

Ecologist

40p
Joint
Issue



RESURGENCE

Geoffrey Ashe's column

A prophet ignored

This year, articles and a memorial volume and a National Book League exhibition have recalled G.K. Chesterton. 'GKC' tried many kinds of writing — fiction, poetry, essays, history, biography. I suppose he is best known for his Father Brown stories, based on the brilliant notion that an intelligent priest, who had heard thousands of confessions, might be well equipped to solve crimes. But he was also a profound social critic and prophet, and the Centenary gave too little credit to that side of him. In particular almost nothing was said about the movement he launched. Over recent years, in fact, I doubt if anyone has seriously drawn attention to this, except myself at the London School of Non-Violence. Yet it rates more than a glance, and its near effacement from Chesterton's image shows how a great exposé of modern society can be, in retrospect, cleaned up.

Distributism, as he unwillingly called his movement, was a pioneer affirmation that Small is Beautiful. It was a protest against both forms of gigantism, Capitalist and Socialist, in the name of small property and devolution and co-operation and rural rebirth. It was an attempt to re-assert human beings against the systems that cut them down to fit. Distributism denounced the pseudo-battles of Right and Left, and never tried to break into politics. At its peak it was a light-hearted, convivial, do-it-yourself affair. An account written before the 1960s described it as the last English movement whose members made up their own songs and sang them.

It never amounted to much. Its biggest success was not in its home country but in Nova Scotia, where a Distributist-inspired project rescued the fishing industry during the Great Depression. It also influenced Ralph Borsodi, later to be a major spokesman of intermediate technology. In England it suffered from several drawbacks, some still familiar to us, others less so. Against Chesterton's wishes it was a personality cult. Also it was bound up too closely with the Catholic Church, or rather with the ideas of certain Catholic radicals, and ended up neither frankly religious nor frankly secular. It attracted types who slowly destroyed it — feuding sectarians, anti-Semites for whom the whole 'System' was a Jewish plot, noisy activists who turned out to be unemployable cranks under the impression that the way to start a community was to build a chapel. After Chesterton's death in 1936 the movement slowed to the right and petered out.

Distributism will never revive in the form he gave it. But it deserves to be remembered as the protest of a man who saw deeper, much deeper, than such acclaimed prophets as H.G. Wells. And one of his own serio-comic novels, written at an earlier stage when his thoughts were still taking shape, makes a point which remains crucial today.

The Napoleon of Notting Hill was

published in 1904. It begins with one of the best opening phrases of any book I know — 'The human race, to which so many of my readers belong' — followed by a wildly funny and acute chapter on the Art of Prophecy. After which, Chesterton launches into a story of the future. His flamboyant, fantastic, wayward style can be off-putting, and it sometimes obscures the wisdom of what he says. Yet I have told this story in summary to young audiences and they were amazed that anyone could have imagined it so long ago.

1984?

The action starts, oddly enough, in 1984. But hardly an Orwellian 1984. England is pictured as not having altered much since Chesterton's day. It has only become duller and more resigned. A drearily competent bureaucracy is in total control, because no one sees any point in rebelling. Consensus prevails. Everything local, original, eccentric is dead. For practical purposes everybody is much the same as everybody else. The head of state, with a few prerogatives of his own, is a king chosen by lot — a safe method, since the officialdom seems all-powerful anyhow, and as everybody is much alike it makes no difference who reigns.

Then a tiny flaw appears in the system. A new king is picked, Auberon Quin, a civil servant who has managed to retain an impish sense of humour. Just to restore a touch of fun, in a harmless way, he gives the London boroughs sham-medieval charters and civic rituals. He insists on their officials being called by titles like Lord High Provost and dressing up in special costumes. After a first wave of grumbling, this masquerade is tolerated, and the Establishment absorbs it.

But when it has been an accepted part of life for a decade or so, a second and larger flaw appears. A great road is to be built from Hammersmith Broadway to Westbourne Grove. Plannings, negotiations,

and compulsory purchase orders are pushed through, buildings are torn down to make way, and at last everything is ready except that the shopkeepers in one small street in Notting Hill refuse to sell out. They are backed by Notting Hill's Provost, Adam Wayne, a young fanatic who has taken the royal jokes seriously and proclaims his readiness to 'die for the sacred mountain, even if it were ringed with all the armies of Bayswater'.

Aided by a shopkeeper who plays war-games with model soldiers, Wayne organises his citizens as urban guerrillas. He routs every attempt to dispossess him, finally winning by a stratagem involving the water-tower on Campden Hill (now, alas, pulled down — a sad loss to London mythology). The heroic defence transforms the spirit of England. Local patriotism, local customs, local imagination and independence return. The King himself is won over.

For twenty years the new order flourishes. Notting Hill is honoured as the source of the revolution. But at last its Council turns imperialist and tries to dictate to other boroughs. Wayne is still Provost. He knows that this betrayal of smallness is Notting Hill's doom, but he is overruled, and forced to lead a hopeless war against Bayswater, North Kensington and Shepherd's Bush. Old King Auberon joins him in a last stand in Kensington Gardens and both are killed.

Conformist dreariness

Today, obviously, things have not turned out quite as they do in this extraordinary novel. Yet a large part of the evil which we rebel against now is weirdly foreshadowed in it. The conformist dreariness of Chesterton's 1984 is the dreariness which was closing in during the 1950s and early 60s, and is still very much a threat. The protests have come sooner, and without the same dramatic focus and violence, but with some of the same rallying-cries, the same symptoms.

What the Alternative Society lacks is not its Napoleon (from whom God preserve us) but its Notting Hill. Five years ago it looked as if Notting Hill itself might, in a way, fulfil even that part of the prophecy. However, I don't think its moving spirits listened to my advice to read Chesterton. With the decline of London the spotlight is shifting, as GKC's own vision did in his later years, towards the land and counties and holy places of England.

Somewhere, in some particular place, a recognised citadel of the new life will have to emerge. I am not thinking of a village UDI, or of the violence which Chesterton romanticised, but simply of a specific home, a centre, an exemplar. It need not be large, but it must exist, and it can only begin to exist through people in that place being ready to say so. To say not merely "We live differently", but "We live differently here, and so long as we hold this sacred ground it is something other than the country around it. It is the first soil of re-awakened Albion." Ω

This Issue

The institutionalised religions have failed to recognise or restrain the anti-religious expansion and centralisation of our political and economic activities. They have failed to put a spiritual content in the social body; they have ignored human happiness, community relationship and existential fulfilment, all of which have been largely destroyed by industrialism and economic materialism. Perhaps, in consequence, no one needs more of religion than the religious bodies themselves.

The helplessness and powerlessness of religious institutions has left the political and economic institutions to operate in a moral wilderness and as a result we face a possible breakdown of our social relationships, the destruction of this beautiful planet and an end to natural wealth and resources.

But the failure of religious institutions is by no means the failure of the religious spirit or the death of religious experience. The wild technology, the

savage science, the rapacious industries, the monstrous political institutions, the impersonal bureaucracies are the root causes of much of present-day human problems and we have to find human solutions. This is the relevance of religious and spiritual values we are exploring in this special issue.

The Ecologist and Resurgence have come together in this joint issue to grapple with those traditions and rituals where faith is not divided from everyday living. Religions which have not become materialist (and are not trapped in the Establishment and large institutions) such as the indigenous religions of African peoples, Zen Buddhism, radical Christianity, mystical Sufism and meditative Hinduism, may give us some clue to a new value system. These help us to create stability, continuity and harmony in our human communities and provide a spiritual context for ecological living. Ω S.K.

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AS WE APPROACH THE POST INDUSTRIAL AGE

A totally new set of solutions is required to the problems that confront man today: — poverty — unemployment — disease — malnutrition — crime — war — pollution etc. The need is for ecological solutions rather than technological ones, solutions that do not require the massive expenditure of ever scarcer resources, that solve problems rather than mask them by eradicating their symptoms, that lead to stability rather than instability and collapse. *The Ecologist* — Journal of the Post Industrial Age, whose editors wrote the now famous Blueprint for Survival (Vol 2. 1. Jan. 1972) has for more than three years published articles that contribute to this end.

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HUNTING PEOPLES:

harmony between community & environment



Religion helps us to bridge the gap between what is rational and explicable and what is irrational and inexplicable. It articulates a moral order which fits us complicated human beings into our complicated world. Religion thus meets a basic human need for security. This need is as fundamental as those for food, drink, and shelter, so that it is not surprising to find that all societies have religions, just as all their members eat and rest.

The earthly embodiment of God's spirit is the forest

The Mbuti Pygmies of Zaire are a forest people. From the forest they receive food in the form of game, wild plants and honey, water, shelter, and protection from the fierce heat of the sun. It follows that their religion reinforces their bond with the forest and the social behaviour they have developed for a life that is most appropriate in it. Like many peoples, the Mbuti believe in spirit power or life force, variously called *mana*, *buntu*, *wenga*, but by them *pepo*. This life force pervades all creatures to a greater or lesser degree, and it comes from a single source, a godhead whose nature is left vague and about which there is little speculation. What is important is that the Mbuti believe the earthly embodiment of this source is the forest itself. Some think this means only the trees and the other plants, but most believe it is the totality — all that is within it, including themselves. Besides people and animals, the forest is the home of spirits, which also contain this life force, called *keti*. *Keti* are considered to be neither hostile nor friendly, but rather indifferent. The Mbuti believe the spirits live as they do, because there is no other sensible way of living in the forest. If a man stumbles while hunting he may say that he has collided with a *keti*; and if there is not game in a particular spot and there is no other explanation, then it will be assumed the *keti* had got their first. There is no feeling of competition with these spirits. They are regarded simply as a fact of forest life. Of course, they are also a handy explanation of the odd and inexplicable. The Mbuti belief in them illustrates how general among people is the dislike of the

unknown. Doubt is so intolerable, that reasons must be found for everything.

The forest is regarded by the Mbuti as their father and mother. If a man suddenly discovers a patch of mushrooms he will warmly thank his mother. Or if a woman becomes entangled in thorny vines, she will complain that her father is being too severe with her. At all times, there is a grateful sense of the great bounty of the forest, and there is a strong affection for it. The anthropologist Colin Turnbull writes that young men sometimes dance alone 'with the forest'. Couples prefer to make love in the forest rather than in their huts, especially by a favourite spot like a stream, but their most powerful means of expressing their involvement with the forest is song.

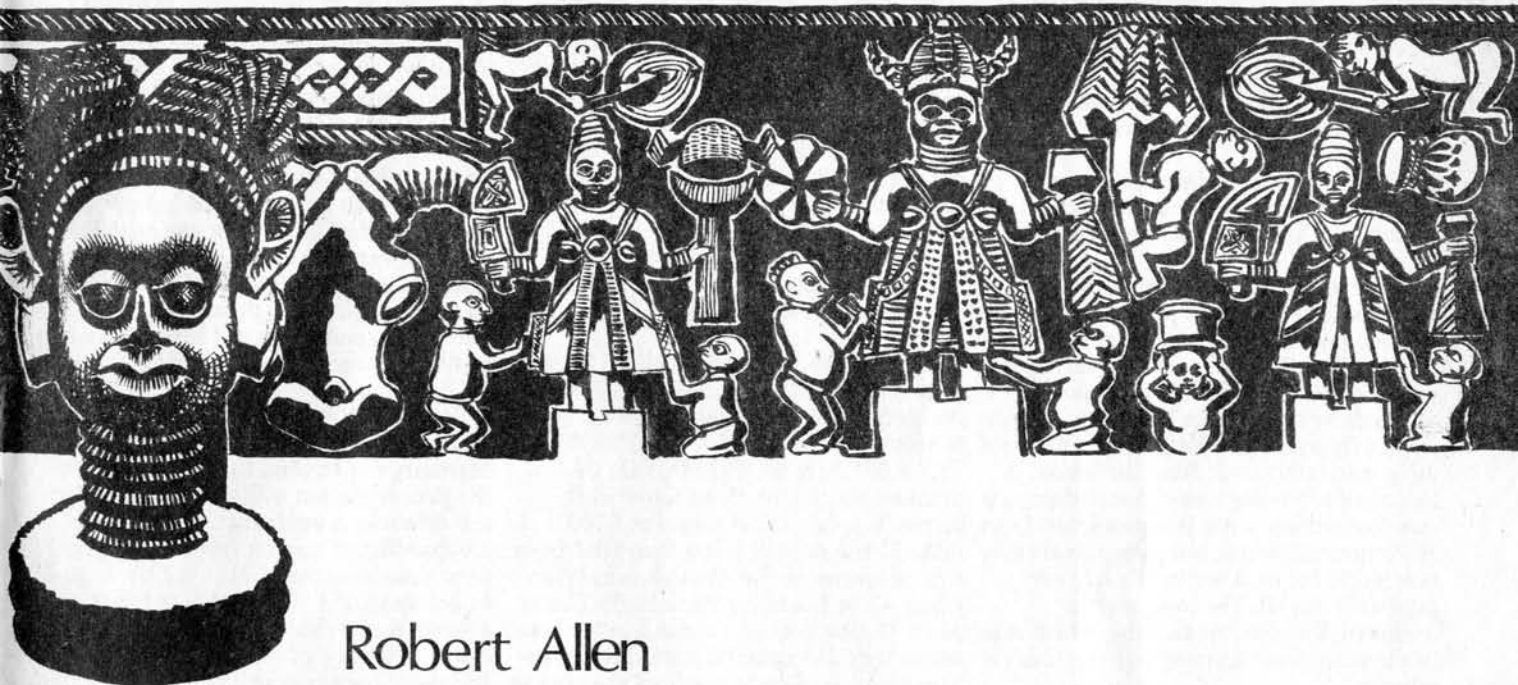
Songs to please the forest

Songs are sung principally on four occasions: hunting, honey-gathering, puberty, and death. Songs please the forest; the Mbuti are very conscious of sound which they interpret as the forest 'talking' and when this talking stops it is a clear sign of immediate danger. Song is a potent way of communicating with the forest, of directing with the breath of the singers (linked to the spirit power within them) their hopes to the centre of spirit power. Song dominates the *molimo*, the festival held at times of crisis.

The *molimo* is an affirmation of life, an expression of joy, the joy of forest life. Lasting from a week to a month, its high point is the dance of the *molimo* fire, the fire of life, in which an old woman tries to put it out and scatter the dying embers, while the young men frantically restore it, dancing with vigorous copulatory gestures. A special instrument, the *molimo* trumpet,

is played. Coals are placed in it and sparks fly out with every breath. It is given fire to still its hunger and water to quench its thirst. At some time or other, every individual comes into contact with the trumpet and rubs it with ashes. There is sexual significance in all this, for the hearth is often called the vagina and the trumpet is obviously phallic. Apparently, too, it is considered an intermediary between the Mbuti and the forest. *Molimo* reaffirms the unity of the band, the fitness of its social structure, and its oneness with the forest. When the fire is finally extinguished and the festival ends, it is an acknowledgement that all life begins and ends in the forest.

As food-collectors, aware both of their utter dependence on the forest and of its generosity, the Mbuti must live in harmony with it. This includes not only living what we would now call ecologically, but also minimising social dissension and disquiet. The Mbuti's religious attitude to the forest, reinforced by such symbolic occasions as the *molimo* festival are powerful enough to ensure this. Another group of forest hunter-gatherers, the Semang of Malaya, also provide religious reinforcements for the attitudes necessary for peaceful co-existence with the environment. They believe in a godhead known as Karei or Kaei. Karei, besides disapproving of adultery, breaches of the avoidance rules, and sexual immodesty, also objects to thoughtless behaviour towards non-human animals — for example, teasing or speaking disparagingly of birds, butterflies, leeches, and monkeys, playing with bird's eggs, or killing non-food animals. If a Semang commits any of these 'sins', he must draw a little of his blood and sprinkle it as a libation to Karei. If he does not, the Semang believe they would be punished



Robert Allen

with thunderstorms, lightning, and floods. No doubt the value of this belief is that it preserves the right attitude to the forest, the care and respect required for successful hunting and gathering over the long term.

The support provided by religion for the social *status quo* is seen in that of another forest people, the Maya. The Maya were and still are hunter-gardeners, living largely by growing maize and other food-plants but also by hunting and fishing. They gave birth to an impressive civilisation in the tropical rain forest. In the midst of rampant and luxuriant vegetation inhabited by jaguars, monkeys, and snakes, they built large cities around enormous temples. These cities and the causeways that linked them required a considerable labour force. This was drawn from the masses, artisans and farmers, who also had to support the priesthood, the ruling class, and the bureaucracy. The first harvests were brought to the temples as gifts to the gods. The farmers believed that only the priests had access to the gods. The gods owned all land, and on their behalf it was allocated by the priests to the Maya clans. There were gods and goddesses for practically everything, including corn-growing, hunting, fishing, bee-keeping, trading, tattooing, singing, dancing, comedy, even suicide. Gods ruled the thirteen heavens and the nine hells, and every one of them consisted of four individuals. Each had to be honoured with the appropriate rituals at the appropriate time of the year. The Maya were devoted to astronomy, astrology, and an accurate calendar.

These subjects were the special province of the priests, who also knew something of weather forecasting. Not only did they tell the farmers what rites to perform to get good crops, they also instructed them when to sow and when to harvest. If the priests were ignored, the gods were ignored, and the people were convinced that disaster would follow.

The Maya were brought up on notions of catastrophe. They believed in a cyclical

passage of events. According to them the world had already been destroyed four times and they were living in the fifth phase. This phase will end and the world will be destroyed for the last time on — in terms of the modern calendar — the 24th December 2011.

Hunting peoples respect animals

A common feature of many hunting peoples is that animals should be shown respect, because if they are not they will tell the other members of their species, who will then refuse to be caught. The Maya also shared this feeling. Each time they killed an animal for food, they made amends by shedding some of their own blood. The hunter would stand over the newly dead animal and pierce either his tongue or his penis, allowing a few drops of blood to fall on the body. The gratuitous killing of an animal as opposed to killing for food was regarded as an act as criminal as the murder of a human being.

The only other time the killing of an animal was regarded as justified was as a sacrifice to the gods. Like the Semang, the Maya believed that blood was the proper thing to give to the gods in propitiation for some wrong done and as a means of finding favour with them. Sacrificial animals included dogs, iguanas, quail, squirrels, and turkeys, but increasingly they gave way to human beings. Sometimes the sacrificial blood was drawn by the supplicant to the gods from his own body, especially from his cheeks, lips, or tongue, and smeared onto an image of the god he was addressing.

Hunting peoples simply do not see why human beings are more important than any other organisms or why they should have more right to live. The Gwi Bushmen of Botswana also believe that it is wrong to kill any creature except for meat or in self defence. Rarely will they kill the unpleasantly persistent blood-sucking flies, and unless they are about to sting some-

body they will even carry scorpions out of their camp rather than harm them. George Silberbauer cites one Gwi who stopped a dung beetle from walking into his fire, and removed it to safety exclaiming that it should not make Nodama (the giver of life) angry with him by perishing in his fire.

Few members of industrial societies would have any sympathy for these views. Any claim that animals are as important as people is likely to be dismissed as extreme conservationist misanthropy. With so much human suffering and poverty, only the callously eccentric would trouble themselves with the rights of leopards and lapwings. This argument would carry some weight if our society valued human life and wellbeing as highly as it claims. In practice, we are as indifferent to the sufferings of other peoples as we are to the fate of other species and we allow them to be bombed and exploited for amorphous ends like the containment of communism or the pursuit of economic growth. The two attitudes are not unconnected, as the North American Indian Chief, Luther Standing Bear, once pointed out: 'the old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too.'

Today the new religion is industrialism

The industrial world view conceives of a separation between man and the rest of nature; it regards the rest of nature as essentially unkind to and unco-operative with man (if not actually hostile to him); it sees technology as the instrument for remedying this unsatisfactory state of affairs. Instead of regarding human beings as animals, important because we happen to be human beings ourselves but not exempt from the laws that apply to all other organisms, instead of regarding ourselves as animals evolving within an evolving system, we regard ourselves as creatures with special privileges, chief of

which is our capacity for progress. This process is exclusively technological. It has enabled us to control nature. Eventually it will liberate us altogether from biological constraints. We will be masters of our own evolution.

The doctrine of technological omnipotence is established by such potent symbols as Concorde and the Space Programme.

What is the motivation of these grandiose and expensive projects? The only possible justification is the religion of industrialism. This religion fully justifies the sacrifices involved: only technology separates us from savage brutality; already we can fly passengers faster than sound and bring men safely back from the moon; if industrial technology can do such things, it can do anything — not just protect us from environmental whim, but create an entirely new world for us, a world of peace and prosperity for all. The logic may be irrational, but it is intoxicating, which is to be expected from a young and vigorous religion.

The potency of this religion is unquestionable. It has absorbed communism as much as it has been embraced by capitalism. It has destroyed and is still destroying cultures at a greater rate and with greater thoroughness than did Christianity. The philosophy behind its promise of paradise on earth represents a formidable threat to the wellbeing of the human race. 'How strange it is', mused that highly respected periodical, *The Economist*, on the publication of *A Blueprint for Survival*, 'that scientists so dissatisfied with the way things are going on earth should wholly ignore the possibilities of escaping to the moon and eventually the planets, there to create a green and

pleasant land'. How much more strange it is that we should allow ourselves to be diverted from humane and sensible goals and be comforted by the nonsense that if some temporary fault in our 'technological omnipotence' should render uninhabitable our richly beneficent planet we would be able to transport ourselves to one much less so.

The absolute contrast between the religion of industrial man and that of hunting man is well illustrated by the following:

Four years ago, Queensland Mines Limited discovered the richest uranium deposit in the world in the Nabarlek region of Northern Australia. In an area a mere 755' x 33' there are 443,000 tons of uranium ore (about 1% of the world's known supply), so far valued at \$300 million. The deposit is less than 600' from a place known to the Aborigines as Gabo Djang — the Dreaming Place of the Green Ants. These green ants abound in the area, where they are a painful hazard to anyone who goes too close to the trees they live in. The Aborigines believe them to be the descendants of the Great Green Ant, whom they revere as one of the powerful spirits who established the framework of their way of life. If Gabo Djang is desecrated, the ants will turn into man-eating monsters that will ravage the world.

Accordingly, the Aborigines have resolutely declined to sell. They have rejected all Queensland Mines' offers, from the derisory 'goodwill' sum of \$7,425 in 1971 to the latest inducement of \$891,000 cash, plus a 3.55% royalty that will yield \$13,619,000.

How right the Aborigines are. For if indeed the uranium is mined it will go to fuel those man-eating monsters, the nuclear

power stations and weapons plants. Nuclear proliferation does indeed look as if it is about to ravage the world. Each addition to the nuclear club makes further additions the more likely. China was inevitably followed by India. After India, no doubt Pakistan. Listen to Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto: "The people of Pakistan are ready to offer any sacrifices and even eat grass to ensure nuclear parity with India." Who next? Very possibly Iran: "if small nations arm themselves with nuclear weapons, Iran will seek possession of them sooner than you think" — the Shah of Iran.

It is not difficult to build a bomb. The technology is well known, the plant necessary not beyond the means of even the poorest nation willing to spend rather less on social programmes. Plutonium is a byproduct of nuclear fission, so if you have a nuclear power plant you are bound to accumulate it. Thirty three nations now operate nuclear reactors. It has been estimated that by 1980 the world's peaceful power industries will have accumulated a million lbs of plutonium. Only 22 lbs are needed to destroy a medium sized city.

Hunting peoples treat the natural world as a home, a comfortable home that must be treated with respect. Accordingly they have lived well, if modestly, in it. Industrial peoples treat the natural world as a chamber of horrors and are rapidly realising their distorted vision. The hunting religion confirms the unity of all creation and thus ensures human well being. Industrialism, by contrast, pits human beings against the rest of creation and thus is truly, uniquely, misanthropic. The Aborigines look after the ants to ensure the continuity of their way of life. We dig up the uranium to ensure the termination of ours. Ω

Ecologist Conference

ON ECOLOGY AND RELIGION

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November 28th

Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, African Traditional Religion — Speakers: Robert Waller, Anton Stanislaus, Satish Kumar, Jimoh Omo-Fadaka. Chairman: Peter Cadogan

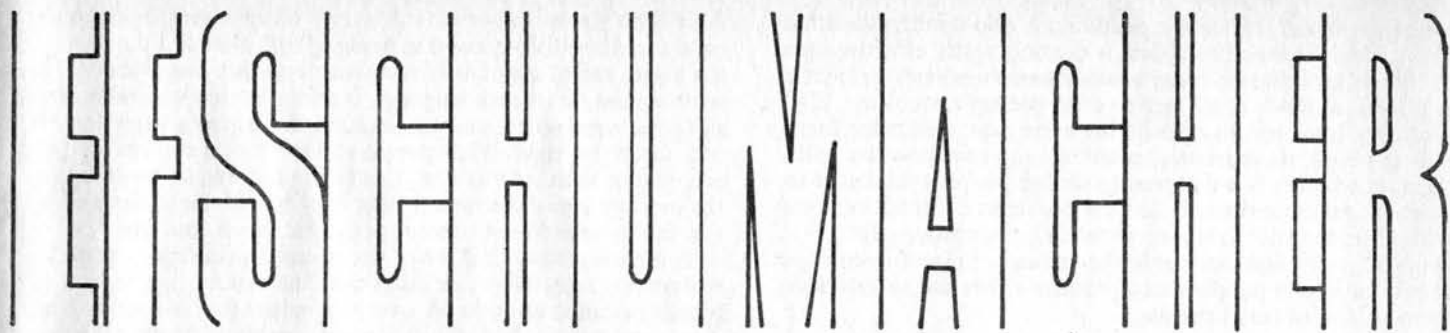
November 29th

The Religion of Hunting Peoples, Religion in a Stable Society — Speakers: Robert Allen, Edward Goldsmith. Chairman: Father Adrian Hastings and Forum

Fee: £5.00 students £2.50

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Don't miss the opportunity for discussing the spiritual context of an ecological society.



Message from the Universe

Our 'environment', it might be said, is the Universe *minus* ourselves. If it is felt today that all is not well with the environment—so that it even requires the protection of its own Secretary of State—the complaint is not about the Universe as such but about our impact upon it. This impact is seen to produce, all too often, two deleterious effects: the destruction of natural beauty, which is bad enough, and the destruction of what is called 'ecological balance' or the health and life-sustaining power of the biosphere, which is even worse. I shall refer mainly to the second one of these concerns, that is to say, to what we are doing to the living world around us.

Who is 'we' in this connection? Is it people-in-general? Is it world population? Is it anybody and everybody? No, it is not anybody and everybody. The great majority of people, even today, are living in a manner which does not seriously damage the biosphere or deplete the world's resource endowment. These are the people living in traditional cultures. We generally refer to them as the world's poor, **because we are more aware of their poverty than of their culture.** Many of them are getting poorer in the sense that they are losing their most precious possession, i.e. their own traditional culture, which is rapidly breaking down. In some cases one is entitled to say that they are getting much poorer while getting a little bit richer. As they abandon their traditional life-styles and adopt that of the modern West, they may also have an increasingly damaging impact upon the environment.

The fact remains, all the same, that it is not the great numbers of the world's poor that are endangering Spaceship Earth but the relatively small numbers of the world's rich. The threat to the environment, and in particular to world resources and the biosphere, comes from the life-style of the rich societies and not from that of the poor. Even in the poor societies there are some rich people, and as long as they adhere to their traditional culture they do very little, if any, harm. It is only when they become 'westernised' that damage to the environment ensues. This shows that our problem is somewhat complicated. It is not simply a matter of rich or poor — rich being harmful and poor being harmless. It is a matter of life-styles. A poor American may do much more ecological damage than a rich Asian.

The threat to the environment comes from the lifestyles of the rich societies

To grasp the meaning of 'life-style' is not at all easy. Our most fundamental attitudes and convictions are involved, in other words, our metaphysics or our religion. To put the matter at its simplest: it is a question of what we consider to be our needs. It is clear that we have many needs, some physical and some spiritual. Our physical needs, like all physical things, are obviously limited. But our spiritual needs are in a sense unlimited: they transcend 'this world'. If it is said that 'man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord', this is not simply a bit of moralising but a statement of fact. (See Deut. 8:3)

A civilisation which devotes its attention primarily and almost exclusively to material advancement — I say *almost* exclusively, because the total exclusion of other concerns would make survival impossible — such a civilisation, as it progresses in science and technology, will tend to develop a life-style which makes ever

increasing demands upon the physical environment. Take the need to get beyond, to transcend, 'this world'. People who understand that 'man doth not live by bread alone' will devote a large part of their energies to worship, prayer, and numerous spiritual exercises. A materialist civilisation will attempt to rise above 'this world' by sending people to the moon and, generally, getting into Space. In terms of resources and environmental impact, the former approach is obviously much less demanding than the latter.

Present-day concern with the environment is reflecting itself in numerous reports. Let me take as examples two highly representative semi-official documents *Sinews for Survival* and *Pollution: Nuisance or Nemesis?* Each of these reports opens and closes with expressions of very deep concern. There are a number of references to the need to 'revise our values'. The report on *Pollution* says that we can—and ought to—do two things:

'First, we can strive for the widest possible understanding of our real situation (which the authors obviously feel is not being fully appreciated at present). Second, we can free our imagination from bondage to existing systems and realise that twentieth century industrial civilisation is only one, and not necessarily the best, of the many possibilities among which mankind is free to choose.'

One might have wished that the authors had pursued their line of thought a bit further and explained *why* they felt that our civilisation, which is evidently in process of conquering the whole world, is 'not necessarily the best' and *what* some of the other 'many possibilities' might be. But they do not do so. They ask for 'new values' but do not tell us which of our current values to abandon, where to find new values, and how to set about getting rid of the former and establishing the latter. The recommendations put forward in both these reports are exclusively of a technical or administrative kind, with many requests for more research and more investigations. Even if all their recommendations were faithfully implemented, this could not possibly produce 'new values' or a 'system' significantly different from what the authors call 'twentieth century industrial civilisation'.

The implementation of the modern, western life-style is of course still highly imperfect and there are many technical faults which can and should be eliminated. But it is not these faults which produce the environmental problems and dangers; they may exacerbate them; they may have the effect of reducing the so-called 'quality of life' in various respects; they may lead to quite unnecessary damage and quite unpardonable waste. But all this is purely marginal. As one of the reports quite clearly recognises: 'These steps . . . buy time during which technologically developed societies have an opportunity to revise their values and to change their political objectives'. It would be of little use if we made great efforts to *buy time* but then found we had no idea of how to use it.

Both reports show that their authors have an implicit belief in education — education 'in craftsmanship, in the creative use of leisure, in good neighbourliness, good husbandry and good house-keeping' (*Sinews for Survival*). 'We hope,' says the report on *Pollution*, 'that society will be educated and informed . . . so that pollution may be brought under control and mankind's population and consumption of resources be steered towards

a permanent and sustainable equilibrium'. No doubt, education, in the widest sense of the word, is the only really effective agent of change, and there is today a wide-spread tendency to treat it, as it were, as the residual legatee of all society's problems. It is necessary, however, to ask whether education is intended merely to help people to understand problems and somehow live with them, or whether it is designed to change people's fundamental outlook and aspirations so that the problems do not arise in the first place. In order to solve a problem by education, the educators must know not only the causes but also the remedies: **merely to inform people that a problem exists and to habituate them to it, is of very little use.**

What is it that we are lacking in our education as it is?

The volume of education has increased and continues to increase, yet so do pollution, exhaustion of resources, and the dangers of ecological catastrophe. If still more education is to save us, it would have to be education of a somewhat different kind: an education that takes us into the depth of things and does not spend itself in an ever-extending battle with symptoms.

The problem posed by environmental deterioration is not primarily a technical problem; if it were, it would not have arisen in its acutest form in the technologically most advanced societies. It does not stem from scientific or technical incompetence, or from insufficient scientific education, or from a lack of information, or from any shortage of trained manpower, or lack of money for research. It stems from the life-style of the modern world, which in turn arises from its most basic beliefs — its metaphysics, if you like, or its religion.

The whole of human life, it might be said, is a dialogue between us and our environment, a sequence of questions and responses. We pose questions to the universe by what we do, and the universe, by its response, informs us of whether our actions fit into its laws or not. Small transgressions evoke limited or mild responses; large transgressions evoke general, threatening, and possibly violent responses. The very universality of the environmental crisis indicates the universality of our transgressions. It is the philosophy — or metaphysic — of materialism which is being challenged, and the challenge comes not from a few saints and sages, but from the environment. This is a new situation. At all times, in all societies, in all parts of the world, the saints and sages have warned against materialism and pleaded for a more realistic order of priorities. The languages have differed, the symbols have varied, but the essential message has always been the same — in modern terms: Get your priorities right; in Christian terms: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things (the material things which you also need) shall be added unto you'. They shall be *added*, we have always been told — added here on earth where we need them, not simply in an after-life beyond our imagination.

The universe speaks the language of pollution, exhaustion, breakdown

Today, the same message reaches us from the universe itself. It speaks the language of pollution, exhaustion, breakdown, over-population, and also terrorism, genocide, drug addiction, and so forth. It is unlikely that the destructive forces which the materialist philosophy has unleashed can be 'brought under control' simply by mobilising more resources — of wealth, education and research — to fight pollution, to preserve wildlife, to discover new sources of energy, and to arrive at more effective agreements on peaceful co-existence. Everything points to the fact that what is most needed today is a revision of the ends which all our efforts are meant to serve. And this implies that above all else we need the development of a life-style which accords to material things their proper, legitimate place, which is secondary and not primary.

It is a small and subservient part of both. Its destructive effects cannot be brought under control unless the logic of production itself is brought under control — so that the destructive forces cease to be unleashed. The chance of mitigating the rate of resource depletion or of bringing harmony into the relationship between people and their environment is non-existent as long as

there is no idea anywhere of a *life-style which treats Enough as good and More-than-enough as being of evil*. Here lies the real challenge, and no amount of technical ingenuity can evade it. The environment, in its own language, is telling us that we are moving along the wrong path, and acceleration in the wrong direction will not put us right. When people call for 'moral choices' in accordance with 'new values', this means nothing unless it means the overcoming of the materialistic life-style of the modern world and the re-instatement of some authentic moral teaching.

It is hardly likely that we of the twentieth century — more enslaved by material pre-occupations than anyone before us — should be called upon to discover *new* values that had never been discovered before. Nor is it likely that we should be unable to find the truth in the Christian tradition. In fact, there is a marvellously subtle and realistic teaching available in the doctrines of the Four Cardinal Virtues, which is completely relevant and appropriate to the modern predicament. Let us have a look at this teaching.

Our obsession with material progress

The Latin names of the four cardinal virtues — *prudentia*, *iustitia*, *fortitudo* and *temperantia* — denote rather higher orders of human excellence than their English derivatives — prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. We can see at once that *temperantia*, that is, the virtue of self-control, discipline, and moderation, which preserves and defends order in the individual and in the environment — we can see that this is the virtue most needed and at the same time most conspicuous by its absence in the modern world. Our obsession with so-called material progress, naively referred to as getting 'more of the good things of life', recognises no bounds and is thus the clearest possible demonstration of *intemperantia*. It has always been known — but who would admit it today? — that *intemperantia* leads directly to despair; it means loading oneself up with even greater burdens in the pursuit of pleasure and prestige, of which one can never get enough, because they do not satisfy but merely stupefy for a little while. As André Gide once said: 'The trouble is one can never get drunk enough'. Anguish, despair, brutality and ugliness — these are the infallible signs of *intemperantia*, just as health, beauty, gentleness and happiness are the fruits of *temperantia*.

Do we really want to hear about these ancient Christian teachings when we are meant to be discussing the environment? Why this old-fashioned concern about virtues, when we might spend our time productively, or at least instructively, by talking about lead-free petrol, bio-degradable plastics, the safe disposal of toxic wastes, clean air and water, noise abatement, and so forth? Yet, as the real cause of our troubles is *intemperantia*, how could we hope to bring pollution or population or the consumption of resources under control, if we cannot control ourselves and are not prepared even to study the question of self-control?

However, it is quite true that *temperantia*, self-control, by itself means nothing at all. In the old teaching it ranks fourth among the cardinal virtues, while *prudentia*—prudence—ranks first and is described as 'genitrix virtutum', the mould and mother of all the others. Without prudence, neither temperance nor fortitude nor justice would be virtues at all. And what is prudence? It is not the small, mean, calculating attitude of mind which has all but conquered the modern world, but a clear-eyed, magnanimous recognition of reality. And this is indeed a *moral* achievement, because it requires that all selfish interests are silenced. Only out of the stillness of this silence can spring perception in accordance with reality. The old Christian teaching does not define the objectivity of prudence as some kind of ethical neutrality. On the contrary, the cardinal virtue of prudence presupposes an orientation of the whole person towards the ultimate goal of life. As a recent author has put it: 'The goals are present. No one is ignorant of the fact that he must love the good and accomplish it . . . And there is no one who needs to be told that he ought to be just and brave and temperate.'

Again, the question demands attention: What has all this to do with the environment? The answer is that it has something to do with the whole relationship between us and nature. If nature is currently telling us in her own language that we are threatening her health and life-sustaining power, we have obviously been

failing in the virtue of prudence and have not been able to see things as they really are. The old Christian teaching maintains that nothing blinds the individual and destroys prudence so effectively as greed and envy.

We are unable to face the problem of justice

We are flogging the environment to satisfy greed and assuage envy, partly because we are unable to face the problem of justice and are seeking to sidestep it. 'Why worry about distributive justice', we tend to say, 'when we can promote economic growth, so that *everybody* will be better off?' But now we are beginning to realise that there are limits to this kind of growth, and this means that the question of justice can no longer be sidestepped. Is it a question to be resolved by calculation, or is it a virtue to be learned and practised by people conscious of their final goal? The old Christian teaching ranks justice as the second cardinal virtue, greater than fortitude and temperance, because, as Thomas Aquinas put it, it not only orders man in himself but also the life of men together.



It is useless and, in fact, impossible to speak about the environment without considering the life of people together. We can say: Every society, every social system, produces the environment it deserves. I have already suggested that we can call the whole of human life a dialogue between the social system and its environment, and if the social system does not fit reality, the environment responds by turning sick. It is because our social system not merely neglects but actively discourages the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and *temperantia*, that we are in trouble with the environment. Not surprisingly, therefore, many people clamour for a different social system – and they are assuredly showing more insight than those who merely clamour for more scientific and technical research to 'solve' the problems that face us. But it must be emphasised that just as the social system shapes the environment, so our basic philosophy shapes our social system. Unless this philosophy changes, the system cannot change in its essential nature – however much it may change in terms of the distribution of power and wealth, or in terms of structure or administrative method.

The evil power of greed and envy needs to be fought by endurance as well as by attack, and to do so is the function of the cardinal virtue of fortitude. Easy-going optimism that 'science will solve all problems' or that we can somehow achieve a social-political system so perfect that no one has to be good, is the most current form of cowardice.

Let us face it: it is easy indeed to ask for 'new values' without specifying what they are and how they are to be attained. The

realisation of value is impossible without the practice of virtue. Today, it takes fortitude even to suggest that there cannot be any change for the better without a change in the every day doing of each one of us.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. (Jas. 1:22-24)

The environment crisis is the mirror showing us what we are

The environment crisis is the glass, the mirror, showing us *what manner of people we are*, and the great Christian teaching of the four cardinal virtues shows us what manner of people we could and should be. There is no trace, in this teaching, of sentimentality or pietism or life-denying squeamishness. The pleasure-principle is as far removed from it as the principle of mistrusting or denigrating pleasure.

It has become part of the conventional wisdom of today to suggest that there is a fundamental conflict between maintaining a healthy environment, on the one hand, and economic growth, on the other hand. As a result, people who are concerned over the deterioration of the environment are frequently denounced as 'middle class élitists', 'bourgeois exploiters', or whatever other terms of political abuse can be extracted from the dictionary of modern controversy. Representatives of the Third World, at the same time, declare that they would gladly trade in a bit of additional pollution for an increase of their desperately low standard of living. "Human economic misery", says Mrs. Gandhi, "is the greatest pollution of all".

There is a bit of truth in all these propositions. The kind of economic growth which has become established all over the world, mainly under the influence of capitalistic enterprise, has indeed proved so damaging to the environment that one can justly say: further growth along these lines is likely to be incompatible with human survival. And if the primary motive of conservationists were fear of what might happen to their own high standard of living if the Third World started successfully to copy us, then one could indeed dismiss them as élitists and exploiters. Poachers are never convincing as gamekeepers. It is also true that the 'pollution' of human misery is more offensive than the pollution of the physical environment. But it is not true that you cannot fight the former without increasing the latter.

The point is that the economic system of the modern world, when considered from the point of view of real human needs, is almost unbelievably wasteful. It devours the world – the very basis of its own existence – while still leaving the great majority of people in miserable conditions. It is safe to say that the human race has never known an economic system in which the relationship between the input of irreplaceable resources and output of human satisfaction was so unfavourable as it is now. It is this system itself – the life-style of the modern world – which is incompatible with the health of Spaceship Earth, and not simply the further growth and expansion of the system.

To replace the idea of rapid economic growth by the idea of zero-growth, that is to say, organised stagnation, is to replace one emptiness by another. The environment cannot be saved by clinging to a life-style which reduces everything (as much as ever possible) to pure quantity, systematically neglecting qualitative discrimination, and then attempting to stabilise the quantity. Such an attempt, foredoomed to failure, could merely increase the general confusion, stimulate greed and envy, and drive the victims of injustice to final desperation.

Let us hope that wiser counsel will prevail: that we find our way back to the ancient Christian virtues; that we let the teaching of them permeate the whole of our educational efforts; that we learn to subject the logic of production and of productivity to the higher logic of real human needs and aspirations; that we re-discover the proper scale of things, their proper simplicity, their proper place and function in a world which extends infinitely beyond the purely material; that we learn to apply the principles of nonviolence not only to the relationships between people but also to those between people and living nature. Ω

RELIGION IN A STABLE SOCIETY

Edward Goldsmith

Religion: the control-mechanism of a stable society

Let us begin by examining the nature of control. To control the behaviour pattern of a natural system (by which I mean a unit of behaviour within the biosphere such as cells, biological organisms, ecosystems, societies, etc) simply means keeping it on its right course, just like controlling a motorcar or a guided missile. This must assume, of course, that it *has a right course*, i.e. that it is goal-directed, which it must be, the alternative being that it is purely random, which is quite clearly not the case. If it were, it would in any case be impossible to study.

What is this goal? The answer is the maintenance of 'stability'. A system is regarded as stable if it is capable of maintaining its basic structure in the face of change. This means, among other things taking those measures required to reduce the extent of possible changes. For a system can only function in an environment which approximates that to which it has been adapted by its evolution. If changes get out of hand it ceases to be able to do so. It is no longer, in fact, under control.

This notion clearly conflicts with the dogma of the human race's infinite adaptability — one that is necessary to justify the systematic efforts of industrial society to cause our environment to diverge ever more from that in which we evolved.

The dogma is maintained by the very loose way in which the term adaptation is used. No distinction is made between achieving stability which implies long-term equilibrium — one in which free energy will be minimised over a long period, and a position of short-term equilibrium achieved at the cost of creating a situation in which it can be predicted that in the future free energy will be increased, in which, in other words, there will be more frequent and more serious discontinuities.

It is in this category that must fall the so-called adaptive behaviour of people in an industrial environment which fails increasingly to satisfy their basic biological and social needs.

One of the practical implications of this principle is that stable systems tend towards the avoidance of change. Those who have studied anthropology will realise that it is to this end that stable societies are geared. Few, however, have examined the nature of the mechanism which enables them to achieve this end.

The answer is provided by the relatively new discipline of cybernetics, the study of control. Cybernetics has probably contributed more to the study of behaviour in general than any other discipline by demonstrating that there is only one way to control the behaviour of a system, regardless of its level of organisation. It requires the presence of a control mechanism which operates by detecting data relevant to the maintenance of the system's stable relationship with its environment, transducing them into the appropriate medium and interpreting them in terms of the model which the system has built up with its relationship with its specific environment.

It can be shown that such a mechanism is required to explain the behaviour of a human society. The model or template involved in this case is the society's world-view. It is in terms of this world-view that the society's behaviour pattern can be understood, and the two together are referred to as its culture. The principle in question implicitly underlies the approach to the study of traditional societies provided by cultural anthropology — a relatively new approach mainly associated with the names of Andrew Vayda and Roy Rappoport.

It may be objected that there are other means of controlling

human societies. We, for instance, tend to regard a society as controlled by means of its institutionalised government on the basis of scientific and technological information. The answer to that is that these are both relatively new principles, which have played but a negligible part in the total human experience of social control. What is more, they have proved themselves to be a failure, which was inevitable since they do not satisfy any of the basic cybernetic requirements, and since, by their very nature, they must lead society on a course — that which we are embarked on today — which is diametrically opposed to the one which would ensure social stability and hence survival.

Indeed, the human experience during the historical period in which institutionalised government and objective knowledge were first made use of for the purposes of social control has been but one of wars, massacres, intrigues, famines; in other words, of precisely those discontinuities in terms of which one can measure social and ecological instability — and which it is the function of social and ecological control to eliminate.

This era is in stark contrast with the Paleolithic which preceded it; during which time man's life appears to have been as stable and as satisfying as is that of the other forms of life which inhabit this planet when left in an undisturbed state.

Requirements for the control of a human society

If a society is to be controlled by means of its religio-culture, what are the requirements? Firstly, it must be able to ensure the maintenance of its basic structure.

It must prevent its environment from undergoing changes which the society is incapable of adapting to without compromising its basic stability, and it must ensure the continuity of the society in its relationship with its environment. These appear to be the basic conditions for social stability.

If we glance at our religion today, it is apparent that it does not in any way satisfy these conditions. It has little effect on guiding our personal behaviour or that of our society. We tend to pay lip-service only to the code of ethics which it teaches, and instead observe a totally different one which is implicit in the culture of industrial man and woman.

What is clear is that religious matters have in fact largely broken away from social ones. This, however, has only been true for a very short time, and during a period which is aberrant on many other counts.

If we are to understand the phenomenon of religion, it must be in terms of the total human experience, and not just of a very small fraction of it, one which at the same time is far from being a representative sample of the whole.

What few people seem to realise today is that *the religion of traditional societies, i.e. the religion of human beings in normal conditions, admirably satisfies these cybernetic requirements*, and that, if we take religion as the basic social control mechanism, then the behaviour of a traditional society can be described in terms of the basic cybernetic model which, it can be shown, ensures the control of all other natural systems.

The relationship between religion and society

In traditional society the social aspect of religion is very much more pronounced. All social life, in fact, is permeated with it. So much so that it tends to merge almost completely with the society's cultural pattern.

Fustel de Coulanges wrote of the Ancient City: 'This State and its religion were so totally fused that it was impossible not only to imagine a conflict between them, but even to distinguish one from the other.'

The same can be said of traditional societies in Africa and Asia even today. If, in such a society, it is possible to serve both gods and men, it is that there is no real distinction, as there is with us, between the two. No more than there is between the natural and the supernatural or the sacred and the profane. Or, more precisely, the difference is one of degree rather than kind.

I shall quote in full Robertson Smith's description of the relationship between religion and traditional society:

'The circle into which a man was born was not simply a group of kinsfolk and fellow-citizens, but embraced also certain divine beings, the gods of the family and of the state, which to the ancient mind were as much a part of the particular community with which they stood connected as the human members of the social circle. The relation between the gods of antiquity and their worshippers was expressed in the language of human relationship, and this language was not taken in a figurative sense but with strict literality. If a god was spoken of as father and his worshippers as his offspring, the meaning was that the worshippers were literally of his stock, that he and they made up one natural family with reciprocal family duties to one another. Or, again, if the god was addressed as king, and the worshippers called themselves his servants, they meant that the supreme guidance of the state was actually in his hands, and accordingly the organisation of the state included provision for consulting his will and obtaining his direction in all weighty matters, and also provision for approaching him as king with due homage and tribute.

Thus a man was born into a fixed relation to certain gods as surely as he was born into relation to his fellow-men; and his religion, that is, the part of conduct which was determined by his relation to the gods, was simply one side of the general scheme of conduct prescribed for him by his position as a member of society. There was no separation between the spheres of religion and of ordinary life. Every social act had a reference to the gods as well as to men, for the social body was not made up of men only, but of gods and men.'

What is more, Robertson Smith goes on to say: 'This account of the position of religion in the social system holds good, I believe, for all parts and races of the ancient world in the earlier stages of their history. The causes of so remarkable a uniformity lie hidden in the mists of prehistoric time, but must plainly have been of a general kind, operating on all parts of mankind without distinction of race and local environment; for in every region of the world, as soon as we find a nation or tribe emerging from prehistoric darkness into the light of authentic history, we find also that its religion conforms to the general type which has just been indicated.'

It is not surprising that, in such conditions, there was no word for religion. 'Religio' for instance significantly meant 'matters of State', while, in Japan, the closest approximation 'Matsuri Goro' also meant Government.

Religio-culture as a means of classifying members of a social environment

We live in a mass society in which the bonds that in a traditional society hold people together so that they are capable of forming a real self-controlling system, have been largely eroded. A traditional society is a highly differentiated system. It is this differentiation which gives rise to these bonds. Differentiation implies co-operation, lack of it competition which may lead to downright aggression. The world-view of a traditional society provides its members with a means of classifying other people in a very elaborate manner, each classification reflecting a set of asymmetric relationships.

I refer to the elaborate kinship terminology in terms of which traditional man refers to and addresses the different members of his social environment. In some societies as many as 150 different terms are in use.

Radcliffe Brown points out the implications: 'The general rule is that the inclusion of two relatives in the same terminological category implies that there is some similarity in the customary

behaviour due to both of them, or in the social relation in which one stands to each of them; while, inversely, the placing of two relatives in different categories implies some significant difference in customary behaviour or social relations.'

A religio-culture also enables one to classify the members of other social groups whether they be enemies or merely living in cultural symbiosis with one's own group.

Furnivall describes India as the most remarkable example of a country that has maintained a stable plural society, in the face of overwhelming odds. This he attributes to the fact that the caste system has provided a religious basis for the principle of inequality.

The religio-culture of a man's caste provides him with a complete model of the environment and a corresponding strictly laid down behaviour pattern, determining every detail of his relationship with other members of his caste and with men outside it, in such a way that a member has no aspirations beyond his caste, no desire to advance himself other than by the strict adherence to the prescribed caste patterns of behaviour. Inequality does not constitute a frustration, a situation which to us seems inconceivable.

This provides a clue to what is one of the basic functions of the supernatural in the religio-culture of traditional societies — *that of consecrating or sanctifying the generalities of its behaviour pattern, and thereby ensuring its stability.* To understand the importance of this most fundamental principle one must enter, once more, into certain theoretical considerations.

The non-modifiability of generalities

The model used by the control mechanism of a natural system regardless of its level of complexity constitutes a hierarchical organisation of information. Information is organised in it in accordance with its degree of generality. The more general the information, the more important it is, since it colours all the other information in terms of which it is differentiated. Also, the more general it is, the longer the experience of the species or of the social group (in the case of cultural information), which it reflects. The more, therefore, it can be predicted that the circumstances to which it mediates adaptive behaviour are likely to be present, the less modifiable is this information.

Traditional man could predict with confidence that the circumstances that have been present for thousands of years are likely to continue being present. The whole cultural pattern depends therefore on the continued presence of these circumstances, and little or no provision is made for their possible absence. Thus, the cultural pattern of a fishing society living on the edge of a lake would assume that the lake does not go dry and that its fish population is not depleted. An Eskimo society living in the Arctic wastes will assume the particular climatic conditions in which it lives. Neither the fishing society nor the Eskimo society can cater culturally for drastic changes in their basic relationship with their environment. If such changes occur, then the cultural patterns in question will collapse. But in terms of their very long experience there is no reason for them to occur.

The same is true of genetic information. Let us not forget that the generalities of our behaviour pattern are formulated in terms of our genetic information. This reflects the experience of a far longer period than does the cultural information. Its main feature is that it is largely unmodifiable, i.e. it is not subject to change except over a very long period. If it were, if, for instance, it were modifiable on the basis of the experience of a single generation, then the species would cease to display any continuity; it would cease, in fact, to be stable.

When scientific information is built up, this essential fact is not taken into account. The generalities of a scientific model are supposed to be as modifiable as are its particularities, which are supposed to enable those who avail themselves of this information for the purpose of controlling our destinies to adapt to the most radical environmental changes which a traditional culture could not hope to do. Needless to say, it doesn't work out that way.

A normal organisation of information will contain the optimum, not the maximum amount of information. A system will not develop the capacity to detect signals and interpret them *if it did not have the capacity to adapt to the situations involved, or can only do so at the cost of disrupting its basic structure;*

which is precisely what its entire behaviour pattern is designed to avoid.

To change the generalities of a pattern of information and hence to seek to adapt to very radical changes, must lead to precisely this result. *It is for this reason that the human brain is not designed to contain an objective pattern of information.* It cannot handle its generalities.

This explains why scientists are incapable of applying scientific method to the analysis of social questions on which their views are uncritically those of their particular sub-culture. The objective particularities of their 'scientific' world-view are grafted onto the subjective generalities of that provided by their specific sub-culture.

When a conflict occurs, it is the subjective generalities which inevitably prevail and the subjective interpretation of any situation which they provide simply tends to be rationalised in the most convincing 'scientific' jargon. That is why wisdom does not seem to grow with access to scientific knowledge, only ingenuity – and ingenuity in the service of the wrong ideals entertained on the basis of faulty assumptions, is a liability rather than an asset.

The classification of the gods

If traditional human beings make no distinction between their society and its Pantheon *it is that both are organised in exactly the same way.*

What is more, the classificatory system employed is *four-dimensional*, so that both are regarded as stretching back into the mists of time.

The tremendous significance of this principle is that *a society is thereby capable of sanctifying its past and, hence, the social structure it has inherited from it.* This ensures that the principles that have previously governed the society are strictly adhered to. It is the supreme strategy for ensuring social continuity. In this way the cultural information that is transmitted from one generation to the next represents not merely the experience of the previous generation, but the total experience of the society stretching back into the mists of time.

In this way the principles governing the transmission of cultural information are precisely those governing the transmission of genetic information, which ensures the stability of natural systems at a biological level of organisation. Government in a traditional society is thereby not a gerontocracy, or government by the old, as it has often been described to be – it is in fact a necrocracy, or government by the dead.

On this subject, Lafcadio Hearn writes: '... we shall find not only government, but almost everything in Japanese society, derives directly or indirectly from this ancestor-cult; and in all matters the dead, rather than the living, have been the rulers of the nation and the shapers of its destinies.'

This essential principle is worth examining in some detail. What is normally called ancestor worship or 'manes worship' appears common to all traditional societies. Though the term worship is not in fact correct, the relationship being a more informal one than the use of this term would suggest. This is not a cult by itself, but forms an integral part of the total relationship between humankind and the supernatural, whose nature we have already examined. If the cult of our direct ancestors plays a greater part in our lives than that of any other cult, it is because of the importance of the family unit, around which centres the vast proportion of our daily concerns.

Tyler writes: 'The dead ancestor, now passed into a deity, simply goes on protecting his own family and receiving suit and service from them as of old; the dead chief still watches over his own tribe, still holds his authority by helping friends and harming enemies, still rewards the right and sharply punishes the wrong.'

Lafcadio Hearn considers the following beliefs to: '... underlie all forms of persistent ancestor worship in all climes and countries.

I – the dead remain in this world, – haunting their tombs, and also their former homes, and sharing invisibly in the life of their living descendants;

II – All the dead become gods, in the sense of acquiring supernatural power; but they retain the characters which distinguished them during life;

III – The happiness of the dead depends upon the fulfilment of pious duty to the dead.'

Fear of death

In a traditional society, a man views his own life as but a link in an infinite chain of being. When he dies he will live on as an ancestral spirit – which means no more than graduating to a superior and more prestigious age-grade – and in this form he will continue to remain a member of his family and community. Even when dead he will continue to be in touch with his loved ones, whom he will continue to serve and who will continue to serve him. What notion could offer greater psychological satisfaction. No wonder he does not entertain our pathological fear of death. He would indeed find it difficult to understand the point of heart transplants, for instance, or of subjecting the moribund in our factory-like hospitals to appalling tortures so as, technically, to prolong their lives for a few more agonising days.

At the same time the notion of paradise is, and must be, totally foreign to him. To be consigned to such a place would mean breaking away from his family and his community, a thought which, rather than provide him with succour, would fill him with the deepest despair.

The cult of the ancestors, however, is not merely a family affair, but will be practised at all the other levels of social organisation. Thus Lafcadio Hearn writes in Japan: 'The three forms of the Shinto worship of ancestors are the Domestic Cult, the Communal Cult and the State Cult; or, in other words, the worship of family ancestors, the worship of clan or tribal ancestors and the worship of imperial ancestors. The first is the religion of the home; the second is the religion of the local divinity, or tutelary god; the third is the national religion.'

The classification of the natural environment

Mauss and Durkheim found that among the Zuni, a branch of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico: 'A veritable arrangement of the universe. All beings and facts in nature, the sun, moon and stars, the sky, earth and sea, in all their phenomena and elements; and all inanimate objects as well as plants, animals and men, are classified, labelled and assigned to fixed places in a unique and integrated 'system', in which all the parts are co-ordinated and subordinated one to another by 'degrees of resemblance'.

They go on to say that: 'This division of the world is exactly the same as that of the clans within the Pueblo.' What is more, the same system of classification of the natural environment appears to have characterised the world-view of all the other traditional societies examined, which included Australian Aboriginal tribes, the Sioux Indians and the Chinese. It also means that the environment is classified in terms of the same classificatory system that is used for classifying the gods and ancestors.

The different forms of life which form part of a person's natural environment are classified in terms of his/her society's social structure. Different animals will be associated with each different clan, and they will be invested with some sort of 'Mana' or vital force, which will render them sacred to it; whereas others will be sacred to a tribe as a whole, also the degree of sacredness may vary from one form of life to another.

Since the natural world is classified in terms of the same classificatory system used for society and for the gods and ancestors, it is not surprising that its components are, via the social unit in terms of which they are classified, associated with the society's ancestors and hence with its gods.

In this way they too are sanctified and a complete set of ritualised relationships is established between a traditional society and the forms of life with which it is in contact.

It is by desanctifying our environment that it has become possible for modern society so systematically to destroy it.

The dynamic principle

I have shown that traditional human beings have at their disposal a complete, four dimensional model of their relationship to their family, society and their natural environment in which they see the whole thing as one vast continuum.

In this way it is capable of giving rise to a single co-ordinated pattern of responses. The pattern of behaviour of a modern industrial state is, on the other hand, nothing more than a patchwork of expedients, since the information on the basis of which it is mediated displays practically no organisation at all. This is pre-

cluded by the reductionist method of modern science and by the fact that it is divided into a host of watertight compartments called disciplines, each of which has developed its own methodology and its own terminology, which is largely unintelligible to the uninitiated.

A society's religio-culture, however, must do more than provide a model of the society's relationship with its environment. It must also provide the society with a dynamic principle in the form of a goal structure and a set of rules for achieving it in such a way that the society's overriding goal of maintaining its stable relationship with its environment is satisfied.

At the level of the family unit this presents no problem. As Malinowski was possibly the first to point out, homo sapiens is genetically at least a family animal. Unless the family is seriously interfered with, as in our industrial society, there is normally no difficulty in causing the various members of a family unit to fulfil their appropriate functions within it.

A society, however, is a more precarious system. The bonds that hold it together are culturally determined, and, as Malinowski showed, are basically extensions of those that hold the family together — hence the elaborate kinship terminology used for classifying a large group of people, most of whom are outside the basic social unit.

In this case, the motivation that is exploited is the quest for prestige, undoubtedly originally associated with the man's desire to shine in the eyes of the woman of his choice and compete with other men for her favours.

Prestige

It is one of the tenets of our industrial society that a person's overriding goal is to maximise ones material benefits. This notion is based on a superficial examination of the behaviour of the human race during a minute fraction of its total experience. If one looks at the behaviour of traditional societies, however, one finds that this is simply not true. A human, in normal conditions, is culturally a social rather than an economic animal, though this point has only recently been explained to our very misguided economists.

As Tarde puts it: 'Primitive man is not a miser, nor a sage, nor a beast of prey . . . but a peacock.'

Linton pointed out how this desire for prestige is used in traditional societies as an instrument of control: 'The human desire for prestige is probably the most useful of all the innate qualities of man. The hope of gaining prestige, or the fear of losing it, does more than anything else to hold the average individual to the proper performance of his role.'

How is this desire for prestige exploited in this way by society? The answer is that prestige in accordance with its world-view, is achieved by the fulfilment of precisely those functions which will enable a society to survive. Thus in a fishing society prestige will be obtained by those who are proficient at catching fish; among hunter gatherers prestige is associated with success in a hunt; in a society geared to war-like pursuits it is the successful warrior who will be most admired.

How does one become a successful fisherman, hunter or warrior? The answer is by accumulating vital force or mana as it is known among the Polynesians. We have already referred to this vital force, whose possession by individuals, animals and even objects confers upon them an aura of sacredness. This notion is in fact closely associated with that of god. So much so that, according to Lods, it may well be that: ' . . . the very ancient term which is found in all Semitic languages to express the idea of 'god' under the various forms of 'el (Hebrew), ilu (Babylonian), ilah (Arab), originally denoted the vague force which is the source of all strength and life, the divine rather than a god or a divine personality: it would have had a meaning similar to that of the term mana among the Polynesians, the Indian brahman, and the Latin numen.'

The notion that power can be acquired or lost, increased or decreased in accordance with a carefully formulated set of rules appears to be common to most traditional societies. The principle is referred to as 'dynamism'.

Driberg regards this notion as underlying the religious beliefs and philosophy of traditional societies throughout Africa. He writes: 'This spiritual force consists of an abstract power or

natural potency, all-pervasive and definitely never regarded anthropomorphically.'

Father Placide Tempels, in his study of Bantu philosophy writes: 'Vital force is the central theme of Bantu philosophy. The goal of all efforts among the Bantu can only be to intensify this vital force. One can only understand their customs if one interprets them as a means of preserving or increasing one's stock of vital force. It is the only ideal he is willing to suffer or sacrifice himself for.'

All illnesses, depressions, failures in any field of activity are taken as a reduction in this vital force. The only way to avoid them is to increase one's stock of it. When a Baluba prays, it is to obtain from the ancestral spirits or other deities an increase in Muntu. The rituals he performs are designed to increase this vital force. Those performed at birth, circumcision, marriage, etc., involve such important increases that, on each occasion, new names are acquired, corresponding to the type of muntu thereby obtained. Each time, the old name must no longer be pronounced, for fear of reducing his muntu.

Taboos are observed for the same reason, as their transgression always involves a reduction of muntu, whose extent depends on their importance. Everyday interpersonal relations also provide an opportunity for increasing or decreasing muntu. A powerful man is referred to as a 'Muntu mukulumpe', a man with a great deal of muntu, whereas a man of no social significance is referred to as a 'muntu mutupu', or one who has but a small amount of muntu. A complex vocabulary is used to describe all the changes that can overcome one's stock of muntu. The verbs 'kufwa' and 'Kufwididila' indicate degrees of the loss of this vital force. A man with none left at all is referred to as a 'mufu'. He is a good as dead.

Kardiner explains the behaviour pattern of the Comanche Indians in the same way. They appear to have: ' . . . the most ingenious concept of "power" which can be borrowed, lent, pooled and freely dispersed among the entire group.'

Their behaviour provides an idea of how vital force is used to achieve the stable relationship of a society with its environment. According to Kardiner they regard all the constituents of the environment as possessing some sort of power. The greatest is personified by the eagle, the earth, the sky and the sun. The highest force is God. After him come the first fathers who founded various clans, and next comes the head of the tribe; the living who also form a hierarchy in accordance with their vital power. Animals, plants and minerals are organised in the same way. However, since their role is to satisfy the need of the humans, they have less vital power. Sorcerers and witches are considered to be capable of manipulating vital power in people and objects, to the detriment and death of their fellows.

In accordance with tribal custom: ' . . . certain things can be done, certain words spoken, certain thoughts harboured . . . ' . . . and to break these taboos involves releasing hidden forces, with the consequent destruction of vital force for the transgressor. It was through the intermediary of this power that the breaking of taboos was punished. A complicated set of rules governed the transfer from one person or object to another.

The sky power could not be transferred to men. Earth power could only be transferred to those who had miraculously recovered from wounds. Next came the power of the eagle, and the various lesser powers, each of which provided its possessor with certain specific benefits. Thus bear power conferred invulnerability, the burrowing owl gave the power of being hard to hit; beavers and buffaloes gave the power of the rapid healing of wounds; the mountain lion gave tremendous strength; the snake the ability to recover from the bite of snakes; the meadow lark the power to 'go directly home'. Minnow power acted as a love charm. The horse, dog and coyote were associated with no specific powers. Success in hunting was attributed to the power conferred by 'tiny black men with invisible arrows'.

The possession of power was double-edged, in the sense that its possession subjected one to corresponding taboos, whose violation automatically reduced the power involved. It appears that all Comanche ritual could be explained in terms of obtaining, getting rid of, increasing or reducing all these different powers. Thus a specific ritual permitted middle-aged men to get rid of warrior powers in order to free themselves from corresponding taboos, which were growing increasingly irksome. Other rituals,

such as the sun ceremony, had the object of obtaining specific powers from the medicine-man in charge.

Centralisation of Vital Force

The amount of vital force residing at the different levels of social organisation as one would expect reflects the society's social structure. In a very loose society such as that of the people of Alors, one would expect that the individuals and families are endowed with a considerable proportion of the society's vital force. On the other hand, in a highly centralised society, a traditional kingdom such as ancient Egypt, Dahomey, or Benin in West Africa, the vital force becomes concentrated in the person of the divine king, who is in fact divine precisely for this reason.

That this was true of the ancient Hellenic kingdoms was recorded by Homer, who writes: 'When a blameless and god-fearing king maintains impartial justice, the brown earth is rich in corn and in barley, and the trees are laden with fruit; the ewes constantly bring forth young, the seas abound in fishes, nothing that does not prosper when there is good government and the people are happy.'

The principle of killing the king at periodic intervals, which is elaborated by Frazer in the *Golden Bough*, makes much sense. In terms of the world-view of the society concerned the king's stock of vital force could, on these occasions, only be renewed by ritually killing him so as to transfer it to someone else, who must thereby be crowned in his stead. As is generally known, in some kingdoms the king was ritually murdered at the end of each year, a custom incomprehensible to those not aware of the specific laws governing the transfer of the vital force in the society concerned.

Equally incomprehensible, would be the custom of putting to death commoners who might have trodden in the king's shadow or committed some other ritual offence, if it were not realised that in terms of the society's world-view this misdemeanour could lead to the most terrible social calamities. It must thereby be clear that the exact course along which are directed the energies of a people must depend on the exact amount of vital force that in terms of their world-view is attributed to each of the constituents of their social and physical environment.

Vital force in a disintegrating society

With the disintegration of a society and the destruction of its cultural pattern, the functioning of the dynamic principle is equally affected. In the case of our aberrant industrial society, however, the notion of vital force is not altogether lost. We still live in an age of faith — not in God or gods, but in science, technology and industry to solve all human problems and create for us a material paradise here on Earth. Undoubtedly we attribute some sort of supernatural power to the scientific knowledge required for this purpose. Its possession is regarded as the key to success, a passport to status and riches. Money is also imbued with vital force, since it is the key to setting into motion the technological development and the industrial enterprises which will combine to create for us this earthly paradise.

Unfortunately, these notions of vital force, rather than provide our society with a goal structure which will enable it to achieve a stable relationship with its environment, has precisely the opposite effect — that of moving it in the direction in which discontinuities will become both more frequent and more damaging until such time as they lead to its annihilation.

Otherworldliness

As a society disintegrates, so does it constitute an ever less satisfactory social environment. A man, rather than be surrounded by a set of his fellows, each one of whom is in a different relationship with him, from each of which he can expect different services, and to whom he has different customary obligations, becomes instead further embedded in an anonymous mass of undifferentiated humanity, from which he feels increasingly alienated. His social environment, in fact, becomes increasingly dehumanised; on the other hand, as we have seen, his gods become correspondingly more human. It is not surprising that it is towards them that people's duties become diverted. Whenever this process has occurred, so has there gradually developed a body

of specialists to exploit our growing preoccupation with our maker. This has led to the institutionalisation of religion, enabling the priesthood to grow in size, importance and influence, and at the same time so has the means of serving god become increasingly divorced from that of serving humanity.

At the same time ethical values underwent a corresponding change, as did the determinance of prestige. In order to be admired it became necessary to achieve very different goals from those which once evoked the admiration of the members of a traditional society. The change had a positive feedback component, in that it could only lead to the further disintegration of the society, and so the process went on.

Let us consider this transformation of the determinance of prestige as a society disintegrates. Lecky deals with this question at great length. 'The first idea which the phrase "a very good man" would have suggested to an early Roman' he writes 'would probably have been that of great and distinguished patriotism, and the passion and interest of such a man in his country's cause were in direct proportion to his moral elevation. Ascetic Christianity decisively diverted moral enthusiasm into another channel, and the civic virtues, in consequence, necessarily declined. The extinction of all public spirit, the base treachery and the corruption pervading every department of the Government, the cowardice of the army, the despicable frivolity of character that led the people of Treves, when fresh from their burning city, to call for theatres and circuses, and the people of Roman Carthage to plunge wildly into the excitement of the chariot races, on the very day when their city succumbed beneath the Vandal; all these things coexisted with extraordinary displays of ascetic and of missionary devotion.'

The redevelopment of social religion

Christianity has not always been a force causing men to be detached from their duties towards their society. In the rural areas of Europe, the veneration of local saints has provided communities with a sense of identity and purpose.

In the case of the Mediaeval cities of Southern Europe at least, the cult of patron saints such as St Mark in Venice, St Catherine in Siena, and St Spiros in Corfu was often more developed than was that of God himself or of the Virgin Mary. This coincided with the development in these Republics of a powerful sense of patriotism and of social obligations that were often reminiscent of City States of antiquity.

Today, as industrial society disintegrates, so can one expect to see emerge from the accompanying chaos an increasing number of new Messianic movements, which will attempt to re-establish a new social order based upon a new view of man's relationship with his environment. It is likely that most of these will adopt at least a facade of Christianity. Many will in fact offer a re-interpretation of the Gospels in a way which might enable these to serve as a basis for the re-emergence of the stable societies of the future.

Subjective and objective knowledge

It may be objected that a religio-culture does not provide objective information, and that its tenets are simply not true. To say that an ancestral spirit exists, for instance, is not 'true' as it is to say that a nuclear power station exists.

Unfortunately the criterion we are taught to use for determining the validity of a proposition is false. It is based on total ignorance of the principles governing the organisation of information. It is forgotten, for instance, that information is organised for *one purpose only*: — so as to provide a model of a system's relationship with its environment, and there is only *one possible reason* for building such a model, and that is for the purpose of mediating adaptive behaviour.

Not only does the subjective information which constitutes the world-view associated with a society's religio culture achieve this end, but, on both empirical and theoretical grounds, it would seem the only effective means of doing so. The fact that it does not constitute 'objective' knowledge is irrelevant. Objective knowledge has never yet served as a basis for truly adaptive social behaviour, and Science which seeks, unsuccessfully as we have seen, to organise it, never has, and never can, replace religio-culture as the control mechanism of stable societies. Ω

If your mind is without turbulent waves,
blue mountains and green trees are everywhere.
If your true nature has the creative force of nature itself,
wherever you may go you will see fishes leaping and geese flying.

Zen does not put God and nature, religion and life, into separate compartments. Things—ordinary things—are recognised by being set apart from each other. Therefore to set the divine apart as a special thing makes it just another thing. To put it in a slightly different way, things are distinguishable and therefore as soon as God is distinguishable, recognisable, or knowable he is no longer God. This is why a Zen verse says:

To know the ultimate Mind, the
ultimate Essence—

In our school this is the great sickness.

Paradoxical as it may sound, in Zen the presence of God is the absence of God, and man knows the ultimate in not knowing it. But this is simply because the ultimate, as another Zen verse says,

Is like a sword that cuts, but does not
cut itself;

Like an eye that sees, but does not see
itself.

Seeking for God implies that he is not already here in the very heart of the seeking, and in this sense every specifically religious activity manifests a lack of faith.

To find a meaning for life, man has always looked away from life. To the immature mind the thrilling and exciting is always what is different. Life is familiar and drab, and therefore the divine, the supremely meaningful, must be sought either through the denial of the ordinary (the *via negativa*) or through projection into an ideal of the utmost concentration and magnification of all positive values that life has to offer (the *via maiestatis*). Throughout the history of the world most religions have followed either or both of

these ways, and thus have ever been characterised by dualism, split-mindedness, the denial of life, otherworldliness, and asceticism. But these are, after all, somewhat childish escapades to deliver ourselves from the seeming boredom of the present.

It seems to require unusual perceptiveness and quite extraordinary character to appreciate ordinary everyday existence, the Here and Now. For the most part the common mind is occupied with extravaganzas, with pilgrimages to Mecca or the moon. Even the great prophets and saints are fired with fascination for the *mysterium tremendum*, but, happily, there have from time to time been still greater prophets with minds subtle and sensitive enough to discover 'the Meaning' in the present moment itself—despite its lack of the glamour which arises from glorifying memory or explosively intense expectation. But instead of such shallow glamour, they found the Meaning of all meanings, the Essence of all essences, in the immediate reality of what is now at hand.

What comes in time must also go in time. There is no finality in formal perfection. Whatever has been attained through process—through going *somewhere else*—will be lost in process. This is why, in Buddhist mythology, even the gods, even Ishvara the Supreme Lord, are said to be still upon the Wheel of Becoming (*bhavachakra*), saved or perfected but not delivered.

This is why it is always said that final deliverance, *moksha*, Nirvana, or Buddhahood, is never to be attained through action or temporal process. For it is the realisation of that which ever *is*, which does not cease to be because it does not come to be. To enter into Nirvana is to realise that one has always been in Nirvana from the very beginning.

Nirvana was not attained because there was never any need to attain it. Suddenly one came to the point where one had always been. Yet the world of time was not obliterated; it was seen to be no different from the world of eternity. From this standpoint, then, the most appropriate image of the eternal is precisely that which is most temporal, worldly, and ordinary. But somehow the image-maker, the artist, must be able to show how the most

common and temporal things appear from this point of view. He must make religion vanish into reality.

The individual is no longer separated; he is a wave in an ocean, a wave that is not trying to hold on to itself and yet which is at the same time a particular wave. On the one hand he is not isolated, and on the other he is not lost. His position is both transcendent and immanent, and his life is the *lila* or 'play' of smooth and even participation in the flow of nature.

The stone *is*. Why must one want to experience more than that in looking at it? For 'mere' existence appears to be dull and worthless just so long as we demand that things should edify us, so long as we approach existence or nature in the attitude of *using* it, of trying to 'get something out of it'. As soon as this attitude is dropped, the simple fact of existence alone becomes infinitely more important than anything else. The pebble, the raindrop, the fallen leaf exist. Thus they have in common with ourselves and with the gods the most important thing that can be imagined.

To seek for morals and meanings is always to seek edification, which is why the moral sphere of religion is always inferior to the metaphysical and existential. In the moral sphere we are still seeking some benefit, however altruistic and exalted, and so long as this seeking persists the ultimate glory of the world remains totally hidden. The whole discipline of Zen was designed to bring this seeking to a halt, to liberate the human mind from every cunning and calculated device, however refined, to set traps for the divine. Zen baffles and defeats these devices with the *koan*, the meditation problem given to the student to stop his seeking as an iron ball rejects the sharp tongue of a mosquito.

These rocks are not shaped by man; no idea has sculptured and defaced what they are of themselves. A stone that has been changed even slightly by the human hand, whether polished or chopped, has lost its vitality and is rejected by the *bonseki* master as 'dead'. Even moss is not placed on living stones; stones are left where moss will grow of itself.

Seen from this standpoint, even the greatest work of sculptural art is dead stone. Though Hinduism gives high value to man-made images of the divine, it pays yet greater worship to certain mountains and to smooth natural rocks of the Shiva-linga shape. These are called *svayambhu*, 'self-originated', and are felt to surpass all human art in immediate testimony to the Creative Energy.

When everyone in the world recognises
beauty to be beautiful, there is
already ugliness.

When everyone in the world recognises
goodness to be good, there is already
evil.

Thus to be and not to be arise mutually.

In the scenery of spring there is neither
better nor worse;

The flowering branches grow naturally,
some short, some long.

It is true,
but what a pity to have said it. Ω

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MAKE RELIGION VANISH INTO REALITY

Frederic
Spiegelberg



Hands in the soil and heart in prayer

Dunstan McKee

It is tempting when considering the role of monasticism in the history of the West to look back at the original Benedictine monasteries through rose-tinted spectacles and then dissolve in waves of nostalgia for a past so rudely wiped out by industrialisation.

For those so minded, I suppose such idle dreamings perform some function. But if the lessons implicit in the history of Western monasticism are to be learnt, we shall have to be rather more mature in our analysis.

When all has been said, the picture of the monastic community in the rule of Benedict has considerable attraction. Here is the organisation for a relatively self-contained and self-sufficient community. The monastery is ruled by an abbot elected by the monks. If possible, the monastery is 'to be so constituted that all things necessary, such as water, a mill, and a garden, and the various crafts may be contained within it.' (Rule 66) There are no servants in the monastery, but all share in the work necessary for maintaining life. The aim of this life is to learn obedience, a means to that self-forgetfulness which leads to union with God.

That, in general terms, is the pattern provided by the rule of Benedict. We now know that Benedict derived much of his rule from an earlier *Rule of the Master* which he adapted to his own ends. What Benedict achieved by his adaptation was a universalising of the rule, adapting it to the needs of anyone who was willing to leave the world to its own devices. So Benedict describes his rule as a 'tiny rule for beginners', (Rule 73), and the monastery as a 'school for the Lord's service, in which we hope we have set up nothing harsh or burdensome.' (Prologue) It is difficult to determine whom in particular Benedict had in mind as his monks. What he gives us is a pattern of Christian living, for the peasant no less than for the scholar, for the poor man as well as for the nobleman's son.

The rule was written in the middle of the sixth century, when the remains of the Roman empire was collapsing into the chaotic aggregate of the early middle ages. In his rule, Benedict set up an organisation for independent houses, complete in themselves and self-sufficient, adapted to survive

the pressures of social change and collapse. Benedict encapsulated in his rule a critique of the Society of his time, an understanding of what was needed to preserve a more than animal existence in a declining society, and a few basic principles on which people could base a human way of life and begin a new order in society. His achievement was to provide for ordinary men a way of surviving a breakdown in society, while at the same time preserving what was valuable, in learning for example, from the past.

A daily and seasonal rhythm

One way of understanding the pattern of life of the rule is to interpret it in terms of rhythm. This is a concept we are only now beginning to take seriously again, after a generation in which technological development has made it possible for us to ignore the changes between seasons and between day and night, with a consequent alienation of man from his natural environment. In the rule, each day is based on a pattern or rhythm of prayer, study, work and rest, which is open to adaptation and improvisation according to the needs of individuals. The proportion of each of these elements is adapted to the skills and needs of the individual, the whole making a balanced rhythmic pattern of life which enables the individual to grow in his own way. All prayed, all did at least some reading, and although the heavy work of the fields was often done by others, all went into the fields and gardens at times, and worked at other times at meeting the other needs of the community within the monastery. The way in which the day is ordered varies also with the seasons. In summer work begins earlier, there is a rest in the middle of the day and more food provided. In winter there is less work, more prayer, and a timetable suited to the hours of daylight. In these ways, the rhythm of life reflected the daily and seasonal rhythms of nature.

Benedict's achievement was to devise a way of life which on the one hand would not have struck anyone as so very alien from the sort of life lived outside the walls (indeed, some keen types thought it was altogether too tame), but which on the other hand had roots which enabled it to survive the breakdown of society. Inasmuch as the life of the monastery was self-contained and self-sufficient, it was not fragilely dependent on movements in society over which it had no control. The way of life was designed for the growth of the person, rooted in the natural rhythms of life and creative work.

New orders were founded as a protest against society

Perhaps it was only in the more primitive conditions of some mediaeval societies that such a community life could become a norm. Yet the Benedictine conception of monastic life survived unchallenged until the eleventh century. Since Benedict's original foundation, the pattern of the history of religious orders in the West which were founded as a protest against the way society and all its works was developing shows how much they were nevertheless affected by the society in which they lived. Usually, the direction of development diverged from the intention of the founder. Precisely because the orders fulfilled a function in society, even one at times of radical critique, they themselves changed under the pressures of the society around them. In the period of the great spread of Benedictine monasticism, monasteries were founded and populated for purposes, social, political and religious, not mentioned in Benedict's rule. For example, the disciplined way of life was soon valued by rulers as an aid to the stability of their domain. Also, the rule provided for admission to the monastery of mature laymen, clerics and sons of the nobility. It is probable that Benedict expected the first group to be the norm, but under the pressures of economic change, religious conviction and social need and ambition, the latter group became the norm. So the life was adapted to meet the demands and opportunities of this development. Endowments and social status became necessities; the pattern of life was changed to a more elaborate ritual routine fitted to the social aspirations of the monks.

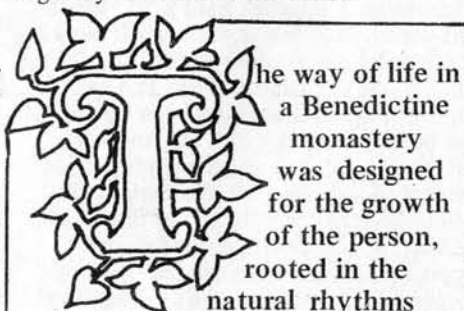
As the pattern of life in the monasteries became divorced from the common pattern of life in the society in which they functioned, and developed into a means of satisfying other than those for which it was founded, the monasteries declined, became subject to new pressures, and reform movements sprang up.

While other groups began to look elsewhere for their inspiration, the Cistercian movement looked back to the original Benedictine rule for theirs, and began a reform movement based on poverty, simplicity, withdrawal and self-abnegation. It is primarily from the Cistercians that the monastic tradition derives its reputation for ecological sense and organic farming. They withdrew to the frontiers of settled society, and began again to live a self-sufficient, self-contained life in harmony with nature. They rapidly reclaimed waste land and woodland, and cultivated and controlled it by a system of granges more ecologically sane than the common system of strip-cultivation. Along with other landowners in much of England, they preferred sheep to cattle, not only for their economic advantage but also because of their ecological value in fertilisation and pasture improvement.

The puritan's paradox

But the movement was more a critique of

the development of the monastic tradition than of society. In the end, the Cistercians suffered from the puritan's paradox. Because they had withdrawn to the boundaries of an expanding society, renounced expenditure on unnecessary adornments and embellishments, provided for their economic and labour needs (chiefly through a system of laymen within the monastic discipline), and developed the first efficient international organisation, they found themselves with a surplus of income. Unknowingly, they had hit on a system which guaranteed economic success, and by rejecting the vanities of riches they had become rich, and gained a reputation for arrogance and aggression. The movement was not without considerable merits, but as society again changed the system collapsed, laymen ceased to acknowledge the need or value of the sort of life the monastery offered them, and the monasteries became part of the establishment, exemplifying the same qualities which their foundation was originally intended to denounce.



The way of life in a Benedictine monastery was designed for the growth of the person, rooted in the natural rhythms of life and creative work . . . It is primarily from the Cistercians that the monastic tradition derives its reputation for ecological sense and organic farming . . . In a society which is breaking down, that community which is self-sufficient and ecologically sound is the most likely to survive.

This is a pattern which persists through the history of the Western religious orders. The Friars arose in a new social environment, and the initial rapid growth of the Franciscans may be largely accounted for by the possibility of a more human life they offered to those already poor in society. But they, like the Augustinian canons before them, were town-centred, and the move away from self-sufficiency to a tradition centred on service and practical utility was consolidated. Again, the pattern of growth followed by change and adaptation under the pressures of an environment of social acceptance and advantage persisted. From the sixteenth century until the present, other orders have joined the remnants of the earlier tradition, often more active and less independent, some deliberately founded as arms of the wielders of ecclesiastical and political power, others arising out of a social critique in the areas of education, social or ecclesiastical organisation, the social position of and opportunities for women,

and medicine, but always liable to that pervasive disease of institutions, whereby the adaptations of time override the original inspiration, the needs of individuals are made subservient to the demands of organisation, and the institution becomes identified with the force of reaction.

The relevance of the monastic tradition

We generalise at our peril, and I am aware of how inadequate this survey and analysis is. Yet, there are definite indications in the history of the Western monastic tradition which are relevant today. Equally important, that tradition, for all that we may learn from a critical analysis of its history, has within it the seeds of a more human life for those prepared to learn from it and avoid the glamorous mistake of merely trying to make it all happen again 'just as it was'.

At the roots of the tradition is the search for an authentic way of life, which offers the possibility of human growth and the development of community. Benedict in his time found the way to this, as did the founders of other subsequent religious orders. Indeed, Benedict's rule has much in it which is of direct relevance today. First, community life can provide a context in which people of differing backgrounds can find a life of sense and harmony, if only it is sufficiently flexible to admit the differing needs and capacities of its members. The rule is not without insight into the human qualities which need to be developed if the community is to survive. Secondly, in a society which is breaking down, that community which is self-sufficient and ecologically sound is most likely to survive, just so long as its members are prepared to forgo the fripperies and excesses of a society heading for economic chaos. Even so, the community would do well to be aware of what we have called the puritan's paradox. Thirdly, there is a pattern or rhythm to life, daily and seasonal, which provides a basis for human growth and harmony in human relationships and with nature, which Benedict provided for in his rule, and which we ignore at the risk of individual and social alienation and disruption.

Finally, our analysis points up not only the requirement of a sound social critique as an adequate basis for community life, but also the perils involved in thinking that the critique has been done once and for all at the beginning and ignoring the way in which, if a social critique is relevant, then a new movement arising from that critique will in fact have its own social utility and so become itself subject to pressures from outside itself, to changes in ways unintended and often unnoticed.

For Benedict and those who followed in the monastic tradition, the original motive was to provide a school for the Lord's service. The points of growth within that tradition today are again those places where the search for authentic life is linked with a social and political critique aimed at the peace of God in the world. Ω

Our Gradgrind Society

Robert Waller

The parable of The Good Samaritan is the example for Christians of how they ought to behave toward one another. The market economy of the Western world operates on the assumption that the Good Samaritan is a bad economist. According to Adam Smith to follow the teaching of Jesus is to impoverish your fellowmen and society.

'It is in vain' he says in *The Wealth of Nations* 'for a man to expect help of his brethren from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and shew them that it is only for their own advantage to do what he requires of them.'

This point of view, however prudent, is not Christian, so that Adam Smith had to make it appear that his doctrine of self-interest had God's support. This he did in the well-known passage:

'Every individual indeed neither intends to promote the general interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it . . . he intends only his gain and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was not part of his intention.'

By this argument God sanctified mammon and provided a religious foundation for the market economy. Christianity had become a heresy and was so treated both by the non-conformists and the Establishment. A new religion of the invisible hand supported the degradation of working people into factory hands. 'Hand' had become a very significant word. The hand was that part of the person that worked the machine: the rest didn't matter. Even the working hand of God was now all that counted in his divine personality.

It is hardly surprising that this invisible hand promotes an end which is not part of the agent's intention: for he is, after all the Devil, assuming one of his pleasing shapes, to lead our intellectuals astray. To persuade people that we serve society best when we are most selfish, because God himself intervenes to correct the natural consequences of our acts, and, so to speak, allows his finger to divert the course of events from Hell toward Heaven, is a feat of mystical sleight of hand that deceived the audience because it had long ago lost all contact with what Jesus was really saying. Those who believe that the market economy and Christianity are compatible have allowed themselves to be deceived by these mephistophelian arguments; they are the victims of an intellectual tradition and to that extent are to be pitied.

That Adam Smith was wrong is easy to prove. Each individual may act rationally, but the result, without social co-ordination, is irrational collective decisions. Free

choice may lead to everyone being worse off. The developers have ruined our coastline because each did what was profitable to him. This illustrates the universal dilemma of individual decision and collective interest.

Adam Smith was right in one thing: the market economy does promote an end which was no part of its intention. The founders of the industrial system were moralists, and they thought their morality was Christian. One of the best known, the deviser of the Lancaster system for regimenting the hands, including children, in factories, was a Quaker. His system of factory discipline, so like a concentration camp — and no doubt paving the way for such things — imposed hard work, thrift, self-denial, silence and so on while working at the machine, as pious virtues mortifying the naturally rebellious flesh. The worst aspect of industrialism has been the way it has broken the individual will and made the worker for so long an uncomplaining subject of industrial totalitarianism. But what has been the outcome of this ascetic self-denial, this thriftiness? Why, the opposite of what was intended: the consumer society, extravagant, undisciplined, spendthrift, noisy, impious and irreverent, thoughtless and out to enjoy itself. The factory system makes us mindless, but its products make us decadent. And this is inevitable because of the economic theories on which the successful operation of industrialism depends. For unless the worker buys the products of the factories in which he works, the machines cannot be kept at full stretch. Unless we are spendthrift, the economies of scale cannot be introduced: we have to buy more than we want in order to keep the price down.

The foundation texts of Western industrial society are now all being questioned. On the philosophical side, for example, we have the elevation of the quantitative approach to nature laid down by Hume in *An Inquiry into the Human Understanding*:

'If we take in our hands any volume of divinity or school of metaphysics for instance let us ask: Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it contains nothing but sophistry and illusion.'

Presumably Hume would have approved of the schoolmen who discussed how many angels could dance on the point of a pin and would be in favour of a school of theological economists who debated how much God would weigh if he were put on the scales. Once his weight was determined we could reckon how much should be sacrificed to him. We might perhaps begin to ration prayer according to our estimate

of the size of His ears.

Artists against materialism

Hume's text is the sanction for reductionism, of reducing everything to what can be measured and ignoring the spirit of life as so much sophistry and illusion. It was this text of Hume's together with the texts of Adam Smith that created the idealism of progressive materialism, codified in Utilitarianism. When Dickens wrote his great novel against industrialism, *Hard Times*, he created Thomas Gradgrind in the image of Bentham and the utilitarians, whose ancestry was through Hume and Adam Smith.

'Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of fact and calculations who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over . . . With a rule and a pair of scales and a multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature and tell you exactly what it comes to.'

Gradgrind was the patron of the Behaviourists. He was not, note, a factory owner — he married his daughter to one, Mr. Bounderby. He was an M.P. for Coketown and an intellectual. He was the supporter of the schoolmaster Mr. M'Choakumchild whose oratory begins the book:

'Now what I want is facts. Teach these

A RULE AND A PAIR OF SCALES AND A MULTIPLICATION TABLE TO WEIGH ANY PARCEL OF HUMAN NATURE AND TELL EXACTLY WHAT IT COMES TO!



boys and girls facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else and root out everything else.'

Gradgrind and M'Choakumchild were the radical idealists of their day who thought they were reforming society and redeeming it from the ignorance of the past. It is their legacy of thought, their attitude of mind, that cripples us more than anything else in dealing with the problems of today. Dickens uses Gradgrind's daughter, Louisa, as a symbol of the soul of Britain. She is crushed and destroyed by her well-meaning father:

'Louisa had been overheard to begin a conversation with her brother one day, by saying, "Tom, I wonder" upon which Mr. Gradgrind stepped forth into the light and said "Louisa, never wonder." Herein lay the spring of the mechanical art and mystery of educating the reason without stooping to the calculation of the sentiments and affections. Never wonder. By means of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, settle everything somehow and never wonder. Bring to me, says Mr. M'Choakumchild, yonder baby just able to walk and I will engage that it shall never wonder.'

What Dickens is rightly saying is that you cannot build Coketown and the conurbations of the Western world unless you first destroy the wondering imagination of man, unless you cripple his capacity to participate in nature and wonder about the meaning behind the creation of the world. It is the intellectualisation of existence that had to precede Western civilisation. And intellectualisation on this scale drives out art and religion and leaves us scientific humanism. The science of ecology, however, because ultimately it must reach a state in which it studies the human being's relation to nature begins to come into conflict with scientific humanism.

Hume, Adam Smith, Bentham and Gradgrind were deepening the current of a stream that had begun within Christianity under the name of Nominalism. Awakening to the wonder of thought and words people at first believed that they partook of the Divine nature: that thought participated in the Holy Spirit and that thoughts were true simply because God put them into our minds. This Realism gave thought a dangerous dogmatic, infallibility. Certainly the infallible thoughts were confined to Divine Revelation — *The Word*. Nominalism questioned the infallibility of Names: language, it was argued, was only nominal: we could misinterpret our experience. We had to be always testing our truths . . . and so on.

The Church saw the threat to revelation and *The Word* in this and as we know persecuted Abelard. Today we are all Nominalists. And yet, is it the case, that the Word, that the thoughts which come to us, do not, and cannot, participate in the divine nature? The Church persecuted the Nominalists for the wrong reasons. It was defending itself and its scriptures, as it were intact, instead of defending the divine spirit in human nature. Inevitably it failed

to hold back the tide of triumphant materialism and, on the old principle of 'if you can't beat 'em join 'em', itself became a bulwark of materialism, sanctifying mammon. It accepted the invisible hand doctrine and the pious morality of the factory system, identifying virtue with prosperity just as the Hebrews had accepted Cain though they knew he was an assassin. He built the first city and cities had temples and a rich priesthood. Cain therefore had to be tolerated. The industrial system has the same mark of Cain upon it.

Nominalism through later philosophers and in particular Francis Bacon was transformed into empiricism, the religion of our time. A few quotations from Bacon reveal his contemporary cast of mind:

'Are not the pleasures of the intellect greater than the pleasures of the affections?'

That is pure Gradgrind and the answer is No.

'I hold it enough to have constructed the machine.'

Some might think too much.

'He who has a wife and family has given hostages to fortune.'

All these statements which remove man's focus of attention from the whole man to the intellect are humanist heresies. They are the signs of the emergence of a new personality — materialist, calculating, individualist, anti-mystical, astonishingly clever: the Mephistophelian idealist who dominates our world.

Bacon betrays the heart of the difference between our modern world and the pre-empirical world in a comment he made upon poetry:

'Poetry was ever thought to have some participation of divineness by submitting the show of things to the desires of the mind: whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things.'

This statement of Bacon's is not true, or rather it is a half truth. Bacon is saying that poetry is not concerned with truth but with satisfying man's desires, while science (which is what he means by reason) disciplines desire by making it bow to fact. Dante's *Divine Comedy* or Shakespeare's tragedies at once reveal that great poetry teaches us that giving way to the desires of the mind ends in catastrophe.

The answer to Bacon is that great poetry does have some participation of the divine in it and any conception of reason that omits this fact is inadequate. All truth does not come to us by scientific experiment. Which does not mean that truth is not tested by the tempest of life. In Shakespeare's last play *The Tempest* he describes how this happens.

Bowing and buckling the mind unto the nature of things in Bacon's sense has led once again to the opposite of what was intended because 'the nature of things' has been wrongly interpreted: we have bowed and buckled our minds to the reductionist nature of Hume and the participatory, mystical element has been dropped out.

What holds the cosmic order together?

Theodore Roszak has developed this theme. What is the uniformity of nature? he asks. Is it the reduction of nature to uniform scientific laws or is it the recognition of a unifying transcendental purpose? What holds the disorder of nature together in a cosmic order: what makes the many one? It is the mystics alone who have always had the answer to that question.

The great poets, who were all mystics, saw that man must obey the imperatives of nature — not the technological imperatives of an artificial environment. They taught that either we submit to these imperatives both of the inner spirit and of external nature or we perish. This is reason: the rest is rationality. So the question is: How can we make science and society submit to reason?

For the mystics, as Roszak emphasises, nature is full of transcendental correspondences. The parables and sayings of Jesus are full of them.

'Behold the fowls of the air: they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? . . . Consider the lilies of the valley, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.'

Compare this passage with some passages from Prof. Sahlin's *The Stone Age Economy*:

'The world's most primitive people have few possessions but they are not poor. Poverty is a social status: as such it is the invention of civilisation.'

The hunters' extremely limited material

FACTS ALONE ARE WANTED
IN LIFE. PLANT NOTHING
ELSE AND ROOT OUT
EVERYTHING ELSE.



possessions — a necessity of mobility — relieve them of all cares with regard to daily necessities and permit them to enjoy life. Access to natural resources is free for everyone to take. Few possessions are a matter of principle, not misfortune.'

Jesus concludes his teaching:

'Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'

The teaching was intended to prove that you cannot serve God and Mammon.

The close correspondence of the teaching of Jesus with the way of life of primitive people should make Christians feel somewhat uneasy. We have imagined that by taking thought we can not only add one inch to our stature but run the universe to satisfy the desires of our mind. Industrial society, as a consequence is in a state of constant anxiety about living: it spends almost its entire time taking thought about tomorrow, checking inflation, stopping itself being blown up by the atom bomb etc. etc. It is alienated from the source of all faith and all stable sustenance — nature. It has reduced nature to land and man to labour: everything is assessed according to what it will fetch in the market. Without money everyone feels inferior and condemned to misery. The nations are always frantically gathering into barns and then seeing the harvest disappear in famines.

The attitude of Jesus to work is the direct opposite to that of the non-conformists who pioneered the industrial revolution. The crusaders for a return to work as a virtue in itself, like ex-President Nixon and Mr. Enoch Powell, are certainly not Christians. This is largely because they do not possess the imaginative capacity to participate mystically in the life of nature. Without that one cannot understand Jesus. The pursuit of self-interest based upon intellectual calculation is the arid road left to man when he has lost the power of mystical participation.

Obviously in a tradition so rich and complex as that of Christian Europe, the empirical movement will not have succeeded in leaving nothing over — as Mr. Gradgrind put it — even in the empiricists themselves. Gradgrind was forced into a position in which the tables were turned on him by one of his own pupils who refuses to 'Have a heart' and acts on enlightened self-interest. He sees to it that Mr. Gradgrind's son is sent to prison in order that he can take his place in the bank. So that Mr. Gradgrind learns, after all, that there is such a thing as a heart and that it is more important in the long run than calculation of self-interest. Our Gradgrind society is being destroyed by the fruits of its own principles.

The extreme form of empiricism as found in the market economy was a long time coming. The pioneers were not so single minded as their less intelligent followers. Bacon and Descartes were formally Christians and accepted revelation with respect to moral commands. In fact

both of them froze morality, put it above speculation and controversy, in order that they might continue with their scientific and intellectual speculations which they considered outside morality and innocent pursuits. Today science and morality have come into conflict because scientific laws, as applied in technology, are changing the face of the world. 'What sort of a world do we want' has become the paramount question. It is a moral question.

The object of science, said Bacon, was to restore the prosperity forfeited at the Fall. But science, so far, has played a major part in robbing man of this, destroying him as a religious being and an artist by its functional reductionism and its concept of objectivity. Religion is not outside life: it is life and there can be no division between what a man says in church and does in his laboratory. If he treats nature like a victim to be tortured until it confesses the truth — the scientific truth — then the scientist is alienated from nature: he neither loves it nor understands it. It is simply his victim to be put on the rack until it gives him what he wants with which to enrich his society.

The love taught by Jesus essentially permeates all life and all action. In that sense it abolishes religion as a separate activity and science too.

Sooner or later the inadequate and partial nature of the present concept of objectivity must become apparent. This will be as science itself finds itself studying nature as a working whole without interfering with it, as the science of ecology should do. So far the science of ecology has omitted human beings as the science of economics has omitted ecology. When these omissions are restored, we shall begin to enter a new phase of civilisation.

Ecology supports a mystical view of existence

It is through the science of ecology that the older and wider vision is being restored in a new way. Through ecology the old sense of participation is leaking back into science and society: many ecologists feel themselves at one with what they study: there is more mystical feeling among ecologists than among all other branches of science. How far dare the ecologist admit this changed attitude of consciousness and remain a scientist? This is a problem to be carefully approached. It is found in an acute form in Pierre de Chardin who often uses mystical insight as if it were scientifically established fact. One must be careful to make a distinction. Mystical insight may lead one to formulate hypotheses, for instance about the manner in which the many are held in unison by the one. Ecology is concerned with the way in which eco-systems interact to create the whole. The ecologist, having observed without too much interference, how nature works as a whole, inevitably becomes aware of what keeps nature healthy. He therefore begins to formulate a standard of how human beings should act towards nature — including their own nature — so

as to keep nature in a state of optimum creative health.

In this way ecology begins to develop an ecological morality that comes into conflict with society. An ecological conscience imposes new imperatives: for example, it demands an integration of science, so that science portrays nature as a whole; secondly it demands that science should serve the health of nature and not its destruction. Thirdly it puts pressure on governments to support science-technology only so far as attention is directed on solving the urgent world problems of hunger, over-population and nuclear destruction. These problems arise from unecological behaviour.

Ecology supports a mystical view of existence in so far as it conceives nature as a multiple structure which co-operates to create an integral whole. To allow any part of the whole to be destroyed weakens the integrity of the whole. To fail to see the relation of the Many to the One, of the parts of the structure to the whole, is to fall into fragmentation, the balkanisation of science. To fail to see that the One depends on the Many, that there is no whole without a complex structure, is to fall into the totalitarianism of imagining that one science can explain the whole of life.

Ecology and religion together teach us that there is an indivisible structural trinity — humankind, nature and God. Nature is the link between the two. The empirical capitalist society has broken this trinity up and destroyed the links. We shall only be restored to health and happiness when we have developed an ecological conscience. For ecology cannot progress unless it recognises these links; when it does so it will throw a new light on the truth of what Jesus was saying in his many parables concerned with nature. Ω

ARE NOT THE PLEASURES
OF THE INTELLECT
GREATER THAN THE
PLEASURES OF THE
AFFECTIONS?





twelve dolls of summer

It is an ingenious day. full of multiplication.
full of heartbeats.
the children carve a scream in my throat.
the magnolia tree blazes.
and I must leave you.

I remember how the petals flew from under your hand.
blossom turns inside out within the space that is
my head. mud turns under the roots within the
space that is yours.

my candle is a conqueror.
and I must leave, gathering shrilly from each
paving-stone. mute moss for the unborn.
I dressed mama-doll in blown roses and turned
her key. but that does not matter.
this evening scratching under the door leaves
pools of laughter.

her red lips made an impression on the wall.
but she is all apart now.

I preferred the kiss of the brown madonna pierced
by the sun. and a silk evening out of a skeleton
day.

I am returning the cups to those who have mastered
them.

I acknowledge these judas-walls, and make white
words to seize them.

this one bears the print of copulation.

this one rode with me into summer.

and here was an exhumation, performed by the exorcist.
his words hammered the shadows and they grew larger.

he masquerades as a keeper of wives and keys. I

saw his fingers eight times over the table. he

brought a woman with him, but she did not say much.

she prepared her skirts only, heavy with information.

theirs was a room of white mornings.

but I must retreat, unformed, to lie in crepe

and hear moons mutter. they made exits like
dolls smiling.

this wall bears a pattern that does not know the
time. if I bend to turn the key, the room
surprises me. I fold into a knot of thick air,
strangled by sentences. my legs flap. I can
see white powder marching through my veins.

and the walls are dead.

and light enters this magnolia day.

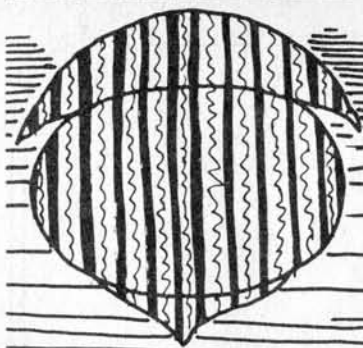
I have kissed stones in order to make wishes.

these rose-walls do not seek me. they return
to their places, glad of a monastic noon.

I am folding jasmine into a pewter bowl, guessing
the correct future. stairs are carved into a
wilderness of remembrance. the marriage-night
ate huge holes into my book, and left me a mosaic
of thorns. I climb carefully, knotting my hands.

I can find the pieces if I breathe the new moons,
and can remember all their names.

nicki jackowska



The Holy World of the Hindus

'The Hindus have made such rites as the worship of the serpent, the elephant-headed God, and trees; but we see greater madness in the seer-saints.

From the ant to the sun and the moon, in all that they see, they behold the Divine, and in their hearts beat the waves of the ocean of joy. An endless, boundless bliss. This vision you may call an illusion if you like.

In the majestic ocean they see the grandeur of the Lord, in Mother cow they see the mother-like tenderness of God, in the earth they see God's patience, in the clear sky God's purity, in sun, moon and stars, God's brightness and beauty. In the flower they see God's softness, and in evil, the Lord who tests and tries us. Thus practising the art of seeing God at play everywhere, one day, the seer-saint merges into the Divine.' — *Vinoba*

The Vedas, the most ancient books of the Hindus are books of ecology and health. In the *mantras* we hear the songs of the glory and beauty of nature sung side by side with praise of the human being. The human being is a part of nature, not its master. Each component of the universe is described as a manifestation of God or God itself who out of *atman* (soul or spirit) and *prakriti* (matter or nature) has created an endless variety of things, putting itself (God) in the centre of all. God's presence is in each and every natural thing.

Gods and goddesses live in the mountains and the seas. Vishnu protector of the world sleeps on a lotus bed in the ocean. The saints and sages live on the banks of the rivers, like the Ganges which flows from the hair of God Shiv. No god is complete without an animal companion: Shiv with a bullock and a snake; Shakti, Goddess of Power, with a lion; Krishna and Radha with a cow; Saraswati, Goddess of Wisdom, with a swan; Ganesh, the elephant-headed God of Grace, with a mouse.

It is the Lord who appears in all things moving and unmoving: we must not destroy, deform or dishonour them. Creation is but a mirror. What we are and what we bring to this mirror, we see in the world.

For a Hindu everything is holy, pure and auspicious. There are holy rivers, holy mountains, holy trees, holy cows, holy men and holy women. These symbolise the holiness of each one and all things. The cow which gives me milk for my health, provides manure for my fields, produces bullocks which I will use to plough my land, the cow which lives in my backyard keeps me company and gives me an opportunity to express my love for the animal world and to learn how to care. I take her out in the fields to graze, I wander with her under the sky, through fields and forests. While the cow is grazing I play on my flute. The cow is a centre for everything. She is my mother. I worship my mother cow.

Lord Krishna, the God of all gods, was a cowherd: 'He went out with other cowherds grazing cattle. When they set out to worship God, he asked them "Who has seen God? How has he

helped us? But this Govardhan hill stands here before our eyes. Our cattle graze on its slopes. Streams flow from it. Let us therefore worship it.'" To his cowherd companions, to the *gopis* (the young girls) with whom he laughed and talked, to the cows and calves he rejoiced in, to them all he opened the door of liberation. He moved with cows and calves in his childhood, with horses when he grew up. On hearing the music of his flute the cows went into ecstasy; the horses thrilled to the touch of his hand as he stroked them. The cows and calves, the chariot horses, were filled with Krishna, became one with Him. Lord Krishna made it clear that not only human beings but animals and birds also had the right to *moksha*, the ultimate liberation.'

A Hindu is born into *dharma* — the perfect way of living. The purpose of *dharma* is to find three-fold fulfilment: Self-fulfilment, harmony with the universe, and an integral relationship with the human community. Three techniques prescribed to find the threefold fulfilment. They are *yajna*, *dana*, *tapas*.

Yajna is action rightly performed

Yajna is the means by which the human being lives in harmony with the universe. In order to live we take food and water from Nature every day, we walk, run and work on the earth. We make use of air and space. To make good the loss, to replenish natural resources is *yajna*. We have cultivated land for thousands of years. *Yajna* says 'Return its strength to the soil, plough the land and feed it with sunlight. Give it manure.' Keeping sheep, raising crops, spinning, weaving and all crafts are *yajna*. Purifying the things we use, washing, cleaning and sweeping are also *yajna*.

One day Gandhi was washing his face while discussing the Independence movement with Nehru. He used a whole jug of water without completing his washing. When he realised the jug was empty he wept. Nehru was surprised, "We are standing by the Ganges which has an endless supply of water." Gandhi replied, "The Ganges may be immeasurable but that is no reason for me to squander it. One jug is enough for me to wash my face and hands and accomplish *yajna*."



Dana is the equitable distribution of wealth

Shankracharya said: 'Dana is equal sharing of everything among the members of the community.'

Dana means that we should not hoard, the wealth of all belongs to all. It must be shared. Dana keeps equilibrium of wealth whether it is spiritual knowledge, technical knowledge, goods or land.

'I have received from society boundless service. When I came into this world I was weak and helpless, the community brought me up so that I have grown. Therefore I in my turn should serve the community. I have received much from the community. To free myself from this debt to society is *dana*.' In the practice of *dana* nothing belongs to the individual. Dana is a continuous way of redistribution of wealth among the members of the society. If all nations practised *dana* there would be no poor and rich nations, no poor and rich communities, no poor and rich individuals. This ancient teaching was perhaps an important element in the success of the *Bhoodan* movement in India. Vinoba reminded rich landowners of their *dharma* and 5 million acres of land were freely given by landowners for the use of the landless. Since the religion became institutionalised and formalised the spirit has been lost. Gandhi said that when people practise *dana* the earth has enough for every man's need but not for every man's greed. And in Shakespeare also we find: 'So distribution should undo excess and each man have enough.'

Tapas is life lived simply

We are born into a body that wraps us. The body decays daily. We use our mind, our knowledge, our senses. *Tapas* is the way to remove the defects and distortions that arise in the body and mind. Fasting, yoga, meditation, right food, caring for the body, a life which keeps the body healthy and balanced is *tapas*. I rise at the hour of Brahman, before the dawn. I clean and wash my body, I go out walking. I study the holy books, I perform yogic *asanas* and sit in relaxation and meditation. I eat slightly less than my hunger demands *sattvic* food (wholesome, fresh food), I fast at intervals. I burn incense and visit the temple and avoid intoxicating drinks which distort the senses. I avoid any activity which involves strain and stress on my mind and senses. I practise *sattva* (simplicity) and austerity.

Nature, society and the body are the three orders into which we are born. They have come to us naturally — they were not invented by us. Therefore it is our natural *dharma* to replenish the wear and tear of these three orders and keep them in good condition. These three orders are not absolutely distinct. It can be said that the creative effort we make, the *dana* we give and the *tapas* we perform are all *yajna* in the comprehensive sense. Through *yajna* we maintain equilibrium with nature, through *dana* in society and through *tapas* in the body.

But action without *mantra*, without spiritual consciousness, is meaningless. While spinning we must contemplate on this mantra, 'Through this thread I tie myself to the workers of the world. And the god hidden in the cotton manifests itself in the form of the thread. With this *mantra* the action will become truly pure, it will become worship to God and union with people but without this *mantra* all is wasted.'

Dharma is not performed out of altruism or with a feeling of 'doing good'. It is not serving someone from whom we have received nothing. *Dharma* cannot be performed out of pity and paternalism. We have received everything from creation and the human community. *Dharma* is the action we perform to liberate ourselves and find happiness. The happiness of the individual is the same as that of the society and society's happiness is the same as that of the individual. Therefore *dharma* says the individual must work for the happiness of the society and the society should work for the happiness of the individual. An unhappy individual cannot make the society happy. Ultimately the society and the individual are one and the same. When we have realised this oneness we shall experience *advaita* — the non-duality.

Separateness will disappear. There will be no conflict in a society where *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* are found and where actions take place accompanied by *mantra*

Ω This essay by Satish Kumar is based on the teachings of Vinoba Bhave.



we are the children...

We are the children our parents warned us not to play with.

We are the children whose parents stopped us playing to sit at desks, obedient, learning words by rote.

We are the children who had no childhood.

(It always happened in the house next door and when we visited, it was somewhere else.)

We are the children who died before our parents, in lieu of parents too afraid to die.

We are the children who could not die too soon to that dead world. We too delayed our dying, frightened to let go. How much dead time, time spent at desks, at typewriters, in classrooms, piled high past time, have we had to vomit up to meet each other for one moment at the interface?

We are the children our parents warned us against.

We are born again and again and again . . .

anon

psalm

Dont need no god.

Dont need no eternal paternal god.

Dont need no re-assuringly protective

good and evil in perspective god.

Dont need no imported distorted

inflated updated,

holy roller, save your soul, or

anaesthetisingly opiate gods.

Dont need no 'all creatures that on Earth do dwell'

be good or you go to Hell god.

Dont need no Hare Krishna Hare Krishna

Hail Mary Hail Mary god. . .

Dont need no televised circumcised

incessant incandescent god.

Dont need no god.

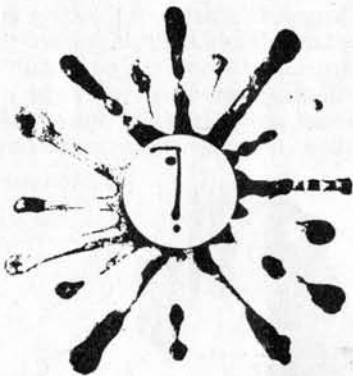
I need human beings.

I need some kind

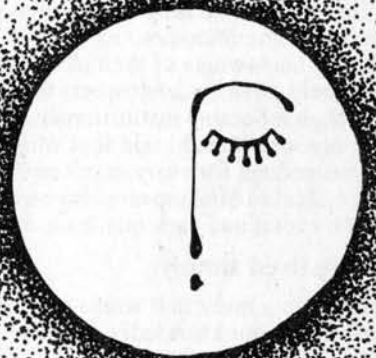
of love.

I need you.

andrew darlington



brother sun
sister moon



Most High, omnipotent, good Lord, to you alone: praise, glory, honour and every blessing.

To you alone, most high, do they belong, and no man is worthy to pronounce your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures especially our Brother Sun,

Who brings us the day and gives us light.

He is beautiful and shines with great splendour.

To us he is your likeness, O most high.

Be praised my Lord through Sister Moon and all the stars; set precious and bright in the sky

Be praised my Lord through Brother Wind, through breeze and cloud and calm and every weather.

Be praised my Lord through Sister Water, who is so useful and precious and clear.

Be praised my Lord through Brother Fire, who brightens the night; he is fine and joyful, powerful and merry.

Be praised my Lord through our sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and produces abundant fruits, flowers of many colours and herbs.

Be praised my Lord through those who forgive through love of you, enduring weakness and trials.

They are blessed who continue in peace for by you, Most High, they shall be crowned.

Be praised my Lord through sister Death of the Body whom no man living can escape.

Wretched are those who die in mortal sin.

They are blessed found doing your will for the second death will not harm.

Praise and bless my Lord, give him thanks and serve him with great humility.

st. francis of assisi

Along with the development of nuclear power, the exploitation of North Sea Oil may well be described in future history as one of the last great follies of the industrial and economic age.

If the biosphere diminishes

We diminish!

Hugh Sharman

No crime can equal the use and abuse of nuclear power. Thousands of generations of our descendants are now doomed to look after the vicious atomic wastes generated by the vicarious needs of today. In the economic costing of such energy the cost and burden to our descendants, being uncountable, has been discounted as if it were nothing at all! Such is the folly of treating the human race as if its sole purpose is to satisfy the economic laws of Adam Smith, Keynes and Alistair Burnett. Because the consequences of failure of atomic installations of any sort are unthinkable then we refuse to think of them!

As in the case of failure in atomic installations the imagination of most planners boggles, boggles more and breaks down. So few brave men have imagined what would happen were an oil well to fracture underneath the blowout preventer of a producing platform in the North Sea. Something in the region of 500 tons per 24 hour day would be released into the sea and would form a thick mass over the surface. The failure in one well could spread to the other thirty or forty wells in that platform spewing out 10-20 thousand tons a day. A Torrey Canyon every week.

Previous major spills have occurred in the Santa Barbara Channel and the Gulf of Mexico. What would distinguish a North Sea oil blowout from any others that have occurred elsewhere in the world are the factors that also make North Sea oil more expensive to extract than oil anywhere else: the depth of the North Sea waters and their constant turbulence.

The drilling and plugging techniques so brilliantly employed in the United States blowouts depend on good weather. Sods law, my own explanation for the occurrence simultaneously of bad luck events, would dictate that a well failure in the North Sea, possibly caused by foundation or structural failure of the platform, would occur in weather such that rig moves to the site would be impossible. The mop up of such spills can only occur when the sea state is less than three or four feet. In other words failure would mean environmental and economic catastrophe.

Supplies of hydrocarbons are strictly

finite. And yet the aim of the British government is still to produce 250 million tons of oil per year from the North Sea by 1985 — 2½ times the present already ludicrously high consumption of the U.K. There is already tremendous social disruption to villages blighted by platform builders, there will be irreversible alterations to the social, political and ethnic infrastructure everywhere in Scotland and the already high risks of oil installation failures will be increased from over-stretched contractors shortcutting safety procedures already observed in the deaths of many divers. But the greatest risk of all is the perpetuation of the myth that 'industrialism' with its plastic panaceas to consumers can survive. As one natural resource after another is more accurately measured and catalogued the end of industrialism as a culture becomes inevitable. The longer we act as if it were not coming at all the more grisly its end is going to be.

In the rest of Europe there is no oil to speak of and the countries of Europe will either have to become pawned to the oil producers or alter their perspectives and appetites. Their sharply diminished purchasing power is bound to affect trade with the U.K. Our industrial machine will simply have to adjust to the new realities so that it is unlikely we will ever achieve the lunatic hopes of today's governors.

The shattering of this myth is going to leave a vacuum in the vision of civilised people so large that major social breakdown is almost certain to occur. What prevents it happening now is the widespread and naive belief in the myth of unachievable growth. Until the objectives of the dominant culture change then, there is no hope. Happily a new culture is arising out of the gratifyingly rapid decay of 'industrialism'. As yet the culture is so small as to be almost invisible. It is springing up like a seedling from the rotting humus of industrialism fed by the nutrients of decay.

What is the new culture?

My scenario of the diverse and pluralistic culture of post industrial society is as follows. The world view of such a culture

sees human beings not as demi-gods, set by their creator to reign over and dominate the world of Nature, but, rather as part of Nature. In the diminution of the biosphere, post-industrial people see themselves diminished. Food is grown by the techniques that give highest yield *per acre*, not *per person*. People move back to the land and the countryside is repopulated by smallholders using organic farming techniques. Diets alter to local growing capacities and meat becomes a once a week luxury.

The new culture draws its inspiration from the deep mystical truths; it is not exclusive and doctrinaire in its treatment of deviants.

Post-industrial politics eschews the notion of bureaucratic management, small-scale communities concentrate on active, local participation in all political and economic decision making. Since the way of life is essentially simple, then decisions will inevitably be understandable to the decision makers, not as present, wrapped up in the abstruse complexities of modern bureaucratic management.

Post-industrial technology is soft, non-exploitive. Power sources are solar, wind or hydro based. The total energy flow that can be tapped from renewable sources is many times less than available now through the burning of energy capital. Thus the production line stops. Transport and distribution slows down. Craftsmanship is revived. Things are made to last and last, and above all to be useful.

North Sea Oil, if it has to be exploited, must not be used by the British or the Scottish to bolster industrialism, but rather used as a bridge that links the industrial era to the post-industrial era. Used wisely it will provide a soft and civilised let down to industrialism. As we dismantle the multinational corporations, the huge government departments and the car factories, the human victims of these situations must be treated with post-industrial civility, as they seek to adjust themselves to new lives and new realities. We must invest the oil to create the tools of low impact industrial technology to ensure the long term survival of us all. Ω

ANCESTOR

Jimoh Omo-Fadaka

The African believes in one God, the creator and giver of all things. God has no father or mother or companion of any kind. His work is done in solitude. Africans have no temples, they select huge trees — under these trees they worship and make sacrifices to God. These sacred trees are regarded in the same manner as most Christians regard churches, as the 'House of God'. God is invisible to mortal eyes. He manifests his power in the sun, the moon, the stars, the rain, rainbow, lightning and thunder. Through these signs, he can reveal his love or anger. Thunder and lightning, are warnings to clear the way for God's movement from once sacred place to another.

As long as things go well for the people it is taken for granted that God is pleased. In this happy state there is no need for prayers. Indeed they are inadvisable, for God must not be bothered needlessly. But when people meet to discuss public affairs, to decide a case or at a community dance and other community gatherings, they offer prayers for protection and guidance. The Elders lead in prayer, while the people respond.

In African traditional religion, there is no official priesthood, nor is there any religious preaching. Converting 'pagans' or 'unbelievers' are, of course, things unknown. This is because the religion is interwoven with the traditions and the social customs of the people. The members of the community are automatically considered to have acquired, during their childhood, all that is necessary to know about religion and custom. The duty of imparting this knowledge to the children remains with the parents, who are looked upon as the teachers of both religion and the art of living.

At the birth, marriage and death of every African, communication is established with God. Spiritual assistance is always obtained, however, by the family group. No individual may directly supplicate the Almighty. The group which may do so is very clearly defined. It is the family which, especially if polygamous, may number one or two hundred people. The family-community is the religious unit and the whole family group must supplicate God together.

The people are daily and hourly in the most intimate contact with Nature. They do not speak of 'nature worship' as a part of their religion, it is a quality that runs

through the whole, vitalising it and keeping it in constant touch with daily need and emotions. There is no distinction between the spiritual and the temporal world. Religion is 'embedded' or integrated into the structure of the society and cannot be separated from it.

Prayers, sacrifices and offerings are the commonest acts of worship. The sacrifice or offering may be made to God, to the spirits or to the ancestors, who are considered to be intermediaries between God and the people. The concept of intermediaries such as seers, prophets, diviners, medicine men, witches, rain-makers, kings, elders, chiefs, ancestors and spirits, is widespread in African societies. Africans feel that they cannot and should not approach or worship God directly; they must do so through the mediation of others.

Africans do not worship their ancestors. Therefore I do not use the term 'ancestor worship'. They hold communion with them, but their attitude towards them is not to be compared with their attitude to the Deity who is truly worshipped.

The ceremony of communing with ancestral spirits is closely associated with everyday life for it brings back to their memory the glory and power of their forefathers. Communion with ancestors (Living-Dead) is achieved by serving them food and drink at special feasts. The Elders in the family conduct the communion with the ancestors. When a sheep is sacrificed to the ancestral spirits, it is but a tribute symbolising the gifts which the departed elders would have received had they been alive. The Binis believe that the spirits of the dead, like living human beings can be pleased or displeased by the behaviour of an individual or a family group. In order to keep good relations between the two worlds the ceremony of communing with the ancestral spirits is observed constantly.

The ancestral spirits can act individually or collectively. The spirits of the father and mother communicate directly with the living children in the same way as they did during their life-time.

When a member of the community breaks one of its laws and bad luck follows, purification or absolution is achieved by means of the medicine man. He will work by establishing contact with such of the ancestral spirits as may be thought to be involved. It is possible that only one ancestor will need to be propitiated, and there is no need for the whole family group to be brought into action.

If a person falls sick or has an injury, ordinary medical knowledge is first applied.

If this does not succeed then the ancestors are communicated with, atonement is made and the invalid recovers.

When it is certain that no ancestors are offended and yet the illness persists, then the father of the family must organise an appeal to God through a sacrifice.

Now the living and the dead of the family together approach God. This assures God that the occasion is serious and that the whole family is indeed at one, having exhausted all other means, in pleading for his help. The living and the dead make the approach by means of a sacrificial ceremony. When the whole society or ethnic group is threatened by drought or famine, then of course, God himself must be appealed to, and the appeal must be made by the whole ethnic group or society.

TO BE RELIGIOUS IS TO BE WHOLE

African peoples are essentially religious in their outlook. Throughout history they have practised religious rites. Their lives have always been guided by their religious beliefs. Their religion takes a holistic view of nature. The people live in harmony with nature, and not against it. They do not regard God as having given them dominion over nature, thereby recklessly exploiting and destroying natural resources. In African life the earth is so visibly the mother of all things and the generations are closely linked together by their common participation in the agricultural ritual, and reverence for ancestral spirits.

African traditional religion is based on the active supplication of the family. The African's religious outlook is world-affirming rather than world-denying. Health of body and soul, the growth of the family, support for all its members, these provide religious and moral standards. There is no destitution, for all members are united together. Together the family finds joy in living and warmth that is expressed in music and rhythm. There are strong social and religious ties, ideals, generosity, hospitality, based on the family. African traditional religion is a religion of ethnic solidarity, stability, and unity, and helps to consolidate ethnic organisation, both spiritually and materially.

One of the most essential features of African traditional religion is that it is indistinguishable from the rest of the society's culture. There is no distinction between the temporal and the spiritual. Religion colours all behaviour permeating and motivating every social act. Ω

POWER

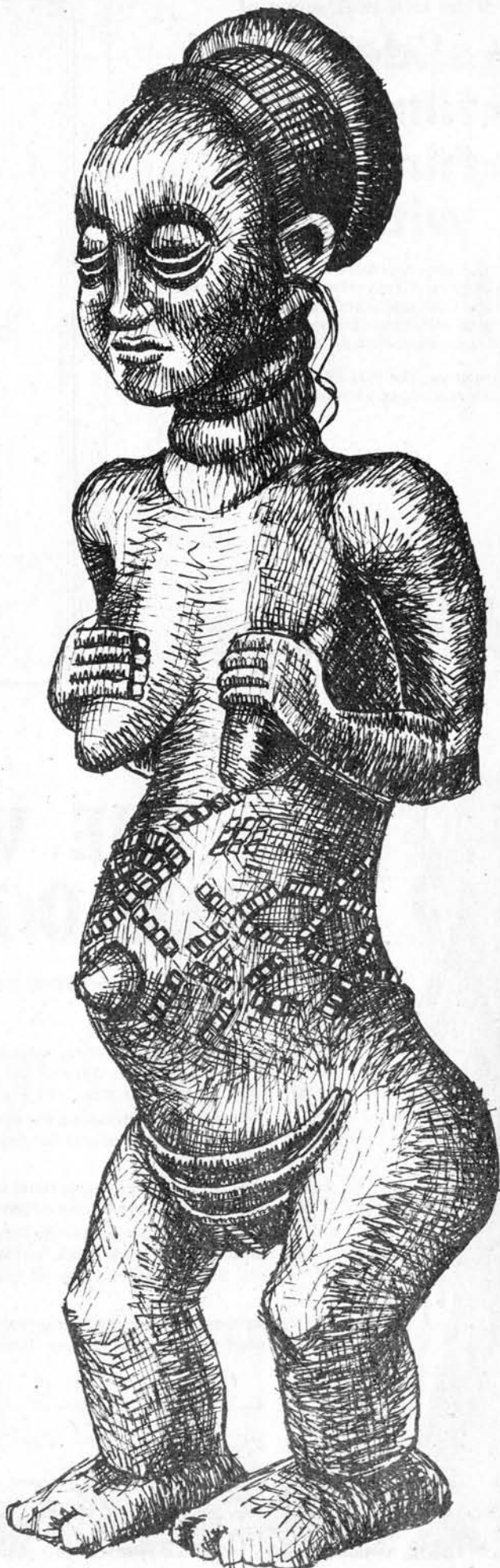
Robert Parsons

The social intercourse of human beings is also shaped by the religious concepts and practices of the people. The life of the individual from conception to entrance into the unseen world is fashioned by religious beliefs, rites and rules of conduct. The numerous religious ceremonies by which a woman endeavours to have and bring into the world a healthy child, make it a child of religion. That it is in the care of religious beings and forces is evident not only in the charms which adorn its body, but in the ceremonies in which it has a part. The naming ceremony, when the child is but a few days old, sets it apart for a certain occupation and dedicates its life to one of good habits and industry. It is united to, and placed in the care of, the maternal family group by the Kewindeda ceremony. At the end of childhood there is a religious ceremony in appreciation of the care of the child during this period. The work of each adult is also strengthened by special 'medicine' peculiar to that vocation or trade. The marriage of the individual follows the rules of the ancestors and is achieved through their help. In adult life, through the normal course of events and in the periods of stress or crisis, one turns naturally to the unseen world for direction and assistance. In death one does not really die, but passes on into that unseen world with which he has kept so close a relationship.

The life of the individual is not a separate existence but is bound by strong ties to the family. This family life is governed by religious forces. The 'kewi' (will) of the maternal and paternal lines is the guiding force in the activities and habits of the family. Fustel de Coulanges says: 'What unites the members of the ancient family is something more powerful than birth or sentiment or physical force; it is the religion of the fireside and of the ancestors.'

The ancestors figure very prominently in the life of the people and might seem to be the highest in rank. However, even though they do play an important part, they are considered intermediaries between the people and God. Prayers spoken to them directly are relayed on and on through the ancestral spirits until at last they reach God. This belief has tended to remove God from the intimate religious life to the outer rim of religious consciousness. Beneath the world of spirits and beings are invisible forces, impersonal but powerful, with whom the people must associate.

The unity and organisation described is more than a unity, and more than an organisation — it is an organism. There is a living communion and fellowship between the living and unseen worlds. As evidence of this fact, one need only point to the number of feasts or communal meals held in connection with the many religious ceremonies. There are the feasts of village purification, feasts when recruits enter Sande, Poro and Bili Societies, feasts over Sande medicine, over the bones of war heroes, at birth and death, for the mother's family, at every ceremony where wrongs are confessed and forgiveness sought, at the *Tamba tina* in times of illness, and feasts at the Mother's Custom Pot. In each case, food with flesh of the sacred parts is set aside for the spirits that are supposed to be present and for any who might be absent. These offerings are made just as naturally as one would prepare an extra bowl of rice for a guest. This naturalness is another evidence that the unseen world is not a world of strangers but a fellowship of their very own. Ω



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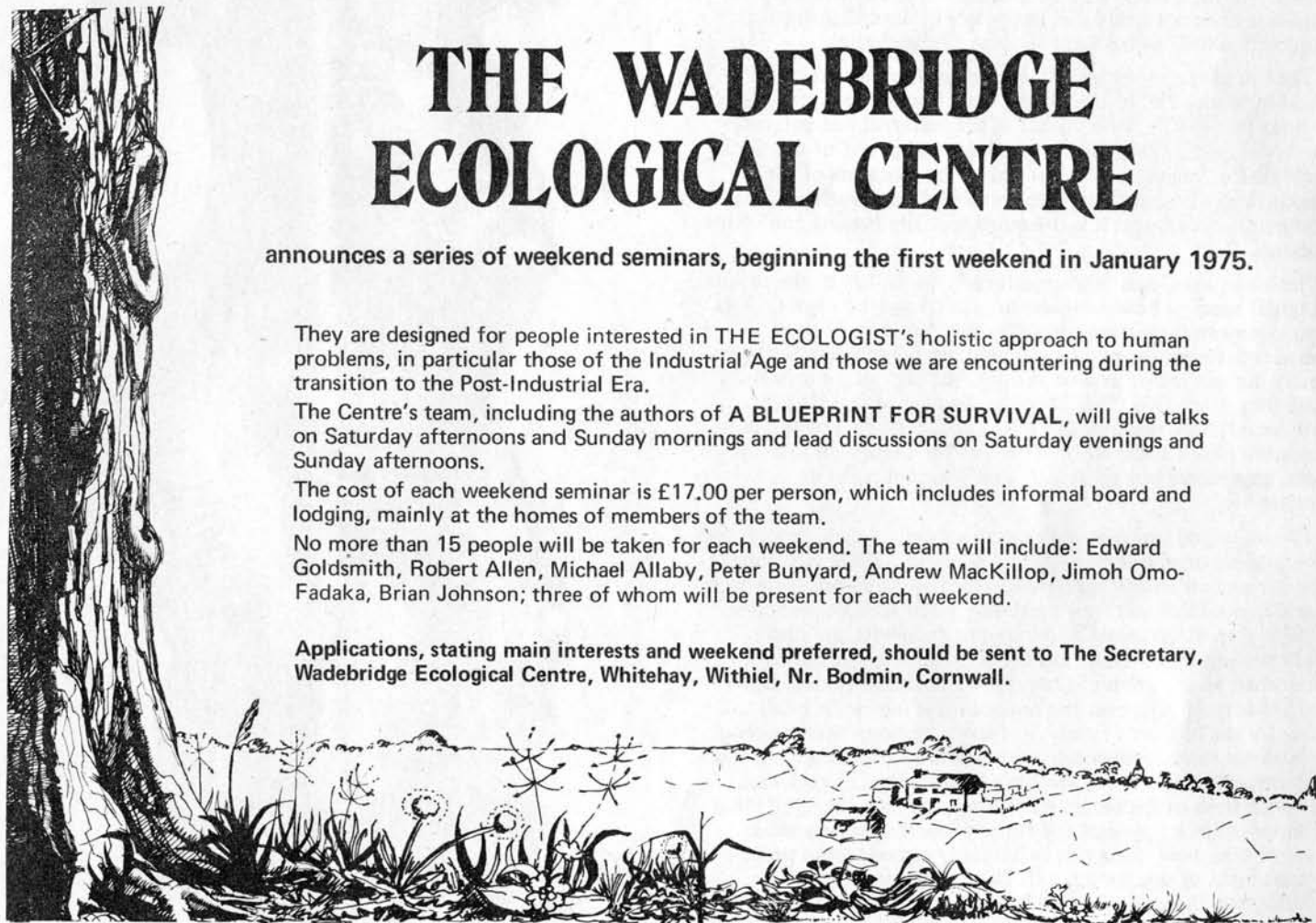
They are designed for people interested in THE ECOLOGIST's holistic approach to human problems, in particular those of the Industrial Age and those we are encountering during the transition to the Post-Industrial Era.

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Applications, stating main interests and weekend preferred, should be sent to The Secretary, Wadebridge Ecological Centre, Whitehay, Withiel, Nr. Bodmin, Cornwall.





Following Nature

COLIN HODGETTS

OLD RECTORY. In two parts, The Prologue and The Session by Martyn Skinner. Will and Sebastian Carter at the Rampant Lions Press, Cambridge. £2 and £3 respectively.

'Yes, a world-setback was the Porton Sneeze.
The mucus sprayed by that micrologist
Who'd bred a virus which no viricide
Could cope with — rabbits, oddly, were immune —
Meant more than just a thousand million deaths.
It meant what we have come to call abeyance:
Civilization, progress in abeyance;
A halt in history, almost a hiatus
In which we huddle now.'

Roaming the resulting vacant wilderness are two interviewers and a friend. Their Europe-wide hermit hunt has brought them to the deserted West Country in search of the recluse, Old Rectory.

'Old Rectory' is a dialogue poem in two parts, The Prologue and The Session, the second part of which was published a year ago. The plot is scant, but that is unimportant, the characterisation slight, but that of little consequence, the language is rich and inventive, the scholarship wide, the craftsmanship skilled and careful, the form unfashionable in its rhythm, rhyme and reason, and the philosophy conservative or avant garde, depending on one's point of view, but all beautifully printed and bound, a one-in-the-eye for your throwaway poets.

Critical reaction has been more of a whimper than a bang. A sensitive review in the Somerset Gazette can be no substitute or consolation for the silence of the rest. 'One who swims against the stream must swim apart' — hard for one who was feted in the forties and fifties, receiving both the Hawthornden Prize and the Heinemann Award. In his previous epic poem, 'The Return of Arthur', he faced the frustration of neglect:

'I'm used to finding on the quay above me
Indifferent faces; and instead of cheering
A throat or two contemptuously clearing.'

In this poem he explores his misalignment with the times. His sensitivity has separated him from his fellow men:

'Nothing isolates
Like a foreboding, which no others share,
Of doom, where everyone participates
In the doomed system. I alone could hear,
It seemed, the future roaring in the weir.'

When imperial Rome was at its height, authors and orators trafficked in 'virtue' and 'justice', whereas in the period of decay the vocabulary of 'some famous strumpet's favourite gladiator' was peppered with 'Fellator, irrumatio, cunnilingus...'. In 'Hair', tribal celebration of the dawning of the new age, such words are sanctified. With soccer and rock stars deified and a Minister to oversee sport who can doubt that, with the Financial Times Industrial Ordinary Share Index, we are falling? In these pages the Second Fall is most vividly portrayed.

Perhaps the stream is changing direction, for many are those who would flee, as the hermits fled Rome. Should they be put off by the accusation that they are evading the problems of their age let them be reminded of what Thomas Merton has forcefully pointed out, that the hermits 'were among the few who were ahead of their time, and opened the way for the development of a new man and a new society.' But are those who flee likely to befriend Martyn Skinner and save him from solitude? There are so many reasons for flight that there is no guarantee of fugitive

compatibility between natural solitaires, Simple Lifers, transcendentalists and nature devotees, between drop-outs and drawn-outs.

Those who fleet footed it from Rome

'Were all religious, Christian, orthodox;
And shared a common dread — contamination;
A common purpose — prayer and meditation.'

Old Rectory was drawn by nature's loveliness, 'a country lane was my Damascus road', and many will revel in and respond to, as I warmly do, the descriptive passages which catch the majesty and mystery of cloud and landscape. He goes beyond those who wish to preserve the countryside but

'lack the vision and the will
To make the one essential sacrifice,
That is, to limit or forgo the use
Of gadgets that gave rise to ugliness.'

However, it is not puritanism but his aesthetic sense that leads him to simplicity:

'I preferred
To any bulb or Belling instance
My candles, kindly to the reading eyes,
That blended with instead of blotting out
The fireside's flicker to the further wall —
A simple blessing in a simple room,
Emblazoning its bareness.'

Let me lay alongside this an extract from Bede Griffith's autobiography, 'The Golden String':

'We found, moreover, that the four candles gave a perfect light for reading; and we learned from this one of the great lessons of our life. Our purpose in using the tallow dips had been simply to do without the products of industrialism, but we found that the light of these candles, reflected on the bare white walls and against the dark oak rafters, created an atmosphere of indescribable beauty. Thus we were able to prove in our own lives that when the simple, natural means are used for any natural end, however humble, they will inevitably produce an effect of beauty.'

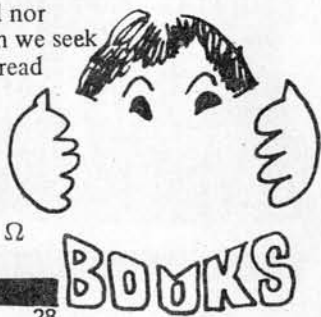
In 1930 Bede Griffiths, Hugh Waterman and Martyn Skinner abandoned academic life to live simply in a Cotswold cottage. 'The political parties, whether of the Left or Right, were concerned only with the organisation of civilized life; but we were concerned with the very nature of our civilization.' 'Our purpose was to escape from industrialism altogether, from the whole system of mechanisation which we felt to be the whole cause of the trouble.' (ibid)

The community lasted for less than a year. They were involved in, and aware of, a radical inconsistency which still, to many, is unavoidable. Their income was derived from the system they repudiated. (Old Rectory, like Pope's father, has his money in a chest, supporting himself and three fellow hermits.) But the experiment affected those involved profoundly. They found their nature-creed deficient and began to rediscover the reality of the spiritual dimension:

'So for me
Religion entered nature. Stream and tree
Retained their old enchantment, cloud and hill
Their beauty, but with that of holiness
Evident too; as when the sunset told
The time on the church clock in hands of gold.'

Old Rectory fled from man's wilderness 'To ponder, even perhaps to paint my way Back to reality.' For 'No way of life's authentic as an end.' 'End is divine'.

Here is still the conflict between convenience and simplicity and the parasitical existence which makes simplicity and isolation possible. The individual cannot achieve purity in a sick society nor can he survive outside it without a commitment to Franciscan poverty, without the desire of the desert hermit neither to lord nor be lorded nor to be possessed by possessions. When we seek to be in the world but not of it we tread a razor-edged path. It is marvellous to have so eloquent a description of the pit-falls and cliff faces, to rehearse again the eternal debate and to be so vigorously and wittily reminded of our sad, sick, situation. Ω



CITY OF GOD?

JOHN PAPWORTH

THE SECULAR CITY

by Harvey Cox. S.C.M. Press Ltd., London.

There is something deeply disquieting about this book. Mankind is in the midst of a fundamental crisis of life, yet what is that crisis about? There are some, and Mr Cox would appear to be one, who suppose that the crisis has its origins in an evil waywardness of human beings which produces such unsavoury symptoms as crime, drug addiction, family breakdown, bodily and mental sickness, adolescent pregnancies, a pervasive enlargement and acceptance of violence and a casual denial of spirituality, all of which, and very much more of negative import, are the hallmarks of life in the modern city.

Mr. Cox argues that the Church can do little about these and other manifestations of the secular city until it abandons much of its theological furniture inherited from the past and embraces the secular city with what he calls 'a theology of revolution'. He asserts that we must view the secular city as 'an emergent reality' on the grounds that it 'exemplifies maturation and responsibility'. This leads him to discuss the

rapidity of social change and the need of the church to learn to react to it at the same speed.

In all this, and a great deal more, I believe Mr. Cox, and those many others who share his approach, are proceeding on the basis of a false premise. The generality of people has neither desired nor created the kind of society in which they are living today. We are, in fact, trapped in a process alien and antithetical to our deepest needs, needs which often exist at a quite unconscious, primordial and even biological, level of our being and which are simply rationalised at the conscious levels of our awareness as an acceptance of the inevitable.

What has led us into such a terrible and destructive situation where at numerous levels, ranging from the mounting incidence of battered babies to the overwhelming obscenity of nuclear weapons, we have become our own worst enemies?

The very trappings of democracy, based on the sedulous manipulation of electoral masses in one party or another, are themselves now one of the implements used for coercing people however subtly into the acceptance of life patterns others have created for them.

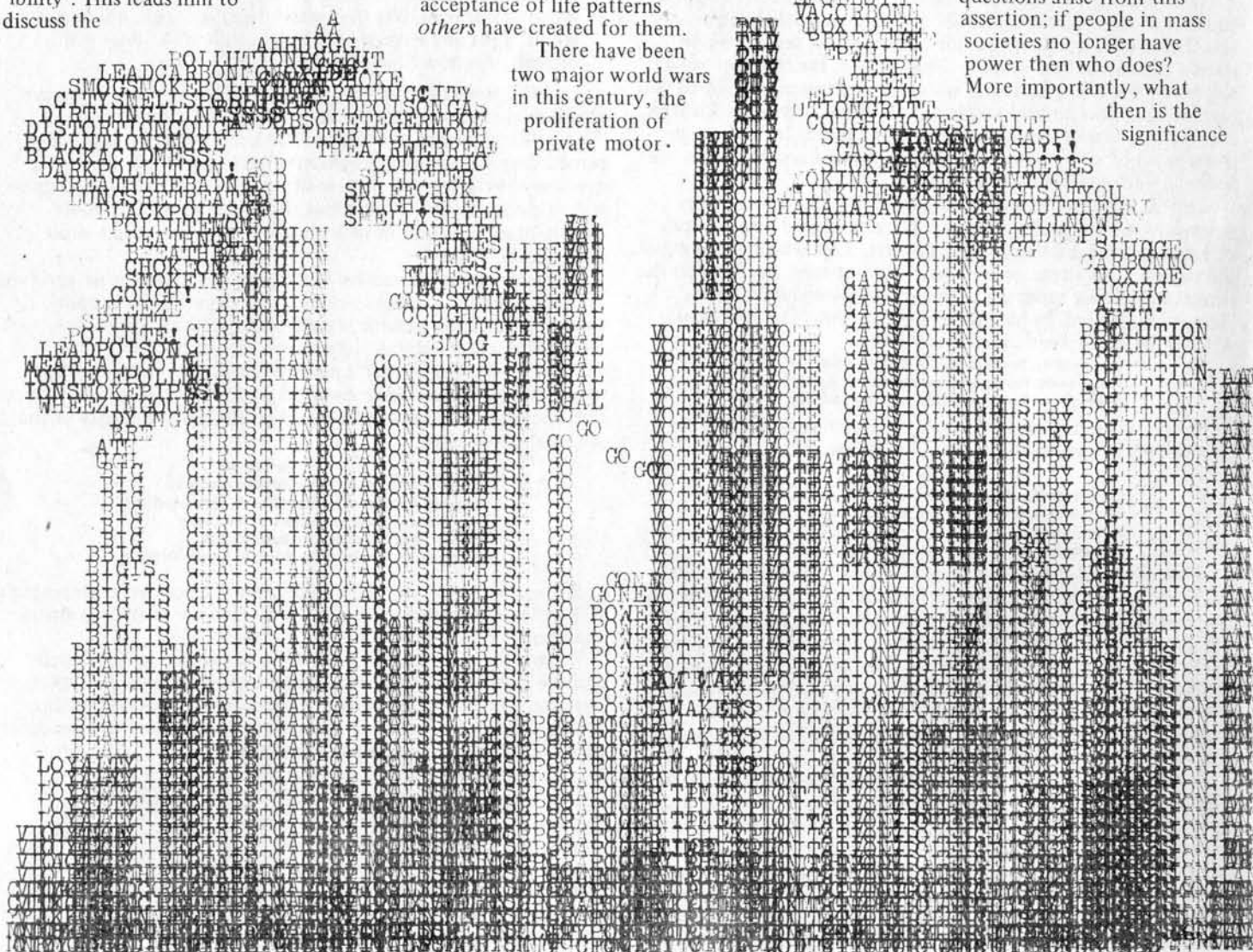
There have been two major world wars in this century, the proliferation of private motor

cars and vast road systems, D.D.T. and other dangerous substances have flooded the farmlands of the world. What voice have ordinary people had in these matters? They were not consulted at all, frequently even their so-called elected representatives were not consulted. The manner, for example, in which the decision to manufacture the atomic bomb was concealed not only from the people and Parliament in Britain, but even from members of the Cabinet has been succinctly detailed in Andrew Roth's book, 'Can Parliament Decide?'

Yet what happens when people are consulted on a major issue and their wishes indicate that they are opposed to what is afoot? The question of Britain's membership of the Common Market is currently possibly the most momentous issue in British politics. Through successive opinion polls the people have indicated quite unambiguously that they will have none of it. Yet Britain is now a member, and the party leaders are still frustrating the people's will with another policy described as 're-negotiating the terms of entry'.

Who has the power?

It would take us too far from our central theme to explain why, in any mass society, people are almost by definition powerless. But a number of key questions arise from this assertion; if people in mass societies no longer have power then who does? More importantly, what then is the significance



and effectiveness of people's moral judgements? Well, what power is running today our schools, hospitals, welfare schemes, civic services, tax systems, industrial and commercial enterprises, military forces, shopping centres and so on? Quite clearly the power to run all these things and make the day-to-day decisions, which are what is involved in running them, is not in the hands of the people. It is rather in the hands of, in power terms, elitest groups whose hands are on the levers. In an effort to make this power more immediately responsive to their wishes people have proceeded to form large mass political parties, only to discover that in doing so they have simply created a perch for more elitest power groups. Talk of 'mass democracy' is simply a contradiction in terms. It is of the very essence of the modern predicament that the ordinary member of a mass society is not only powerless and anonymous, but totally subject to the various forms of manipulation which the various elite groups who do have the power are able to wield.

In such circumstances the effect of people's moral judgements on the workings of modern society cease to have any but the most residual significance. The very idea of morality shrinks to a consideration of the private peccadilloes of individuals whilst altogether ignoring the enormity of the social crimes we are powerless to stop our 'leaders' from committing. This is what in turn has helped to create a situation in which personal morality appears to be of no importance and where churches which are concerned about the evils of, let us say, drunkenness or promiscuity, whilst ignoring that their governments may be murdering and maiming people by the million, become mere vehicles of absurdity and an archaic irrelevance to the desperate spiritual needs of our time.

Freedom to do what?

The 'freedom' of modern urban secular people to which Mr. Cox refers so frequently, is a wholly illusory concept. It is simply the freedom of moral irresponsibility, the freedom of anonymity, the freedom that is able to escape the commitments of serious social ties and obligations and hence any serious questioning of the social institutions on which they

should be based. At root it is simply the freedom of powerlessness which is expressed as the power to be manipulated.

This is the fundamental reason for the moral break down of modern societies, and which is putting the moral goals of goodness, gentleness and fellowship beyond the reach of even those who would seek them.

Collectively modern mass societies are

unable to express or move towards such goals because the levers of power are in the hands of minority groups whose primary aim is the grasping, retaining and consolidating power itself in their own hands.

The Church is not at fault, as Mr. Cox asserts, in failing to become somehow identified (although precisely how is never made clear), with this terrible situation. Where it is at fault is in failing to discern the relationship between the need for power to be in citizen hands if citizen moral judgements are to be exercised in any seriously dynamic way and the citizen stock of moral wisdom thereby preserved and extended.

It is also, in my view, deeply at fault in failing to see how this tremendous loss of citizen power, despite its apparent extension through the ballot box, has been accomplished, and here again, the record is unambiguous.

Citizen power can only be truly operative when people are living in societies which are on a scale commensurate with their capacity to control them. It is only in small communities that the citizen can exercise moral judgement and all the other attributes of their genius and humanity. It was the Weimar Republic which produced Goethe, not the first, second or third Reichs, which have been noteworthy mainly in producing more and bigger wars; it was Salzburg which produced Mozart, not the Austro-Hungarian Empire; it was Stratford on Avon which produced Shakespeare and the Bedfordshire village of Eltham which produced Bunyan and the Pilgrim's Progress, not some concourse of bureaucrats in Brussels or anywhere else. But why are we so ignorant, indifferent or mindless of the lessons of our own history? The Renaissance happened in the small-scale, city-states of Europe after the collapse of the top-heavy and overcentralised Roman Empire. That Renaissance was the most splendid event in all history and saw man reaching heights of creative and spiritual achievement which dazzle us to this day. It is not a scrap of use seeking to belittle the Renaissance on the grounds that its cities had bad sewage systems or that some workers were exploited or that some barbaric customs such as torture and stake-burnings prevailed. The renaissance prevailed despite these factors. In any event, who are we to talk with the latest Amnesty report before us declaring that the use of torture is increasing in many parts of the world, and when environmental scientists are begging us to stop polluting and poisoning our eco-system before it is too late to save it from destruction? Let us ask instead why it is that with all our new forms of power and technology we cannot hold a candle to the achievements of our forebears more than half a millenium ago.

Why? I believe the answer to this question has a profound bearing on the issues raised by Mr. Cox, but it indicates a path which is quite contrary to that which he would have us take. The failure to enlarge and advance the achievements of the Renaissance stems directly from the destruction of the

historic city states and the destruction of those many forms of power which were wielded locally by human-scale communities.

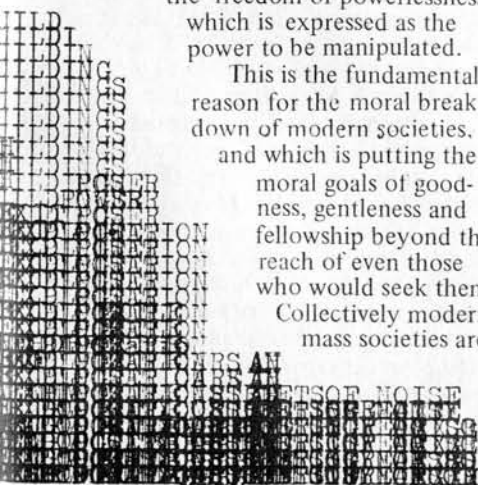
Partly this was done by war and conquest but even more it was done by the emergent forces of capitalism and, more recently, by state-controlled communism. It is no accident at all that the intellectual climate of the Renaissance was dominated by debates on moral and spiritual issues, for on a human-scale of social life moral questions are not irrelevant to the main forces dominating such societies, as they are in the mass societies of today, they are fundamental to the purposes and even the very existence of such societies.

The late R.H. Tawney has demonstrated in memorable prose, in his 'Religion and the Rise of Capitalism', how considerations of profit, 'efficiency' and expediency came to silence the great debates on such questions as usury and 'the just price', and fundamental to this change was a change in the power relationships of social groups. More specifically new and much more impersonal forms of economic power came to dominate and even supersede, the power of local communities. This new power of the market was largely in the hands of a small minority and once it achieved its dominance the way was open to enable it to create new patterns of life on a mass scale which took only as much note of moral considerations as was necessary to hold or enlarge its domain.

It should be noted that wherever the common people could they resisted this new form of power tenaciously. The Luddites, who could see the writing on the wall far more clearly than many people are able to see it even now, were possibly the last despairing throw of ordinary people seeking to maintain some sort of control over their own destinies. They failed of course, and we of the twentieth century who can look back down the centuries at their struggle are privileged to be able to measure some part of the price of their failure.

What we cannot, what we dare not do, is to continue to acquiesce, as Mr. Cox does, in the forces that have made our age one of such abysmal moral and spiritual squalor in the quaint belief that its material forms, the mass society, the secular city, consumerism (the new opium of the masses), immeasurably wicked instruments of war, and all the rest of it, are matters which have somehow just happened rather than which are direct fruits of these historic forces. On the secular city Mr. Cox writes 'In face of its coming, attitudes which have been brought along from yesterday must be discarded, and a new orientation which is in keeping with the new social reality must be initiated.'

Might it not be wiser, and we do not seem to have too much time to seek to locate the forces which are creating such historic enormities as the secular city as a step to counter ing them with a fresh vision of the



city of God? And in under taking this task would it not be worth recalling that whilst the enormous centralised and monolithic power of the Roman Empire crumbled to ruin, the power of the Church, based on small, human-scale parishes, has shown a capacity for survival which now stretches across nearly twenty centuries?

"The wise man" said Shaw, "seeks to adapt himself to the world, the fool tries to adapt the world to himself; thus all progress depends on fools." Perhaps the Church could do with a few more fools of this order.

Elsewhere Mr. Cox refers to the fact, if it is a fact, that 'We are all trying to live in an age of accelerating change with a static theology.' He makes it clear that he does not disapprove of the former, but of the latter, although anyone conversant with the works on theology which have appeared over the last two decades might be forgiven a modest doubt as to where this static theology is to be found.

Rapid social change is a fruit of the Advertising Industry

Yet why should rapid social change be taken as a fact of life rather than largely a fruit of the advertising industry and the forces which sustain it? There is no particular virtue in rapid social change, involving as it does a great many wrong turnings and wasted journeys, and there is a great deal of particular vice which is expressed in dislocation of people's lives and endless, needless and pointless suffering by millions. We are confronted here, in fact, by something quite vicious and inhuman. It takes time for a woman to advance through pregnancy to giving birth, it takes time for an infant to mature into an adult, and the very business of living, of learning and of maturing into old age, has its own innate rhythm which cannot be hurried except at the price of deep-rooted dislocation. We need time to think, to meditate, to pray, to contemplate the stars, to ponder our situation, our relationships, to walk alone in silence, if only to see what will come to us, to be open to new spiritual developments within ourselves, and even just to be ourselves instead of mere appendages to 'rapid social change'. 'Be still, and know that I am God'. Is not this one of those ineluctable truths which we deny at the expense of our humanity? Why then should we not be concerned to slow down the prevailing rate of social change rather than adapt ourselves to it? After all, the reason for the rapidity is not a very elevating one. What is called rapid social change is seldom more than an impetus for the rapid and frequent consumption of goods and services, and the reason for this urgent tempo stems from the need for rapid production which in turn rests on the fact that production depends on the use of capital which in turn can earn interest over time. Time is money, and since money dominates everything we must all be in a rush to spend both for fear of what we may lose and to keep capitalists out of the red. Why should not any major social change, the egregious folly of the Concorde

airplane for example, be preceded by the quiet communings and consideration of numerous parish meetings over many months, so that all its *pros* and *cons* are carefully weighed in a balance of social cost and benefit before being embarked upon? Why all the rush to follow blindly wherever experts may want to lead? It may be argued that others are rushing and that we may lose out if we don't. If this is so, is a reminder quite out of place that we are human beings, and not Gaderene swine?

The modernist, and doubtless Mr. Cox is one, will be aghast. Return to a smaller scale? Slow down the rate of change? But you cannot put the clock back — regardless of the fact that it is only a very small, albeit powerful, minority which is pushing it forward to a speed which negates our humanity. There is a simple failure of vision here. Civilisation is not going on and on and up and up, it is disintegrating before our eyes. It is doing so because we have lost control of certain important artefacts of our societies, the economic ones not least. We are in fact at the brink of a chasm of social breakdown and destruction because our societies are too big, over-centralised and engulfed in a tornado of change stemming from mere greed for profit or power or both.

Poised on such a brink we do not need any 'theology of revolution' to impel us forward in league with these Godless forces. Indeed ordinary sanity impels us, to step back and take stock. We cannot, in any event, go back in time. What we can do, and desperately need to, is to take full note of the forms and tempo which produced such resplendent results in the past and to see what we can use of them to make genuine progress, moral and spiritual as well as material, now.

When Jesus enjoined his hearers to 'Love your neighbour' he was addressing people who *had* neighbours, not just fellow residents who were in transit and who worked, played, educated their children, worshipped and lived in separate categories and places. Who is one's neighbour in the secular city? Perhaps we should address the question to any Parish Priest whose work is chronically confounded by the sheer anonymity and isolation of the multitudes around him.

Without such community relationships what moral judgements based on personal experience of the behaviour of one's fellows in all the variety of roles they play in a community as workers, worshippers, family members, taxpayers, philanthropists, politicians, cultural activists and so on can be made? Where is the close-knit observation and experience whence wisdom stems?

There are no theoretical obstacles to a polycellular global society, the Scandinavian nations, Switzerland, Austria, Iceland, even tiny Liechtenstein, a mere 22,000 inhabitants, all demonstrate that smallness succeeds. It is true that some of these countries are unduly centralised so that genuine citizen control is not all that it might be, nevertheless we do well to ponder one quality all these small countries possess, they do have pronounced qualities

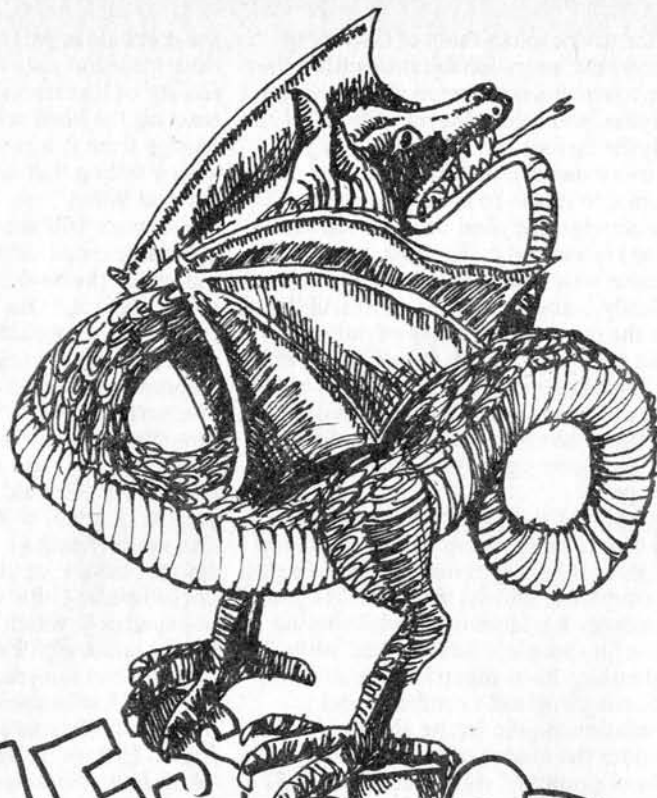
of peace-keeping. Switzerland, despite the fact that it is landlocked in the midst of one of the most war-torn and war-prone continents in the world, has not been involved in a war for something like two centuries. Perhaps another quality is worthy of note; all of them display a pronounced lack of political extremism and a no less pronounced degree of political freedom and toleration.

Perhaps before we embark on the construction of a 'theology of revolution' in a trendy attempt to accommodate our faith to the imposing realities of violence and social disruption, we should pause to study the Swiss Constitution. It is a remarkably short document and quite free of legalistic jargon and the rhetorical bombast common to such documents.

We will find no doubt that we still need a 'Theology of Revolution', for even the Swiss are a long way from solving all their problems, but it will surely be a revolution to extend the frontiers of our faith within a meaningful framework that bears some relation to our humanity and which does not start from a premise which repudiates much that is basic to our needs.

There remains one point in Mr. Cox's approach which cannot be passed over in silence; is it really true that there is no other way to run a world of three billion people except by massive organisations that demean by their sheer size and existence the human significance of those multitudes whose affairs they encompass? In the perspective of human recorded history the loss of control involved in the transition from small to large scale structures, and from local to remote bureaucratic control, is no more significant in terms of time than that of the blink of a camera-shutter. Why the assumption therefore of its inevitable permanence? Mr. Cox might be forgiven for such a sweeping assumption in 1964, even though long before then some quite perceptive voices had raised doubts on the matter; Mahatma Gandhi, for example, never swerved from the view that Western Civilisation, if it did not change course drastically, could only end by destroying itself, and he was saying as much, more than a decade before the onset of World War II and the advent of thermonuclear weapons.

I began by saying I found this book deeply disquieting, I also find it dangerous. If the world is to be saved it will not be saved by vast organisations, but by countless individuals freely engaged in using their moral judgements and applying those judgements to their own lives and that of the social order around them. If, however, social and economic forces founded on a repudiation of morality, and operating on a scale so large as to make those moral judgements inoperable in relation to it, are accepted as both necessary and inevitable when they are neither, then any ensuing attempt to conceive a theological framework based on their acceptance will only be a theology of revolution into darkness and can scarcely fail to be other than a revolution of despair. Ω



LEOPOLD
KOHR

WALES STORY

'The great crisis for us came with the rise of state power and Empire in the last century. It was our bad luck to be incorporated in the most powerful country in the world and to be inundated by the world's strongest and most prestigious language and culture. The marvel is that we survived at all.' Gwynfor Evans

LAND OF MY FATHERS: 2000 Years of Welsh History

by Gwynfor Evans. John Penry Press, Swansea, 1974. £4.00.

When Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, he felt like 'taking a snapshot of a steady-state process, in which some rocks are worn down continually and other new ones being thrown out, so that no matter when man went to this spot — whether it had been 1,000 years ago or a 100,000 years ago or even a million years from now — it would generally look the same.'

I have a similar feeling as I go through Gwynfor Evans' book, wherever I open it, the scene looks generally the same. The past is always present; the present always past. Conquests are made and eroded and new ones made. The Welsh language is assaulted, outlawed, degraded, saved. The nation is pushed to the limits of extinction, yet surges again and again in a seemingly never ending struggle for self-determination and the preservation of its identity. What changes is the names of a dramatic string of protagonists and antagonists. But the roles they enact against the background of successive historic settings, as the roles in Shakespeare's tragedies in which many of them figure, are always the same. And so is the play. As Mary Dasser, quoting from a gripping Welsh poem, says: 'To live in Wales is to be conscious at dusk of the

spilled blood. . . . You cannot live in the present, at least not in Wales.'

This does not mean that the story is repetitious. It merely illustrates the continuum which the steady-state process imparts to the life of a nation. It also illustrates what Polybius had in mind when he said that 'history is philosophy taught by examples.' This is why we are always tempted to describe past events in contemporary terms, or to compare contemporary leaders with the leaders of the past. Gwynfor Evans greatly helps the reader's understanding by doing precisely this and, as a result, has been criticised for viewing Welsh history from the perspective of a Welsh nationalist. But from what other point of view should the President of *Plaid Cymru*, the Welsh Nationalist Party, describe the history of a people whose very survival has for two millenia depended on those who have ceaselessly defended its separate identity — from the saints to the bards to the princes to the Chapel all the way up to the founders of *Plaid Cymru*? Should he have written the history of his nation from the perspective of the Labour Party, one of whose Scottish members is reported in *The Guardian* of August 19, 1974, as having said: 'If we deliver socialism the national feeling will soon go away'?

So there is nothing wrong that *The Land of My Fathers* should have been

written from the viewpoint of a devoted and loving son anxious to preserve the patrimony of his ancestors. But this does not mean that his history is a loaded die. As Dr. Glyn Rhys pointed out, after all: *history means his story*. And his (Gwynfor Evans') story is a tremendous feat initiating the outsider such as myself in a single 465-page volume in 2000 years of Welsh existence. It is the first one-volume Welsh History written in half a century. And it omits nothing. Maybe it is only in Wales where nothing *can* be omitted. Elsewhere, the history of a country's language, literature, art, music, religion can be separated from the political process of nation building which, indeed, is more often than not steeped in barbarism and savagery. In Wales it is part and parcel of the history of civilisation. It is inconceivable without saints and bards who, when everyone else faltered, remained the repository of national consciousness and, when the rest of Europe became eclipsed in the dark ages, emerged as almost the sole torch bearers of the Western and the Christian mission. Hence it is not surprising that this book of a nation's history should abound in the reproduction of poetry and verse, leaving the reader with an acute desire to become acquainted with the work of a whole host of persons of whom he has never heard before unless, of course, he is a Welshman.

As I mentioned, in every history which is philosophy taught by examples, one is tempted to find forever contemporary parallels to the events and persons of the past, and vice versa. Thus, letting the book fall open on page 275, one reads under the dateline of 1442 that, since 1401 'no Welshman could own property within a borough, nor near one; he could not hold a position under the crown in Wales or England; he could not be a juror, nor marry an Englishwoman, nor a Welshwoman an Englishman.' One does not need to strain one's mind to see in this a classical case of *apartheid*. Not even a successful soldier such as Owain Tudor was exempt from these restrictions with the result that, when he wanted to marry an English woman in 1429, he had to marry her clandestinely. The woman was the widow of Henry V, Queen Catherine, who thought her husband's Welsh family were 'the goodliest dumb creatures she ever knew', a judgement not too different from that of Paul Johnson, the former editor of the *New Statesman*. In due course, Owain himself was executed (at Hereford, 1461).

It is from these dumb creatures and outlaws that arose England's most illustrious dynasty, when Owain's grandson succeeded Richard III as King Henry VII after his victory on Bosworth Field on August 22, 1483. 'For the Welsh', said the Viennese ambassador at the time, 'it can now be said they won back their old independence, for Henry VII is a Welshman, a fortunate and wise Welshman.' Similarly,



BOOKS

Sir Francis Bacon still thought nearly a century later that Henry Tudor's victory was a victory for the Welsh. 'They had thereby regained their freedom.' And the Welsh themselves thought that, with a Welsh-speaking Welshman on the English throne, their national aspirations had at last been fulfilled. Indeed, they had all reason to share this conviction. For, like Lloyd George and many a Welsh member of the British Labour Party in their more recent battles for Downing Street, Henry began his preparations for the battle on Bosworth Field with the specific promise to 'the nobles and commons of this our principality of Wales' that he would restore 'our said principality of Wales and the people of the same to their former liberties.'

But, as Gwynfor Evans writes, it was a Pyrrhic victory. It 'came close to costing the Welsh nation its life. . . . Freedom was the goal: But the tragic mistake of the Welsh when trying to attain it was to aim at government by a Welshman in London instead of a Welsh government in Wales.' And so, in line with the steady-state process, it has been ever since — from the Battle of Bosworth Field of August 1483, to the Battle for Downing Street of October 1974; from Henry Tudor to Enoch Powell.

Barely half a century after Bosworth Field, in 1536, Henry VIII confided in

a letter to the inhabitants of Galway in Ireland that 'every inhabitante within the saide towne indever theym selfe to speke Englyshe, and to use theym selfe after the Englyshe facion; and specyally that you and every one of you put forth your childe to scole, to learne to speake Englyshe.' The same provision applied of course to Wales whose annexation to England dates from the same year. But while the law is at last gradually being eroded, its spirit still lingers as in the most recent ruling of only a few weeks ago by the Welsh Office to the effect that English, like the Englyshe of over 400 years ago, must be accorded pride of place over the national language on road and railway-station signs throughout the Principality.

In spite of the warmth with which Gwynfor Evans presents his nation's long struggle, his history reflects no anti-English or xenophobic animus whatever. He praises his country's achievements while hiding none of its people's defects. And while condemning his compatriots for so often supporting England's centralist and assimilationist policies, he always tries to 'consider the matter impartially' also from England's point of view. Hence, while *The Land of My Fathers* is his story, his story is also history. It is neither a harangue nor a popularization. It is a stupendous work based on the most exhaustive study of his nation's past, and presented not only with

the meticulous scholar's sense for factual exactitude but also with the Welshman's facility of literary expression. Anyone entering the book with ignorance, will emerge from it instructed and enriched and with a feeling that at last he knows something of Wales.

Glanmor Williams, Professor of History at Swansea, said, after praising many aspects of the book, that he would recommend it to his students — with reservations. I would not recommend it with reservations any more than I would recommend Gibbon or Tacitus with reservations. What I would recommend now that Gwynfor Evans' treatment has stimulated my own appetite for more is that students should read also other books such as Glanmor William's *The Welsh Church*, Kenneth O. Morgan's *Wales in British Politics*, or particularly Alwyn Rees' encyclopedic *Celtic Heritage*, now available in paperback, which Professor Anatol Murad ranks with Frazer's *Golden Bough*. And last but not least I would recommend the most handsomely presented and beautifully illustrated condensed version of Evans' *History of Wales* which the *South Wales Echo* (Swansea, 1974) has brought out for more popular and school-age consumption in the form of a magazine (34 pages, £0.50). With these on one's shelf, one should be well prepared for a journey to and through Wales. Ω

Practice & Utopia

JUNE MITCHELL

MAKIN' IT: a guide to some working alternatives

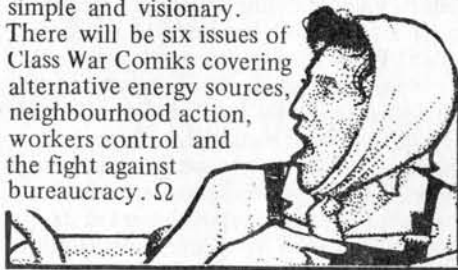
by Nigel G. Turner. Paper Tiger Productions, The Loft, The Manor House, River Lane, Petersham, Surrey TW10 7AG. 1974. 80p.

NEW TIMES, Class War Comiks no.1 by Clifford Harper. Epic Productions, 76 Peckham Road, London SE5. 25p.

Makin' It covers 21 alternative projects in 134 pages: Industrial Common Ownership, Publishing Community Papers, the art, socio-political cinema, Free Schools, Organic Husbandry, Food Co-ops, Non-commercial Shops and Record Companies. Many of the projects have been going a number of years, such as BIT, Bath Arts Workshop and Alternative London. The author describes each, how it functions and the philosophy that inspired it, how to start a new project and keep the books straight. The style is simple and the stories of going projects fascinating — it tells you how to survive in spite of financial worries and worse. The projects all seek new relationships between consumer and producer and share a respect for each other as human beings, a belief in the importance of community and a small-scale service which responds to those who receive it. 'Success' is hardly ever in financial terms but is in personal and community fulfilment. This is the year of the Tiger and Tiger Productions have made a good start with this book. Many people who are bored at their 9-5

jobs should find this book a very useful tool.

Whereas *Makin' It* is about the practical aspect of the Alternative now, Epic Productions has come out with a comic on the political aspect of a new society. The setting is a large rural commune of 2000 people living in farms and a village on about 1500 acres. The time is Post Revolutionary Britain. 'New Times' puts philosophy into intensely personal terms. What will be the relationships and how will small communities reach decisions? It brings out the conflict between those who think that revolution can only be made in the city and those who feel it can only be lived in the country. Prince Kropotkin is the prophet of their Utopia. The illustrations are mysteriously simple and visionary. There will be six issues of *Class War Comiks* covering alternative energy sources, neighbourhood action, workers control and the fight against bureaucracy. Ω



The Map

ASHOKA

THE GOSPEL OF RELATIVITY

by Walter Starcke. Turnstone Books, London. 1974. £1.95.

When I see a layman's guide to enlightenment I am suspicious of it. The com-

mercial world has made meditation and self-knowledge into a business. Many enlightened yogis and seekers have been seduced by the managers of money. Water, air, earth, sunshine are invaluable. So is the spiritual experience and when we put a price on them there is somebody cheating somewhere.

The Gospel of Relativity takes us away from money oriented mysticism. It fuses the body, mind, spirit and science into one whole. It sees the totality of reality and unity in identity. It introduces the realisation of superconsciousness.

The book is written in two parts: the preamble called 'The Celebration of Life' in which a survivor from the present day tells a future generation how technology killed the world; and 'The Map' which was written at the end of the world and which he used as a key to his freedom. The map is a way to self-knowledge.

'The secret is we must die to live. We must surrender in order to attain all we have sought by struggle. Consciously seek no further. Consciously surrender your mind, all you have learnt and all you have not learnt, all old knowledge and all new . . . surrender your desire to have more of god in your life.'

The book is written with utmost simplicity and has a meditative quality in it. It is a Christian approach to Buddhism or a Buddhist approach to Christianity. Buddha and Christ walk side by side in it. One should not expect to be enlightened by this or any book. Enlightenment happens when one is ready. Such books may help us to understand our way. Ω

Alternative Economics

STEPHANIE LENZ

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE HUMANIST REVOLUTION OF OUR TIME

by John Papworth. Neczam. £2.00.

From: 275 Kings Rd, Kingston, Surrey, England

The humanist ethos of the African village and tribal communities probably serves as one of the best examples of the role the size factor plays in dictating whether a society will be governed by the impersonal forces of the international market or by the moral incentives arising out of concern for the well-being of its members.

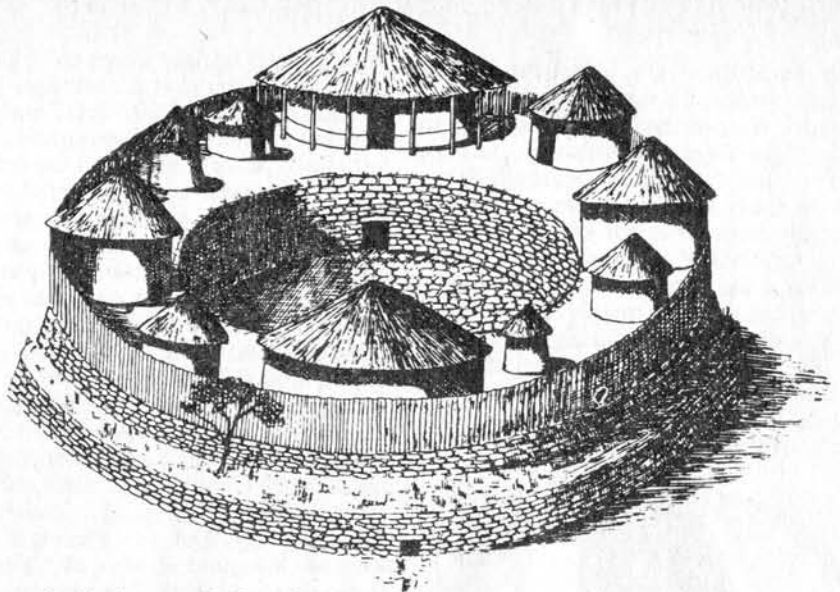
John Papworth has been working as political adviser to President Kaunda in Zambia during the last three years which has provided him with first-hand experience in the structuring and building of a Fourth World country whose government is guided by the age-old humanist philosophy of the African tribal village.

The two factors most responsible for creating this philosophy were, first, the struggle with a harsh environment, and second, isolation from the major trading routes. These factors ensured that the communities were kept small, and that the unity and health of the community was vital for its survival.

Within the framework of our mass societies the situation is quite different where the human being is no longer the focal point. The growth in the scale of operation of orthodox economics, whose giant forces have achieved dominance over present-day human activity is largely responsible for it. The focal point has become the profit motive rather than human self-fulfilment, or the 'needs of the human soul'.

The purpose of the economic process should be to serve and enrich society. Instead it provides pecuniary and material gain for the few, and in its wake is poisoning the environment, exhausting our natural resources, wasting the earth's energy reserves, creating mass unemployment and poverty, causing the alienation of us from ourselves.

So where and what went wrong? The author traces the beginnings as far back as to the expansion of trade in 16th-century Europe. As the forces of capitalism grew, the influence of the Church in providing a guideline based on personal morality weakened, and the 'path of right conduct' gave way to that of 'self-interest'. The personal element of the village and community was lost within the framework of the giant economic forces which were responsible for creating the large urban trading centres. The individual worker became insignificant in relation to the production process: merely a 'hand' under the category 'labour'. Rather than providing



a means of relieving people from boring, routine jobs, machines have come to replace creative skills and to introduce further jobs so extreme in their boredom and routine as to remove any dignity and fulfilment from human beings' working lives.

The result of this lack of creativity and self-fulfilment in work is of course that fulfilment is sought in consuming. And in Papworth's view, and I agree with him, one of the greatest perpetrators of this evil is the advertising industry. Day in and day out people are bombarded by the persuasive voice of the commercial advertisers using methods based on all the latest scientific discoveries into psychological manipulation to play upon and encourage the insecurities created by a daily life devoid of meaning. And not only are we encouraged to consume our fast-disappearing natural resources at an ever-increasing rate, but also to introduce harmful, poisonous substances, lacking all nutrition into our bodies! Is there a greater Evil than slowly poisoning one's fellows and the earth upon which we depend for the material gratification and private gain on a short-term basis of a few individuals?

What Papworth prescribes is an economic system based on the philosophy of humanism, and puts forth what he refers to as a humanist definition of economics: 'Economics is the study of those means

whereby the self-fulfilment of all can be best achieved.' to put this into practice, he advocates the necessity for scaling down the existing economic structure to a size that enables the members of a society to control its forces, and places the interests of the whole human being in the centre of its activity.

In order for any new forms of organisation or any new policies to be adopted, they must first be both accepted and understood by all. Papworth realises the necessity for this, which can only be brought about by a thorough reassessment of our values stimulated by re-educating and enlightening people to the nature of their reality. We are very special beings endowed with the 'capacity to love, to perceive truth and to create beauty'. Progress for mankind should mean the advancing of each one's quality of life and spiritual evolution. This cannot be achieved through the advancing of technological and material well-being as long as in the process we continue to degrade and debase the human spirit. And this, perhaps, is the greatest strength of John Papworth's brilliant book: that he states this case not from a metaphysical viewpoint of ethics but from an economic and evolutionary viewpoint of necessity. The outstanding analysis of this book will be greatly welcomed by students of post industrial economics. Ω

The Earth's Energies

FRANCES HOWARD-GORDON

THE VIEW OVER ATLANTIS

by John Michell. Sphere Books Ltd. 75p

'The View over Atlantis' is the first attempt I have so far come across to pinpoint in concrete terms, chiefly by example, the centres of energy of our planet Earth. When this book was first published, it set a great many minds-a-working, a great many people were at last able to understand more clearly what was only before a rather vague notion of

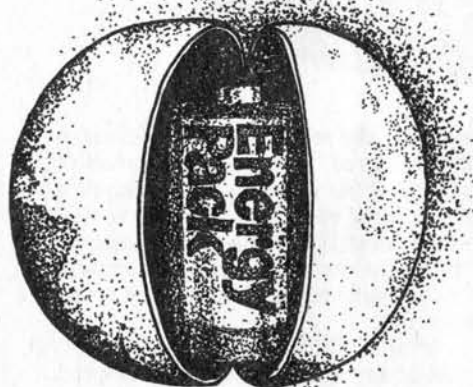
'energies' and 'currents' in and around the Earth.

John Michell's aim in this book is to help us understand very basically the whys and wherefores of 'ley lines' and the magnetic currents that run over and under our planet. Our earth has a magnetic core and it is agreed by scientists that there is a north magnetic pole and a south magnetic pole — centres of extremely strong magnetic energy beneath the Earth's crust. No scientist has yet been able to determine exactly how this magnetic energy flows across the planet; only that it



BOOKS

does indeed do so. Our planet also has a magnetosphere; a magnetic pull this time on the surface of the Earth. Now, if we try to envisage our planet as a person, as a soul and personality with energies much like our own, we can see and compare these magnetic currents to our own, to the different kinds of energies we emit when basking in the light of our soul or when our personality reacts, is moody, emotional; angry and so on. Or, to make it even simpler, we can regard the planet as we do our own network of nerve centres in our physical bodies — our etheric centres with their corresponding ganglions in the flesh.



The nerve centres of our planet were known and mapped out by an ancient civilisation: the civilisation of Atlantis. At that time, the priests and government had intuitive knowledge of the earth's magnetic currents found in underground springs, wells and fissures. And in order to put these energies to some use above the ground, they mapped out these centres on the surface of the earth with lines or circles or stones, then constructed mounds in those exact same places to conserve the energy. But the work did not stop there. They then wished to combine the underground magnetic current with solar or atmospheric energy — the two to meet to form centres for initiation. This 'solar' energy was attracted by the very sophis-

ticated use of upright stones and pillars such as those found at Stonehenge.

John Michell goes into detail and gives us many examples of these centres of initiation. 'All over the world the centres of spiritual power were discovered by means of a system which combines science, astrology and intuition.' And he goes on to cite the Chinese dragon lines, mapped out by geomancers in such a way as to make the whole landscape of China fit and use these magnetic currents. The stone circles dotted around England; Glastonbury Abbey and many other churches especially the Gothic cathedrals, huge figures in the South American landscape, Stonehenge, the Great Pyramid — all of these are examples of the harnessing in ancient times of such energy. And, as if these structures were not intriguing enough, Mrs. Maltwood re-discovered in the 1920's a group of enormous figures inscribed in the landscape between Glastonbury Tor and Camelot — an exact replica of the twelve signs of the zodiac drawn and structured out of the countryside.

The Great Pyramid is perhaps the finest relic of the ancient world illustrating as it does most perfectly the marriage of spirit and matter. And if we consider that previous civilisation in terms of its mastery of science, its way of seeing and understanding things in terms of letters, numbers and symbols, then the mind boggles at the thought of the secrets that must be hidden in the Pyramid, the whole constructed inch by inch as an altar to the secrets of the universe. The British stone circles, Stonehenge and Glastonbury Abbey were also laid out to a groundplan consisting of regular geometrical figures, all concealing in their measurements the most recondite and marvellous esoteric truths.

This science, using numbers and letters symbolically, is called gematria and is of profound significance. In this sacred science are hidden the secrets of the cosmos. This will come of no surprise to the Kabbalists amongst us.

John Michell delves at length into gematria and its importance in understanding ancient civilisations and their monuments; without it, the whole subject would be incomprehensible. But there is another aspect of the energy centres and places of initiation constructed so long ago that belongs more to the realm of intuition — something that can be experienced by each and every one of us if we visit such a centre. In such a place, and from my own experience in the central chamber of the Great Pyramid, the energies and magnetic currents flow so freely that a warp of psychic energies takes place. The magnetism in such a centre is so powerful that metaphysically two such impossible combinations as water and oil mix and combine freely with nothing to stop them.

So what of this ancient civilisation which knew all about energies and how to use them? Obviously we have a great deal to learn from what remains of their culture — particularly our rediscovery of that quality called intuition — the ability to envisage and grasp at truths normally totally beyond our comprehension. Evidently this lost civilisation experienced an externalisation of the Mysteries — truths which until this day are very much esoteric. But is it not also true that they must have lacked some essential quality which could have prevented the disaster that removed them from the face of the planet?

Of course it is difficult for us to see our present day chaos as a step forwards in evolution, but one can suggest that through all our society's necessary scepticism and rejection of things 'mysterious' and 'unorthodox', a new externalisation of the Mysteries is on its way. A new approach to the truth is awakening in us all, for we already possess the qualities of that ancient civilisation — we have only to re-affirm them, to learn their use all over again.



BOOKS

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THE WEAVING EXPERIENCE

A&T. Willcocks

Weaving is a special experience for me. It all started a few years ago when I watched my sister hand card some raw sheep's fleece. Carding is really combing the fleece so that all the fibres run together in the same direction in preparation for spinning. Carded wool is extremely soft and gentle to the touch, and a unique experience to the senses.

Once the wool is carded it is ready to be spun. So out I went and bought myself something to spin with, in this case an 'Indian Spinner'. The most traditional and the most common spinning machine is, of course, the spinning wheel, but out on the West Coast of Canada the Indians have adapted the concept to use with a simpler, more box-like treadle frame. It is more versatile than the spinning wheel because it can be used to spin very thick and nubbly, as well as the more traditional thin, even thread. Personally I prefer it because I can get some very texturous effects in my woven article. Most spinners spin their wool in its natural oily state, after which it is wound into a skein and washed in lukewarm water with soapflakes. A great deal of lanolin and dirt comes out in the wash, and this may amount to as much as 40% by weight of what you originally bought.

Now it is ready to dye. Dyeing is one of the most important processes in weaving since it determines the final visual experience of the woven article. There are limitless colour shades, using both chemical and natural vegetable dyes. The dyer 'feels out' his/her tastes and the processes of this dyeing art to suit any particular desired effects.

Now you have your beautifully dyed skein of wool, which has dried, and is ready to wind into a ball and to be used. The actual weaving process requires some kind of a loom. A very easy and efficient loom for the beginner is the frame loom, which can be made simply with an old sturdy picture frame. The warp threads are wound tightly around nails hammered in at even intervals at each end of the frame; for example, at about 5-7 threads per inch. Once these 50-60 parallel warp threads are tightened over the whole width, you are ready to weave, using either spun yarns or just raw fleece for the weft. The word 'weave' simply means in and out of, which is exactly what you do. From now on I don't believe there should be any rules, and the weaver can have a great time!

Like any craft, or art form, weaving is a self expression. From the hand made cloth you can make anything: cushion covers, wall hangings, rugs, or shawls. You can do it for your own inner satisfaction, or to make an income. The cost of weaving depends on how much you want to put into it. For example, the cheapest wool you can buy is the fleece, and spin it up yourself, or you can spend a fortune on ready-spun fancy commercial yarns. The

initial outlay of money would probably be on some kind of spinner, anywhere from a spindle at about 40p. to an antique spinning wheel at several hundred pounds. Likewise the loom — a cheap frame loom may be adequate, or you may want to go for a big beam loom which probably requires a workshop of its own.

So both the poor and the rich can afford it: all it asks for is plenty of time spent in experimentation and discovery. The satisfaction of an article which you weave yourself is fantastic, especially if you have spun, dyed, and woven it completely. It becomes an addiction after a while, and each process has its own satisfactions. I can fully say that I have the weaving bug, and once it has got you there can be no looking back.

Alice Willcocks

WOOL

Let's go back to the sheep, shorn in about June or July, its fleece, full of dirt, burrs, and bugs. I suggest that for the beginner the raw fleece should come from a local farmer, or for a wider choice try a wholesaler, who is probably tied in with the Wool Marketing Board: he will have a better choice in terms of different types and colours of sheep, but will charge more than the farmer (about 35p instead of 20p per pound). Alternatively, for ready-to-use spun yarns the area around Galashiels is a gold mine, as are other places in Scotland.

TEASING & CARDING

First thing is to tease the fleece — that is to go through it very carefully, removing all the offending material, and pulling apart the matted fibres. This gets rid of the dirt, and makes it much easier to card.

In factories, great rollers spin around, teasing, separating and softening the fleeces, but these are expensive and most home weavers own a pair of hand carders instead. Resembling oversized dog combing brushes these are used to comb and 'card' the fleece, and to produce a 'skiver' or 'rolag' of wool, which is generally rolled like a hair curler on the back of the carders.

An alternative method of carding, the Drum Carder, saves considerable time and produces larger quantities of carded fleece at once. Perhaps originally developed in Norway, the drum carder consists of two rollers covered by card clothing (wires set into a flexible base) which are activated by a handle in the same way as a mangle. Handcarders are supplied in different patterns by several distributors. The price for a pair ranges from £3.50 to about £8.50: a drum carder developed in this country sells at £28.50.

SPINNING

The traditional spinning wheel has a small

orifice for the carded fleece to pass through, and is ideal for spinning thin strong yarns from a rolag. One of the most popular types is the Ashford wheel imported from New Zealand. The Canadian Indian Spinner, as an alternative, has an orifice about 3/4" and can be used with equal ease to spin thick-and-nubbly or thin and fine yarns — an ideal combination for experimenting with textures. The critical part, the spinner head, can be attached to any suitable base, one of the best (and cheapest) being an old sewing machine treadle.

DYEING

After winding the yarn into a skein it is brewed up with the plants or lichens needed for a desired colour for several hours, or with chemical dyes for a shorter time. A mordant must also be used to make the colour fast. Common mordants are: vinegar, salt, alum, chrome, ferrous phosphate (iron), and cream of tartar, all of which can be bought at the chemist: some of these chemicals are poisonous. Also remember to choose the dye bath carefully, since this may act as a mordant itself, thereby producing the wrong colour: enamel basins are always safe.

The cheapest dyes are of course natural vegetable ones, which only require looking for and picking, but are also obtainable from some distributors.

WEAVING

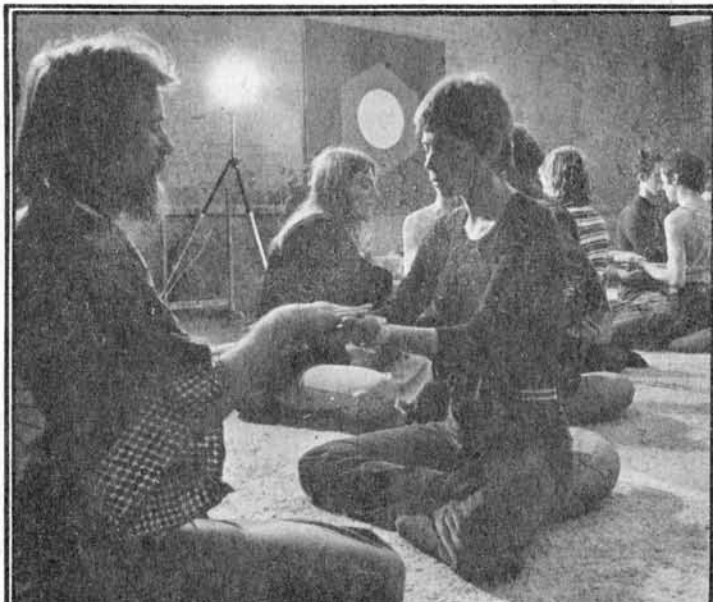
The frame loom is the simplest of all looms in construction, requiring no specialised parts. Next comes the table loom. The warp threads are wound on to a roller at the back, come forward through some little eyes ('heddles'), which are mounted in the two to four 'sheds', then on through the 'beater' which keeps them separated at the correct intervals, and finally they are wound on to a front roller. In order to push the shuttle across and across with the weft yarn and thus create the fabric, the warp threads are alternately separated by the sheds. These sheds are operated by hand on a table loom, and by foot pedals on the foot loom.

Several craftsmen up and down the country make individual looms and certain special types, but perhaps the principal maker and supplier of looms in this country is Harris Looms Ltd, of Hawkhurst in Kent, who make a comprehensive range of table and floor looms. A 24" wide table loom might cost about £30, while a large floor loom might be as much as about £350. Ω

Timothy Willcocks

For a better listing of handweavers studios, and of suppliers of materials and equipment, a very useful list is published by the Association of Guilds of Spinners, Dyers and Weavers. This is obtainable from Mr. A Haynes, of Witches Wood, The Firs, Kingsdown, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 9BB.

THINGS



ARICA

Oscar Ichazo started the Arica Institute after years of extensive travel and study of many esoteric traditions. Born in Bolivia, he was trained in the martial arts while still a boy, and experienced psychedelic drugs and shamanism through contact with the Indians of the Andes. He was instructed in Zen, Sufism, the Kabala and some Gurdjieff techniques in Latin America. He then travelled widely in the East, doing more work in the martial arts, learning all the higher yogas, studying Buddhism and Confucianism, alchemy and the 'I Ching'.

The realisation he made during his personal exploration of the human psyche was that beneath religions and esoteric disciplines of many different cultures there lies the same science — the science of who we are and what we can become. In 1971, in the town of Arica, Chile, Ichazo began to pass this science to the people.

The backbone of Arica is a 40-day intensive training in which individuals work as a group with specific tools, to develop consciousness and high states of awareness.

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and emotions, using a system of techniques synthesised from a wide range of ancient and contemporary disciplines. Physical exercises clean the body of accumulated tension, correct physical imbalance and teach essential movement.

At the same time a system of personal analysis allows the student to begin to make a distinction between the essential self and the ego mechanisms — or conditioned behaviour patterns. Special attention is paid to the exploration and balancing of the three instincts, through which it is possible to feel the common experience of all humanity. These instincts are: Conservation (the identification of our true needs), Relations (relating freely as a social animal) and Syntony (harmony with the environment). More than a hundred different techniques are compressed into the training period.

Arica takes the question of acceptance of reality as the key to human survival. If, as a species, we could accept the reality of what we are doing to the planet, the solution to the problem would begin to occur naturally. We would modify the culture to correct the ecological imbalance.

■ LONDON SCHOOL OF NONVIOLENCE

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■ **TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP** exists to promote alternatives to the present mad transport system. 45 Lowerhouse Lane, Burnley, Lancs.

■ **UHURU** is the Swahili word for freedom. In Oxford Uhuru is a shop where they sell handicrafts and whole foods. 35 Cowley Road, Oxford.

■ **GUIDE TO RESOURCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION** by Peter S. Berry published by The Conservation Society (12 London Street, Chertsey, Surrey) July 1974, 20p. This is an annual guide designed for use in schools. It includes books and periodical articles, games and study kits, visual aids etc.

■ **SPARK** Magazine of the Committee for Social Responsibility in Engineering. It includes articles on the suppression or misuse of scientific and technical information and the growing conscience of engineers. \$10 per year from CSRE, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027, USA.

■ THE FOURTH WAY

Gardening, Pottery, Leatherwork and weaving are all part of spiritual work here. Gurdjieff's teachings are concerned with work on being as well as work on knowledge. The system is called The Fourth Way.

People who are intellectually inclined will be encouraged to use their hands. New movements are devised for them so that they will enjoy new experiences through their bodies. The individuals whose centres of gravity are more in Moving Centre, will be encouraged to widen their knowledge by reading and in other ways. The aim will be a certain balancing of the centres; to work on the weakest rather than the strongest. Above all the Fourth Way is based on an understanding proceeding from self-knowledge, and the perception of one's own deficiencies and on the necessity for working in a particular direction. One does not live in isolation. We are cells in the larger body of the Universe.

This teaching was brought to Western Europe immediately after the first world war by Gurdjieff and his follower, Ouspensky. In his book 'In Search of the Miraculous', Ouspensky describes the work of the groups who studied the system in Moscow and Leningrad. After certain wanderings, Gurdjieff founded his famous institute on the outskirts of Fontainebleau, while Ouspensky established certain groups in London. Maurice Nicoll, who had been a pupil of Jung, joined forces with Ouspensky and Gurdjieff and he was the inspiration behind the founding of a centre in England.

■ **CHILDRENS COMMUNITY CENTRE** (see Living with Children, Resurgence Vol.5, no.2)

They have produced a bulletin on how they established the centre, the arrangement of the house, the relationship with the neighbourhood, the children and parent involvement, sex roles. A practical guide at the end covers how to get money, how to find premises, insurance, rates, free milk, free and improvised materials. 15p from 123 Dartmouth Park Hill, London N19.

They recommend some North American Liberation Presses which have produced books designed to challenge the sexual stereotypes. Most of these are available from: Books, 84 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, Yorks.

G.L.C. Second Hand Stores: Very cheap furniture is available (and gets *burnt* if it isn't bought) — kids' tables, chairs, easels, water and sand trays, bookshelves etc. GLC Tottenham Hale Depot, Mill Mead Road, Ferry Lane, London N17. Tel: 01-952 2311 — Ring before you go.

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Or does your project need money? If it's community-based, imaginative, evolutionary or whatever, send for details of how to apply. Deadline for next pay-out: December 23rd. CLAP Pay-out No 3 came to £1,577. CLAP, c/o BIT Free Information & Help Service, 146 Great Western Road, London W11 (tel 01-229 8219).

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■ LOWER DOWN

Wandsworth People's Magazine. If all communities produced such excellent papers we would have some hope of undermining the mass media. 6p from 45 Salford Road, London SW11.

■ SPINNERS AND CARDERS

I make to order Hedgehog drumcarders (£28.50 up), handcarders (£3.50 up), and Canadian Indian Spinners (£9.50). S.a.e. enquiries welcomed. T.J. Willcocks, c/o Handweavers Studio and Gallery, 29 Haroldstone Road, London E17 7AN.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE HUMANIST REVOLUTION OF OUR TIME

An important contribution to the debate on the Fourth World. In this book which contains a preface by Dr K. Kaunda, President of Zambia, John Papworth seeks to spell out the answers to some of the problems of economic policy posed by the need for more modest consumption in rich nations and for smaller forms of organisation.

Written in terse and lively prose, it is a must for all Resurgence and Ecologist readers.

Published by NECZAM. Price £2 + postage from Resurgence, 275 Kings Road, Kingston, Surrey

RESURGENCE

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Journal of the Fourth World

is seeking answers to global problems of war, militarism, industrialism, pollution and alienation. It argues that many of these problems are now beyond solution because governments and economic organisations have become too big and too centralised to be manageable. It asserts that these problems can only be solved if political and economic units are made small, technology simple and our mode of living organic. Hence the Fourth World is the world of decentralised, small-scale forms of organisation, structured organically rather than mechanically and directed towards the fulfilment of human values rather than materialist objectives. Resurgence pursues the course of change through nonviolent action and an alternative life style.

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JANUARY 27 — 31, 1975

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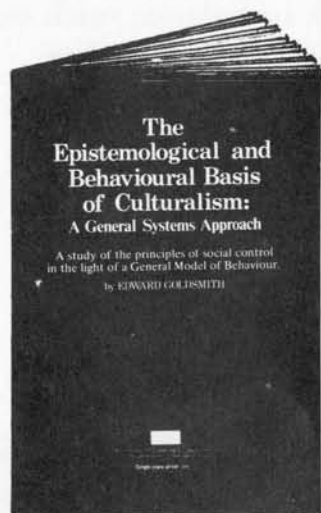
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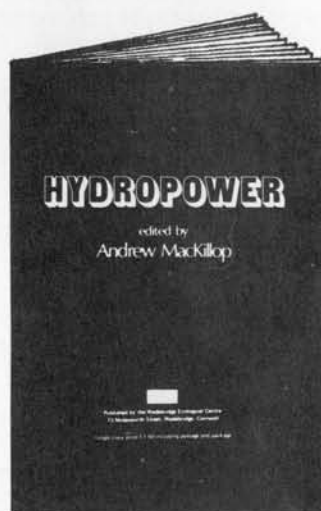
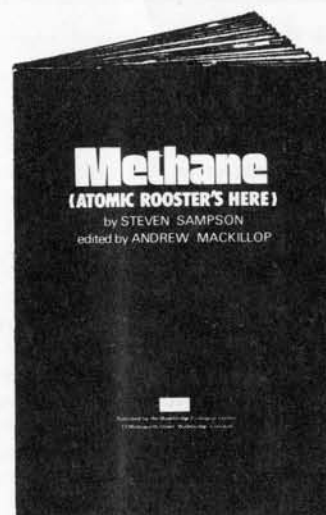
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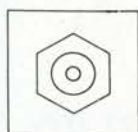
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