools which are deficient." She continues:

In California, Negro and Mexican-American children are overwhelmingly over-represented proportionately in classes for the "mentally retarded." A former education official (an angry Anglo) told me of visiting a school in the San Joaquin Valley where he saw records listing one child as having an I.Q. of 46. Wanting to learn more about how such a mental basket case could function at all, he inquired around and found that the child, a boy of eleven, has a paper route, takes care of his four younger brothers and sisters after school, and prepares the evening meal for the family. He also speaks no English.

In California it is illegal for teachers to use any language but English in the classroom. Spanish-speaking teachers naturally break this

law. They are *teachers*, and you can't teach without communication. The idea of insisting on English is of course part of an "Americanization" program. But the way this "given" works out is totally anti-American. Mrs. Rowan says:

By denying the child the right to speak his own language (in some places children are still punished for speaking Spanish even on the playground), the system is telling him, in effect, that his language, his culture, and by extension himself, are inferior. And he rapidly becomes truly inferior in achievement, since the teachers must perforce water down the subject matter, such as arithmetic and social studies, for use as a vehicle for teaching English rather than the subject itself.

Well, who figures out the "givens" of education in the United States, and who is it that cares so little when they don't work and are ridiculously inflexible, as in this case? We don't really know. Nobody knows. This question is so complex that an answer would involve a "social study" of the entire country and all our history.

One over-simplifying answer would be to say that the "givens" are in part inherited slogans and in part anxious improvisations. Take the new stress on mathematics and technical subjects. If you look objectively at how it came about, you realize that this new "given" handed over to the teachers was a fairly sudden decision that the Spartans knew more about education than the best American pedagogues. In Sparta, as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* relates in the article on Education, "the end of the state as a military organization was kept steadily in view, and . . . after early childhood, the young citizens were trained directly by the state in a kind of barrack life—the boys to become warriors, the girls the mothers of warriors." For technological war, of course, we don't need barracks, but we do need more science and math, so that, as an educator put it recently, "Suddenly the pressure is put on us,

telling us that a strict, scientific and demanding curriculum should be put back into the elementary school, the kindergarten, and perhaps even the nursery school." Now is the time for emphasis on "the development of skills in physics, chemistry, and all the hardware sciences." Where do these "givens" come from? "The vicissitudes of political issues directly and indirectly exert their vast pressures on the educational system and on us, the educators."

The program can be defended. If military training shapes character with its discipline, study of math and science orders the mind and sharpens its faculties. We are getting "flabby," anyhow. In vain will J. B. Priestley warn that the real "lost souls don't wear their hair long and play guitars. They have crew cuts, trained minds, sign on for research in biological warfare, and don't give their parents a moment's worry." Priestley is just an aging English novelist, probably a friend of Bertrand Russell. You wouldn't want to take your "givens" from *them!*

Obviously, the entire question of humanistic priorities and values, of how the "givens" in the responsibilities of educational specialists should be determined, is lost in the morass of "practicality." And "practicality" gets its variable definition from the vicissitudes of political issues or from undeliberated dictates of impulse, desire, or fear.

There are several ways to behave in a situation of this sort. One is to brazen it out. You can argue that the response of the social community to anxieties produced by the Soviet Sputnik was a natural result of democratic concern for the survival of our political system; that we do have to get ourselves ready for the tough times ahead; and that a small interruption in our fun and games (made possible by the highest standard of living in the world) is probably "healthy" at this time. You can argue that even if the Liberal-Progressive position is getting a little uneasy and hard to maintain, these days, there isn't any other position and we'll just have to make the best of it. As to the inequities in the social

system, the uncertain character of political decision, the susceptibilities of the population to demagogic manipulation—on these things you can say that a free, self-governing society always has such problems as a condition of life, and we are really making great efforts to solve them. Anyhow, what *else* can we do?

The point of setting up this last question is to propose that while there may be an answer to it, there isn't any *ideological* answer to it, which is why we don't ever hear one worth listening to. The modern world has had enough experience with competing ideological systems to make it plain that they are all fatally flawed, since, in order to maintain their assumptions, they are obliged to practice thought-control, militarism, and varying degrees of terrorism. One can of course work up all sorts of theoretical answers, but such answers always involve turning over the seats of power to their inventors, and in human experience a political theory almost *never* works out in practice the way it is supposed to. This is the explanation for the fact that the most thoughtful men of our time are increasingly drawn to communitarian experiments and counter-society proposals. They want a prove-it-as-you-go approach to social problems. Such an approach is the only reliable or acceptable reading of the phrase, "the end of ideology."

Since ours is indeed a specialist society, some more inspection of the typical problems of the specialists should be useful. We started out by looking at the work of educators, conceived as specialists. Another class of specialists whose work depends in another way on the attitudes of human beings at large is made up of the environment-designers—architects, urban planners, and redevelopers. What are the "givens" of these people, and where do they get them? In a short text titled, "Are Our Cities Dying?" (printed as part of an Alcan ad in *Time* for May 19), Edward J. Logue, Boston's administrator of redevelopment, says the following:

Technology has made it possible for the very important people who dominate our economy to use only a piece of the city quite comfortably, regardless of the decay that is never more than a mile from their seats of power. These powerful men are usually those who have done the least to make the city livable. As wealth and power increasingly ignore land and political boundaries, it is possible to grow up, prosper and die without ever having been a citizen of a city in the Athenian sense; a fund raiser for alma mater, or a board member on a community chest agency, seems to be the average limit. . . .

When banks redline a blighted area and shut off investment they may protect against short run risk. But there is a cumulative loss of confidence that can change a whole city's faith in itself. Unfortunately, most new investment decisions—a branch bank, a supermarket, a new factory—are made in areas entirely safe. Do we realize what we do when we rule entire sections of a community off limits? Why are we surprised when those millions thus cut off from society decide that they do not belong and do not care?

But if you had shares in a bank, what are the "givens" you would want the loan committee to be guided by? Should they choose a carefully guarded risk or a problematic venture in urban renewal? If everybody else is out for himself, why should you underwrite a "social experiment"? A bank is supposed to make a profit, isn't it? That's why you invest in the bank.

Loyal, reverent, brave, and true to such principles, Mr. Logue says in his little article:

I believe that the private enterprise system must face the challenge of the slums.

The imagination and the drive that has made our system the most productive in the world must be turned to the task of renewing our cities.

Mr. Logue has some catchy ideas such as offering tax-exempt securities for investment in the slums, but what is more interesting, right now, is the record of the private enterprise system, thus far, in slum clearance and redevelopment. What seems a good summary of the process was given by Theodore Roszak in *Peace News* for Oct. 9, 1964, in an article on urban renewal. This, he says, is what happens:

1. Negroes and other underprivileged social elements are "removed"—often driven haphazardly—to other slums (preferably in other cities) or, where there has been better planning, they are walled up into some hive-like public housing. The typical housing project is oversized, slapdash, characterless, ponderously utilitarian, often prison-like, densely and noisily populated—and clearly marked out as public housing, so that its residents cannot escape the stigma of their poverty. Thus, in one way or another, the original ghetto is reconstituted. The gross injustice of some of these practices has become so clear that, under pressure from federal housing authorities, some cities have begun taking care to relocate their "renewal DP's"—in some cases by subsidizing their rents in ordinary neighborhoods.

2. The slum landlords are then bought out by the city state, or federal governments, and their land sold to private developers at criminally low prices—in order to provide "incentive."

3. The private developers then slap up characterless "middle-income" housing which is depressing in almost every respect—but possessing electric garbage disposals and wall-to-wall carpeting.

What is fundamentally wrong with such urban renewal is the refusal of those in charge to recognize that the renewing of cities involves the renewing of people. A slum is not simply ramshackle buildings and filthy streets; it is rather depressed and socially useless people who cannot afford (often cannot clearly comprehend) the social respectability they want sorely to enjoy.

Here, again, we see the consequences of the "givens" of the people involved. A perceptive, public-spirited administrator finds it absolutely necessary to devise some means of putting urban renewal within the area of the acquisitive "givens" of the free enterprise system, in the hope that, as he put it, "we might just connect up IO million presently forsaken people with the mainstream of American life." Obviously, another set of assumptions and another kind of logic are required for working with and for those ten million people and the re-creation of their home environment. But who has charge of "givens" of this sort?

Sometimes designers themselves wonder about such questions. An award-winning essay on city planning, "A City Is Not a Tree," by

Christopher Alexander, an architect and mathematician who teaches at the University of California, exhibits a very different phase of the problem of "givens." In awarding prizes to Mr. Alexander and other winners, the judges remarked that "detailed considerations and industrial design paled into insignificance when seen against the massive problems of social planning and its expression in the structure and forms of the modern city." The judges also observed that the modern city is "reaching a point of crisis," and that today "the city is a system of vast complexity and in turn part of a bigger system of social organization whose values and goals are being questioned."

The interesting thing about Mr. Alexander's "systems analysis" approach to city planning is that while he does not overtly exceed the "givens" of the city planner—in terms of general theory—he nonetheless shows awareness of the problems of "the renewing of people." A designer can hardly prescribe for such a renewal, but he can accommodate its necessities in his plans. Mr. Alexander's proposition, "A city is not a tree," means simply that designers tend to simplify the organic structure of a city into a treelike affair, with one basic trunk or chine, and with branches for its main functions. But, he points out, that is not the way a real city grows into being. A city, he says, is a semi-lattice, which means a multiple-centered construction with many cross-connections and odd interrelations and overlappings. Designs of complete cities are difficult, and most of them fail, he says, because designers, "limited as they must be by the capacity of the mind to form intuitively accessible structures, cannot achieve the complexity of the semi-lattice in a single mental act." It is for this reason, he continues—"because the mind's first function is to reduce ambiguity and overlap in a confusing situation, and because, to this end, it is endowed with a basic intolerance for ambiguity—that structures like the city, which do require overlapping sets within them, are nevertheless persistently conceived as trees." Mr. Alexander

concludes his discussion (which originally appeared in *Architectural Forum* for April and May, 1966):

When we think in terms of trees we are trading the humanity and richness of the living city for a conceptual simplicity which benefits only designers, planners, administrators and developers. Every time a piece of a city is torn out, and a tree is made to replace the semi-lattice that was there before, the city takes a further step toward dissociation.

In any organized object, extreme compartmentalization and the dissociation of internal elements are the first sign of coming destruction. In a society, dissociation is anarchy. In a person, dissociation is the mark of schizophrenia and impending suicide. An ominous example of city-wide dissociation is the separation of retired people from the rest of urban life, caused by the growth of desert cities for the old, like Sun City, Arizona. This separation is only possible under the influence of tree-like thought.

It not only takes from the young the company of those who have lived long, but worse, it causes the same rift inside each individual life. As you yourself pass into Sun City, and into old age, your ties with your own past will be unacknowledged, lost, and therefore broken. Your youth will not longer be alive in your old age—the two will be dissociated, your own life will be cut in two.

For the human mind, the tree is the easiest vehicle for complex thoughts. But the city is not, cannot, and must not be a tree. The city is a receptacle for life. If the receptacle severs the overlap of the strands of life within it, it will be like a bowl of razor blades on edge, ready to cut up whatever is entrusted to it. In such a receptacle life will be cut to pieces. If we make cities which are trees, they will cut our life within to pieces.

What, actually, have we here? Mr. Alexander's conclusions constitute a radical enrichment of the "givens" of the city planner, founded on insight into the nature of human life and explicated by mathematical analysis of human behavior in the patterns of urban existence. He is, you could say, an empiricist whose observations are so searching that he is able to see the expression of human needs in their objective aspect and to make provision for them in his initial

conception of the relationships which city planning must allow and facilitate.

This, in a general way, points to the conclusion we have been seeking. It is that the "givens" of any specialist, or of any specialist profession which has to do with the lives of human beings, while they will have a natural limit established by the scope and responsibilities of their specialty, ought also to be informed by an overview of the incommensurable values inherent in a philosophy of human life. This is the *noblesse oblige* of the professional, and his practice will have no human excellence unless the mandates of these values pervade everything he does. If the traditional "givens" of his profession or specialist activity are contradicted by those values, then he had better improve them or find some other kind of work to do—work which deals with problems of matter instead of those of man.

And we have here, also, the basic explanation of the failure of ideologies and ideology-dominated thinking to meet the endlessly proliferating *human* problems of organized society. An ideology is an attempt to externalize and give finite, operational definition of incommensurable, human values. It attempts to technologize human life, and it doesn't work. It cannot be made to work. Awareness of incommensurable values resides in human beings, not in externalized systems. Individual man is the place of conjunction and interrelation between finite and incommensurable values. The accommodation of the finite to the incommensurable is an individual act informed by individual insight and wisdom. Such accommodation is absolutely indispensable. The social community where this is widely understood and practiced will be a community where habitual resolution of this paradox by individuals creates the *atmosphere* of a free society.

Only in the presence of this atmosphere will men be able to understand the limit that must be placed upon the "givens" of any and all specialties. Another observant empiricist of our time, Prof.

Karl Popper, has stated the same principle in negative terms, in relation to the ambitions and presumptions of ideology:

. . . it must be one of the first principles of rational politics that *we cannot make heaven on earth*. The development of communism illustrates the terrible danger of the attempt. It has often been tried, but it has always led to the establishment of something like hell. Those who are inspired by this heavenly vision of an angelic society are bound to be disappointed, and when disappointed, they try to blame their failure on scapegoats, on human devils who maliciously prevent the coming of the millennium, and have to be exterminated. . . . Communism has reintroduced slavery, terror, and torture; and this we must not condone and cannot forgive. Yet we must not forget that all this happened because the founders of communism believed in a theory which promised freedom—freedom for all mankind. We must not forget in this bitter conflict that even this worst evil of our time was born out of a desire to help others. . . . (*Etc.*, May, 1963.)

The crucially operative word in the foregoing is "*make*, in the first sentence. Ideologies declare their competence to *make* the good life come about. They cannot do it. No ideology can do it. The good life results only when a sufficient number of individuals, living according to their individual ways, practicing their individual "givens," accept the priorities of incommensurable values and qualify all their actions by these values, *but only as each man sees them for himself*.

How can we be certain about this? We can't. That is the meaning of faith in man. If, then, we cannot have certainty, how may it become possible to hope? Hope, it seems plain, becomes possible only by increasing our faith, which means setting about to generate wider awareness of the importance of incommensurable values, and the realization that they survive only in the hearts of those who accept them voluntarily. This point of view would in time bring radical transformation, but it would be a transformation that develops in small increments, by subtle increases in vision and delicate alterations of perspective, in all men. This is the way human beings—and their good towns and cities—grow.

REVIEW

FOUNDATIONS OF TOMORROW'S SCIENCE

IN the first section of *Personal Knowledge* (University of Chicago Press, 1958), titled "The Art of Knowing," Michael Polanyi speaks of the milieu in which scientific discovery takes place, and of its indefinable character. He writes:

. . . While *the articulate contents of science* are successfully taught all over the world in hundreds of new universities, *the inspecifiable art of scientific research* has not yet penetrated to many of these. The regions of Europe in which the scientific method first originated 400 years ago are scientifically more fruitful today, in spite of their impoverishment, than several overseas areas where much more money is available for scientific research. Without the opportunity offered to young scientists to serve an apprenticeship in Europe, and without the migration of European scientists to the new countries, research centres overseas could hardly ever have made much headway.

To make this point in another way, Dr. Polanyi speaks of "lost arts":

. . . an art which has fallen into disuse for the period of a generation is altogether lost. There are hundreds of examples of this to which the process of mechanization is continuously adding new ones. It is pathetic to watch the endless efforts—equipped with microscopy and chemistry, with mathematics and electronics—to reproduce a single violin of the kind the half-literate Stradivarius turned out as a matter of routine more than 200 years ago.

These seem entirely reasonable generalizations and we have no doubt that Dr. Polanyi could produce much evidence in their support. But what about the creation of *new foci* for the practice of a science that has a base different from the kind of researches pursued in Europe for four hundred years? Just possibly, such science would need a milieu free of earlier scientific assumptions—even though we admit that *any* innovating discovery involves a break with the past.

Musings of this sort come naturally from reading a remarkable book, *The Morning Notes of*

Adelbert Ames, Jr., edited by Hadley Cantril and published by Rutgers University Press (1960, \$6.00). Ames, who died in 1955, became a lawyer in his youth, then painted for four years. The painting drew him to study physiological optics—a field to which he devoted the rest of his life. The jacket flap summarizes the impetus behind this work:

Approaching his subject from the base of optics and the psychology of vision, Adelbert Ames went on to examine the nature of reality as it presents itself to the experiencing human being. A closer scrutiny of this book will reveal a noble, almost heroic, effort to reach the very frontier of man's possible comprehension of himself and his self-created world.

The last phrase here is a happy one since it suggests something of Ames' conclusion that our world is far more self-created than we suspect. No one need fear a technical vocabulary in this book, although it nonetheless makes great demands upon the reader. It is an ordinary-language account of the rigorous introspective thinking which Ames pursued over a period of fourteen years. Of his work at Dartmouth, including discovery of the eye defect called *aniseikonia* and his invention of glasses to correct it, and his experimental "perception demonstrations," which showed the extent to which we see what we *expect* to see, rather than "what is there," Horace Kallen said:

To me, there is something integrally American in this record, with the frontiersman of the mind taking over and transvaluing the faith and works of the frontiersman of the woods. There is likewise something suggestive of Leonardo.

The careful reader will not find this too high praise. Alfred North Whitehead called Ames an "authentic genius," and John Dewey wrote to him in 1946: "It would not be possible for me to overstate my judgment as to the importance of your demonstrations with respect to visual perception . . . they bear upon the entire scope of psychological theory and upon all practical applications of psychological knowledge." The last sixty pages of the book presents

correspondence between Ames and Dewey. This collaboration in thinking lasted about four years and ended when Dewey, in failing health, was ninety-one and Ames sixty-eight.

In his Preface, Hadley Cantril tells of his excitement when he first experienced Ames' demonstrations, which for Cantril confirmed "in simple and direct fashion the fact that our perceptions, our attitudes, our prejudices are learned significances for purposive behavior, significances which we ourselves have created in order to act effectively and which we are unlikely to alter unless and until our action is frustrated or our purposes change." The way the "morning notes" got written is of more than incidental interest. Prof. Cantril writes:

He [Ames] had the habit of putting a problem to himself in the evening just before he went to bed. Then he "forgot" it. The problem never seemed to disturb his sleep. But he often "found" the next morning on awakening that he had made progress on the problem. And as soon as he got to his office he would pick up his pencil and pad of paper and begin to write. He always said he didn't know just "what would come out," and dozens of times he would call me at Princeton in the middle of the morning, ask, courteously, if I had a few minutes, and say, "Hadley, listen to this. I'm surprised at the way it's turning out and I think it will interest you." It was almost as though he himself were a spectator.

And, indeed, that Ames was in some sense a spectator of his own thought seems to add greatly to the sense of confidence the reader has in what he says. It is of course impossible to summarize this book. The reader becomes the companion of a wise, very acute, and warmly humane man who day by day is extending the horizons of his self-knowledge and his knowledge of the external world. What becomes clear is the virtually absolute interdependence of these two kinds of knowledge. You could say that one is a special case of the other, yet to be able to distinguish between them is also crucial. One begins to see that the new kind of psychological science now being born will depend upon those who recognize that such paradoxes are of the essence of the

human situation and who engage with enthusiasm in the search for whatever kind of "order" may lie behind them.

It is of course too soon to speak of the "integration" of such science in terms of first or general principles. The subjective factor in the work of men like Ames—both its genius and its unanalyzable distinction—requires a new criterion for whatever "public truth" may in time result. It is enough to report that, troubled by the resistances of other psychologists to the work he and Ames were doing together, Cantril remarked about it to Dr. Einstein. In reply Einstein smiled broadly and said, "I learned many years ago never to waste time trying to convince my colleagues."

Here, we can do little more than offer brief samples of Ames' reflections. In a "morning note" on the radical difference between human perceptions and "what" we look at, he wrote:

. . . our perceptual awarenesses are not disclosures to us of the nature of what we are looking at but only provide us with a prognosis as to its significance . . . Significance to the individual means importance to him. It is apparent that no understanding of the nature of perceptions is possible without some understanding of why what a person is perceptually aware of is of importance to him. It seems apparent that what a person is perceptually aware of is of importance to him in that it provides him with awareness of how to act and behave effectively in the particular environment in which he finds himself, i.e. to carry out his purposes or, more specifically, to attain goals natural to him as a human being to fulfill his wants, wishes, desires, and experience value satisfactions. . . . The point that is being made is that there is no correspondence between the characteristics of the environmental phenomena and the characteristics of purposes, and therefore of the characteristics of the significances of which an individual is perceptually aware.

Perhaps as far as we can go at present in answering the question "What is the inherent nature of environmental phenomena?" is to say "God knows."

Certainly the findings of modern physics not only show that the answer is not as simple as it used to be thought, but that the more that is discovered, the less likelihood there is of finding the answer.

Having spent many years in showing how easy it is to produce "illusions" in visual perception, Dr. Ames points out that without experience of illusions, human life would be completely static: "It is only through illusory experience that the significance of situations, heretofore undifferentiated from other situations, are disclosed to us." Far from being culpable, he remarks, one might think of illusions as "God-sent." This is practically identical with the ancient Eastern doctrine of Maya, or Mahamaya, and there are other aspects of Ames' thinking which recall Upanishadic philosophy, as, for example, what he says about "I" or the idea of "the self." When we use words to point to things or actions, we locate their "thatness" out there, by means of an environmental reference. This makes us think we "know" what we are talking about. But when we speak of "I" or oneself, we are pointing at the pointer. But the pointer has no objective reference, which means that "the pointer can't point at itself." Therefore:

It would seem that these considerations throw light on the dilemma by which we are all faced when we try to follow the precept that "one must become unaware of, lose one's Self, to experience God and Reality."

It is confusing to try to understand how, by becoming unaware of an aspect of reality, we could become more aware of the total reality of God.

Further, it would seem that nothing that can be pointed at exists as a reality in its own right but only in transactional relationship to everything else that can be pointed at.

Still further, the essential "I" is not an isolated aspect of self, but is a reality in dimensions where "isolation" as we understand it in time and space does not exist.

The essential "I" isn't anything of our own that we can lose.

A man who forged his own way to such conclusions is worth reading again and again.

COMMENTARY

THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

ONE of the problems of all reform movements, in the Western world at least, and probably elsewhere, lies in the fact that much of their driving energy comes from the idea that unless *other people* are being made to change their ways, nothing real or "constructive" is happening. Now it is true enough that far-reaching change will not take place without fundamental alterations in outlook and action on the part of a great many men; and it is obvious that long-term habits of mind, with corresponding institutional barriers, must eventually give way; but in human development, and in the development of authentic community, changing others through confrontation and moral pressure is always a secondary aspect of the growth-process, and for such undertakings to be genuinely successful the utmost in maturity and moral balance is required. Unless these qualities exist in the protagonists of confrontation, their efforts will be marked by self-righteousness, and made strident by the implicit contention that if they do not succeed in compelling others to see the light, the cause will be totally lost. Evil will triumph again.

It follows from these tendencies that a common feeling among reformers is that unless they are pointing out the defects in other men, condemning people who hold conventional attitudes, and personifying the worst of these attitudes in major offenders, they are not saying anything of importance at all. Being *right*, in short, takes precedence over understanding the processes of human growth and social betterment. The issue, here, is not so much concerned with courage to stand against ignorant opinion as with the *moral contempt* that is invariably associated with self-righteousness.

Actually, the charismatic quality of great leaders in reform comes from the absence of self-righteousness. Whatever they do is an invitation to *see*, to understand. There is in them no barrier

of emotional exclusiveness that turns other people away and hardens their hearts. More than self-abasing, weakening "humility" is involved. Somehow, such men are able to identify with their opponents without identifying with the views being contested. The capacity to do this is certainly a great deal more than being able to choose the "right side" in a controversy. Some profound enlargement in the area of subjectivity is the root achievement of these men. In them, social action and *teaching* have become one. The self-righteous man is not really interested in teaching. He says that the world has no time for teaching, but what he means, often, is that *he* has no time for it; his idea of caring for the unrighteous is to figure out how to *make* them conform. How can their stupidities and immoralities deserve patient consideration?

At issue is growth in self-understanding, which is always human understanding. Every man in the world who achieves this is a useful reformer. A great moral idea whose "time has come" finally gains acceptance, not from the castigating persuasions of the self-righteous, but from countless increments of growth in mind and understanding, to which men in every kind of creative activity make their contribution. It is by such means that the stage for change is set.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

DID SOMEBODY SAY SOMETHING CRITICAL?

IN his book *One Dimensional Man* (Beacon Press, 1964), Herbert Marcuse makes a comment on contemporary society which, unfortunately, accounts for a great deal of the "freedom of expression" of which we are so proud. It is that the function of the critic of society has been nullified by homogenization. The critic is not suppressed; he is allowed to make his objections, but treated with no more respect than a court jester. If almost no one listens seriously, you can say practically anything without upsetting anybody. This is Mr. Marcuse's point. He calls the outrage of the authentic artist at mediocrity and injustice the Great Refusal, which once operated to keep alive the vision of high culture. It embodies what Lionel Trilling, in a volume of essays, spoke of as the expressions of the Opposing Self. But this role of the artist and intellectual, in Marcuse's view, is disappearing in the technological society. As he puts it:

Now this essential gap between the arts and the order of the day, kept open in the artistic alienation, is progressively closed by the advancing technological society. And with its closing, the Great Refusal is in turn refused; the "other dimension" is absorbed into the prevailing state of affairs. The works of alienation are themselves incorporated into this society and circulate as part and parcel of the equipment which adorns and psychoanalyzes the prevailing state of affairs. Thus they become commercials—they sell, comfort, or excite.

Even if the works of high culture are now available at the drug store in paperbacks, something has been lost in the process. As Marcuse says: "coming to life as classics, they come to life as other than themselves; they are deprived of their antagonistic force, of the estrangement which was the very dimension of their truth." He adds: "If they once stood in contradiction to the status quo, this contradiction is now flattened out."

An interesting illustration of this new "acceptability" of critical thinking is provided in an interview by Chandler Brossard with Edgar Friedenberg in *Look* for May 30. Actually, the title Mr. Brossard gives the interview is exactly correct. Dr. Friedenberg does qualify in what he says as "Our Most Devastating Critic." We'd call him a modern Sampson who is shaking loose from their foundation the walls of the temple of conventional attitudes, except that his eyes are wide open, and he sees with profound clarity exactly what is wrong.

The author of *The Vanishing Adolescent*, *Coming of Age in America*, and *The Dignity of Youth and Other Atavisms* is a new kind of critic for the United States. He is not political. He has no overt "program" that is likely to make anybody nervous. In principle, and at an intellectual level, his observations correspond to what a Dutch sociologist was quoted here (June 14) as saying about the Provos:

Now, suddenly, part of the younger generation hits us precisely where we thought ourselves reasonably safe. No one really understands where these young people came from. They seem to have escaped our educational devices. Who taught them? Who brought them up?

The answers Dr. Friedenberg gave to Mr. Brossard's questions about the youth of today ought to be even more unsettling than the unpredictable activities of the Provos, mainly because they came out of a rich, level-headed maturity, and seem unassailably *right*. But because they are an intellectual communication published in a mass magazine, they may not be recognized for what they are.

As we said, this is a new kind of criticism, coming from a new kind of sociologist. Dr. Friedenberg teaches at the Davis campus of the University of California. Those who have read his books know that he strikes into his subject—whatever it is—at a level of subjectivity which gives fresh insight into the ills of American society. For example, on the official reaction to

the anti-war demonstrations of the "new student radicals," he says:

We're responding to this as though it were inconceivable that any large body of American youth should become genuinely angry and expressive on a matter of moral principle, and that either they have to be manipulated, or duped, or are pathological. And yet it isn't very long since we were asking ourselves why no significant number of people in Germany could be moved to moral indignation.

What seems to me to make the kinds of young people who become active in protest movements angry, almost regardless of what the protest is about, is the feeling that the adults they are dealing with are finks who will not respond to any criticism they may make on its merits, but, sadly, only in terms of its administrative consequences and its impact on the adults' careers.

Dr. Friedenberg is acutely aware of historical and social processes in his discussion of the role of the true conservative, which, he says, is to preserve "what is traditional and valuable and of quality." He finds blatant contradiction in the behavior of present-day "conservatives": "a generous and public-spirited conservatism, committed to human dignity as present-day conservatives are committed to Puritanism and constraint, would welcome dissenting youth." An authentic elite, he says, bearing heavy responsibilities, would move about its tasks with confidence, but today—

American leadership seems more and more to respond with a crescendo of self-pity and self-righteousness until its behavior amounts to a cosmic temper tantrum. Time after time we find ourselves led into disaster, which even a little courage and integrity might have averted, by officials who cannot bring themselves to oppose courses of action they know and will privately admit to be evil. Bourgeois slyness and caution are neither new to this century nor peculiar to America. What is new and decidedly peculiar, I find, is our acceptance of it as a matter of course, even as a mark of maturity.

Of the "Great Society" outlook, he says:

The whole panorama of poverty programs which make up the vision of the Great Society are efforts to make the poor enough like the present middle class to fit into society as middle-class persons, meaning more

grammatical, more punctual, and consistent in meeting stated obligations, more judicious, more specialized in their vocational skills and detached in their response to life's encounters.

A certain lack of enthusiasm here. . . .

The basic ground of Dr. Friedenberg's criticism is the profound difference he sees between the subjective and objective approach toward life: whether "one's sense of who one is in relation to the rest of the universe is felt to depend ultimately on one's inner qualities, or on one's dexterity and precision in responding to observable features of the environment."

These are only fragments of a steady, clear vision of the contemporary scene, in which the young, in Dr. Friedenberg's view, are "the only people who have done anything serious to assert the root values of our society, to insist upon serious attention to moral issues as they appraise America's current course."

Incidentally, Mr. Brossard, now senior editor of *Look*, is the author of *The Bold Saboteurs* (Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952), which may help to explain the appearance of this remarkable interview.

FRONTIERS

Dedicated to Pasternak

IN one of the lectures he gave as professor of English Literature at the University of Tokyo, between 1896 and 1902, Lafcadio Hearn spoke of the contribution of literature—great novels, poetry, essays—to international understanding. (These lectures were collected from other works and printed in 1927 in a single volume, *Talks to Writers* [Dodd, Mead], with an eloquent introduction by John Erskine.) Hearn's purpose in this lecture, which was titled "Literature and Political Opinion," was to inspire his students to create a great literature for Japan. Literature, he told them, was far more important than journalism in shaping the opinions people of one nation have of those of another. And an informed population, he pointed out, is more likely to cause its country's policy in foreign matters "to be marked by something resembling justice."

I should say [Hearn told his students] that the newspaper press has more to do with the making of prejudice than with the dissemination of accurate knowledge in regard to such matters, and that at all times its influence can be only of the moment. The real power that shapes opinion in regard to other nations and other civilizations is literature—fiction and poems.

For illustration of this influence he chose Russia. Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, he said, nothing was known of Russia, or thought worth knowing, except that Russian soldiers fought hard. What had been heard of Russian customs and the policy of the government was such that "the Russians were scarcely considered in England as real human kindred." But then, quite suddenly, the great Russian authors began to be translated into French, German, and English. The first important work to be put into English was Tolstoy's *Cossacks*, translated by the American minister at St. Petersburg. Prosper Mèrimée had already made French translations of Gogol and Pushkin. Before long extraordinary interest was aroused by

translations of Turgenev and Dostoevsky. Hearn said:

After having read those wonderful books, written with such simple strength of which we have no parallel example in Western literature, except the works of a few Scandinavian writers, the great nations of the West could no longer think of Russians as a people having no kinship with them. Those books proved that the human heart felt and loved and suffered in Russia just as in England, or France, or Germany; but they also taught something about the peculiar and very great virtues of the Russian people, the Russian masses—their infinite patience, their courage, their loyalty, and their great faith. For, though we could not call these pictures of life beautiful (many of them are very terrible, very cruel), there is much of what is beautiful in human nature to be read between the lines. The gloom of Turgenev and of his brothers in fiction only serves to make the light seem more beautiful by contrast. And what has been the result? A total change of western feeling towards the Russian people. . . . a general feeling of kindness and of human sympathy has taken the place of the hatred and dislike that formerly used to tone popular utterances in regard to Russians in general.

Hearn is careful to add that this did not mean admiration of the Russian government, which he saw as "the nightmare of Europe," but this sensitive writer, were he alive today, would doubtless class *all* the governments of the great powers as pursuing nightmarish policies.

The point of recalling Hearn's lecture on Literature is the parallel reflection stirred by publication in the *Atlantic* for June of a brief essay—it is really a lyrical cry of pain—by Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, called "Reflections on Reading Doctor Zhivago." All that Hearn says of the Russians seems repeated in principle in these eight pages of Mrs. Alliluyeva's response to Pasternak's novel, which she read only after she left her homeland. Her own life in Russia seems to melt into Pasternak's story, and she is overwhelmed by a pathos which becomes tragedy, and then returns to pathos. But there is also a special kind of pain, even more acute than her sorrow for Russia. In her own "silent language" Mrs. Alliluyeva seems to be saying that she knows

that whatever she writes will be used as propaganda by the West.

It is a great pity, this. Anti-Russian propaganda is hardly necessary, these days. And for work of this sort to be used as a cultural reproach to the Soviets means only one thing unequivocally—that the beauty and sensibility of the work of Stalin's daughter will be lost on many of its readers, both East and West. What was in Hearn's time a force for understanding becomes in ours a tool to make understanding more difficult than ever. For the Russians will feel obliged to attack this work, and too many Americans will take the wrong kind of "I told you so" pleasure in the Soviet response.

And yet, there is a clear, untendentious honesty in the writing of Svetlana Alliluyeva. It may be good enough to cause people to feel ashamed that they are making politics with it. She loves Russia and the Russian people, and, quite plainly, sees Russian politics as a kind of disease. As a guest, she can say nothing about ours.

Her work is strongly reminiscent of Harrison Salisbury's novel, *The Northern Palmyra Affair* (Harper and Dell), published a few years ago. There is evidence aplenty, if one will take the trouble to look, for the fact that everything Hearn said about the Russian people is still true. There ought to be *some* way in which we of the West could help even Russian officials to stop being afraid of discovering this for themselves.

It comes down to this, that only the confident strength of humanistic utterance will be able to quiet the fears and replace the animosities of ideological antagonism. Peace, finally, will not be made by diplomatic peace-makers, but by men who embody its animating principles. These are made up of people in all walks of life, including novelists, poets, and musicians, not to forget athletes!