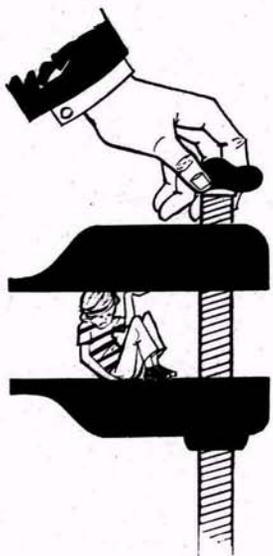


## PRESSURES ON THE YOUNG



OUR purpose, here, is to take note of the conditions in which our young are growing up, and to reason out what we need do to help them.

For our task, we need the broad perspective, for what we do is cast upon the stage of what our fellowmen now do in the society of which we are a part. Our institutions are instruments within the total social mix. We sit in our hometowns, they within their States, the States within the United States, and the United States within a world drawn and knotted tight with knowing of a common fate for all who call themselves members of the human race. This is a time of crisis and psychic pressure; there is no doubt of that.

Whatever the pressures have been on us in this generation, we know these pressures will be greater on the young now coming on. However dangerous has been our time, their time will be more

dangerous. Whatever the complexities we have faced, the complexities they face will be greater. However pressing our need for knowing the most universal and elemental values by which to guide life, their need for such knowing will be many times greater. However much we need integration of ourselves and integration with our fellowmen, their need for such integration will be far greater; their world is, indeed, the *whole* world, and their people are, indeed, the whole of the peoples of mankind.

We know then that our young need personal and sensitive help; they need the best we can give, and better yet than we have known to give ourselves, for we have not been fully masters of our ship in our time. We want to give our best.

Let this be preamble to our thought, naming our essential task.

### **The Nest of Nature**

Let us try to understand this society in which the young are growing up. The young grow up and shape their attitudes and acts according as their environment invites, allows, requires. The young of the Eskimos grow up in barren wastes, and give shape to their thought and act according as transactions run for survival in that place, and continued life

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So do our young in *their* place and time; the environment provides what must be taken into account in the shaping up of life. The growing goes in counterpoint to what environment provides.

The environment of now is not the environment of the pioneer who shaped this land. The pioneer could assume an open land, freedom to carve out a niche which was his own—so clearly his own. He could lay claim to a piece of land, and, with his hands, chop down the trees, take these and build a house which was his own, plant his own garden and fields, raise his own stock, feed himself, clothe himself, be producer of his own consumer needs, and depend relatively little on what others would provide. He could be seen by his neighbors as a creative man, could be valued as such, and could value himself as such. It was a short feedback chain from what he did to its consequence. He could see his value—plain. He was taught by the conditions of his life to be an independent man, a self-responsible man, a self-motivated man, and to think of his society as made up of men who were the same. Creation was his theme.

This became rural America, and the way of life of the private entrepreneur. Then came the period of heavy industry, the discovery of the power of coal

and oil and iron. The use of these required employees, men who could serve the systems of production. The pioneer then became the man who, in the mine, loaded coal on a little train. He could not, with reason, then lay claim to the lumps of coal he put upon the train as his own. They were undifferentiated from the mass. All men's lumps appeared to be the same. He could not eat them; he could not clothe himself with them; he could not build his home with them. They belonged to someone else and something else—the productive system of the mine.

The returns he got were pay in coin, with which he then tried to get the food and clothing and shelter which he needed as his own. He was now a *dependent* man, dependent in important measure on still other men. No longer able to identify the value of himself with the product he produced, he began to value what came next around him—which was his fellowman, worker also in the mine. Joined in unions, he sought a way, with a social system of his own, to contend with the social system of which he had come to be a part.

Heavy industry paved the way to manufacturing and technology. What was once merely a system for production of the coal became multiplied many, many times, as systems for production of much more than heat or light or power alone. Coal was made by chemistry (in largest part) into 200,000 products, each with its own production line, and thousands more employees took their place in their production chains. Creation in America took on this form, with other systems, social and political, made to fit the dependent chains.

Rural America thus gave way to ur-

ban America, and we are now a nation of dependent individuals, dependent both as consumers and producers. We sit in the laps of other men. To eat, we depend on the grocery chain. To get shelter, we depend on the construction firm, the financial firm, the unions of carpenters, plumbers, electricians. To travel, we depend on auto factories of huge corporations, on highways built by state and nation, on airplanes that span the continents. To communicate, we depend on wires that span the land, on wireless waves that span the seas, and, now, on satellites that yield a common message for all peoples of the earth. For news and entertainment, we turn on the TV set and have more in common with a man a thousand miles removed than we had, in rural days, with our neighbors across the county line.

### **A Man-made World**

Our basic nest, now, is not the nest of nature, as in our rural days, or in the long eons past of man's emergence from the earth, when his fate was made to rest directly on what he did with nature to gain his food and all the rest. In one lifetime, this great shift has come, where our nest, now, is in the laps of men. Our cities are man-made; our schools are man-made; our churches are man-made; our science is man-made; our art is man-made; our laws are man-made; our financial systems are man-made; our factories are man-made. What we see and confront and live in is man-made. Our fate is man-made, too; we made the bombs, and we will live with the bombs, or die by them.

We have been a creative people, creating all of this, but now netting up a place in which to live such that a man is so

much dependent, so fully put within the lap of other men, he has a hard way to know what is *his* name as a person, individuated, integrated, identified, realized and known as a creature of his own. He has a hard way to know his meaning to himself as a creature of the whole emergent human race.

This is our present land, and not all is well within it. For every four who graduated from college in 1962, there were five other persons then resident in mental institutions, three of whom were new that year. For all who are enrolled in colleges in a given year, it is fair to say that there is an equal number of other men who are sick enough in mind to need professional attention. The human being, as individual entity, as person, is being caught in complexities, separations, ambiguities, splittings, frustrations that are difficult to transcend. He can rarely lay his hands on what it takes to be creative on his own, as the making now requires. He is not the pioneering man. Not being able to identify himself and to know himself as creator in his own right, he gives up creation and grows sick. People who are helpless to create a world of value to them, on their own, *do* grow sick. It is a law of life that creation must go on, and those who are not able to feel and know themselves as participants in the creative game are on a course towards death.

### **To See Realities**

I would not be so bold to remind you of this if I were not so much aware of the part that education has played. It is not the uneducated who have built the systems of finance, and transport, and communication, and commerce, and politics on which we now depend. It is not

the uneducated who have developed the refined systems for delivering death. It is the educated who have done these things, men in the developed nations, men in the modern technological nations. It is these nations who have propelled aggression and war in ever-increasing destruction during this century, and, it is their leading, educated men who have pointed up the way. It was no less than an Einstein who could deliver the formula for making the bombs; it was no less than a Harvard man who received it, and no less than the faculties of many universities, who, along with their products, finished with the task. It is no less than highly educated chemists who, backing up the arsenals for death, add methods of their own, and highly educated biologists who do the same. It is highly educated men in the seats of power who now make the decisions, leading into life, richer yet, or death.

It is we educators who have paved the way into this sort of world, yielding up our art to help the formation of powers in nature so vast and interlocked that we feel more controlled by what we have created than in control of it. We need to get ourselves in tow to concentrate our art on making better men, as balance to the rest, and the way to get command of our human fate.

Our young grow up in this context. They have order and meaning and direction to make out of this. Facing rapid change, they need stability. Facing strife, they need peace. Facing confusion, they need clarity. Facing splittings, they need integration. Facing conformity, they need individuation. Facing institutionalization, they need

personhood. Facing excessive dependence, they need independence. Facing lack of opportunity to be creative on their own, they need to be creative on their own. Facing reasons for death, they need to know reasons for life. Facing the man-made, they need the nature-made.

All these things they need, not to evade what is here, but to encounter what is here; not to hide from the realities but to see the realities; not to run away, but to attack. They need these strengths, supported and mounting within them, to transcend their problems and their times.

We know that these pressures on the young are also to be on ourselves, for, in the role of adults-educating, we are meant to be in their first line of defense until they can carry on the struggle on their own. This being so, we have, first of all, a rendezvous with ourselves, knowing that we cannot clear a path for them that we cannot clear for ourselves. How do we deal with change, and strife, and confusion, and depersonalization, and institutionalization, and conformities, and excessive dependencies, and lack of opportunity for personally satisfying creation, and, indeed, with death? At bottom, the answer for us is what we work out first for ourselves. There is no other source for choice than the choices we have stored within ourselves to make.

If this day be a day of struggle with ourselves, let it be so; but let us know that what we are doing here is not for ourselves, alone, but for human life to come.

These youth are human-life-to-come, and we know their names.

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