



FOREWORD

Margaret Mead's most winning gift was surely her capacity for immediate, zestful response. Whenever she went away from home, she looked, listened and asked questions. And on her lecture trips and travels around the world, whether to London or Sydney or Peri Village in the Admiralty Islands, she accepted with grace the fact that her fellow travelers and the people in her audiences wanted to ask questions too. She made a point of answering each query thoughtfully and concisely—sometimes with a single word, sometimes sharply and most often with humor. She took for granted that a sophisticated question required a sophisticated answer, but she never rebuffed the person who had to struggle to find words. One thing exasperated her: without hesitation she pricked the balloon of the pompous, pretentious questioner.

Looking and listening, asking and answering questions—these are the indispensable tools of the anthropologist, which Margaret Mead used with consummate skill. It was also her conviction that the freedom to ask questions and the obligation to listen and to answer fully and responsibly are the marks of an open society and are critically important in a period when change, coming upon all of us so swiftly, continually forces each of us to ask: Who else thinks—and feels—as I do?

Almost all the questions and answers gathered in this volume were first published in *Redbook Magazine* over a sixteen-year period, from 1963 to January 1979. A handful of them, published here for the first time, had been prepared for publication at the time of her death in November 1978. Very often when she lectured, Margaret Mead asked the members of her audience to write out their questions, so that whether

or not she could answer all of them that very day, she still would have some record of what was on their minds. A great many of the questions answered in *Redbook's* columns were chosen from the fat stacks of cards and little slips of paper she brought home from her talks with college and university students or women's groups or teachers or psychiatrists or politicians or business people—or any of the other groups and diverse organizations that claimed her time and interest. Other questions were raised by the young members of the *Redbook* staff. They were in touch with their readers and, no less than others, hoped to find out what she thought about problems that concerned and often troubled them.

Over the years a relationship that combined a lively friendship with mutual professional admiration and trust grew up between Margaret Mead and the people with whom she worked most closely at *Redbook*. Every author knows what it means to have a copy editor who will check every date and the spelling of every difficult name and, even more important, who will not hesitate to say, with tact: This sentence doesn't seem to me quite clear as yet! For eleven years, since 1967, Helene Pleasants shepherded Margaret Mead's columns into press at *Redbook*, providing a kind of consistency over time which one may hope for but seldom attains. This is reflected in the organization of this volume as well.

Here each question and answer is given with the date of its first publication or, in the case of the few unpublished ones, with the date of their completion. It is possible, therefore, to relate each one to the events then taking place, as you remember them, and to the mood of that period. Especially in the earlier years, people wondered what an anthropologist might have to say about some current problem, and through all the years there ran the bright thread of curiosity about Margaret Mead herself: who were her role models, who were her favorite storytellers?

In spite of changes in the kinds of questions, there is a congruence in the answers that reflects a consistent, human view of the world and of our shared lives, past and still to come. Margaret Mead took in the world around her as a

whole person. Asked what she thought or felt or believed, she replied, as she felt she must, with a lively expression of her own, her personal views.

—Rhoda Metraux
New York City
January 29, 1979



Would you favor changing our abortion laws?

FEBRUARY 1963

The problem of abortion goes to the very heart of any ethical system. When is a human being a human being? At conception? When life quickens? At birth? An hour or a week after birth? If a choice must be made between the life of the mother and the life of the unborn child, how is the issue to be resolved? Is it ethical to endanger the life of the mother of several little children when a new pregnancy may end in the mother's death? Should children be brought into the world fatherless or, because of the state of the mother's emotional life, essentially motherless? Should parents do anything to prevent the birth of a child who is likely to be mentally or physically defective?

Who should decide these questions? Some of them, of course, can be resolved privately and be met by the use of contraception or the proper exercise of self-control. But some cannot.

Conflicts over abortion are generally based on either religious or political considerations. In countries like Japan and the Soviet Union, legislation has been controlled by national policies dictated by alternating desires either for more manpower or for a higher standard of living. In this country religious differences have been the most important. The various religious groups—and people who belong to no religious group—differ in their beliefs about abortion. In the eyes of some, our abortion laws are too stringent; in the eyes of others, too lax. A very wise psychiatrist, speaking about patterns of human behavior, used to insist, "You must not legislate in areas of heterogeneity." Yet this is what we do when we make the kind of laws about abortion that we have today—in 1963—laws which, in most states, permit abortion only when a woman's life is endangered by childbirth.

I believe that our abortion laws should be changed. In a country where there is a genuine and convinced divergence of ethical belief, I believe that we should not prescribe the conditions under which abortion is permissible. What is im-

portant is the provision of optimum medical protection for any woman who undergoes an abortion. Wherever abortion is illegal, unnumbered girls and women, married and unmarried, run frightful risks, and the danger of bearing damaged infants is greatly increased.

We will be a better country when each religious group can trust its members to obey the dictates of their own religious faith without assistance from the legal structure of the country.



Do you believe that our laws on drug addiction should be revised? How? MARCH 1963

Yes, I do. Far from fulfilling their intended purposes, our present laws make it almost inevitable for the person who once begins to use drugs to become involved in other criminal activities and for the use of drugs to spread in ever-widening circles. Attempts to carry out our drug laws have a distorting effect on the lives of many people in our society.

With the high cost of illegal drugs, the addict—especially the young addict with limited earning powers—is rapidly driven to crime as a way of obtaining money to buy drugs. The waves of petty crime that sweep over a city when large drug supplies have been confiscated by the government are vivid testimony to the connection between theft and drug addiction. In addition, the new addict is readily induced to become a "pusher"—someone who seeks to involve others in the use of drugs so that, by selling the drug, he may get some for himself. In religious and political movements one of the most effective forms of recruitment is summed up in the rule "Bring the one next to you." In this, drug addicts are undoubtedly very much like others who are engaged in activities which their companions do not understand—they want to bring in their friends. But the main inducement is the economic one; they urge the use of drugs on others as a way of keeping up their own supply.

Our present laws on drugs and addiction are dangerous, illogical and inhumane. It would be no more intelligent for us to treat people with certain contagious diseases as criminals,

to provide only the minimal hospital care for them and to make it illegal for them to buy medicine. In these circumstances we would not be surprised at the development of a bootleg market in medicine, or at a tremendous upsurge of crime among those who could not pay the exorbitant prices.

The sale of drugs to addicts should be legalized, put under strict medical control, as has been done in England, and the drugs should be sold as inexpensively as their real cost permits. If this were done, those who became addicts would lose most of their reasons for seducing their companions. Under such a plan there would be more opportunities and incentive for addicts to accept help in freeing themselves from their addiction, and they would be under far less pressure from their former companions to begin using drugs again. The illegal sale of drugs should continue to carry heavy penalties. What is imperative is that the drug addict should be regarded as a patient and adequate care should be provided for him, just as we provide medical and hospital care for other ill persons. As in the case of other illnesses, not every stricken person will recover. But the illness can be reduced to a state in which it is virtually noncommunicable—and so the danger of infection to others can be minimized.



Has homosexuality in America increased in recent years, or does it only seem so because it is more publicized and more accepted than previously? JULY 1963

It is always hard to answer a question of this kind about behavior that is socially disapproved and legally punishable. There has been much more open discussion of homosexuality in contemporary literature, on the stage, in films and over television and the radio. This tends to give people the impression of a great increase. The McCarthy period also brought homosexuality into unexpected prominence by linking it with subversion and thereby making it a more acceptable, if highly criticized, subject of discussion.

It cannot really be said, however, that we are becoming more tolerant of variations in sexual behavior. I think that for

the most part we are simply more willing to permit discussion—sometimes with pornographic intent, as a way of feeding a commercially developed appetite for the titillating and the unusual; sometimes on the pseudoscientific level of homosexuality as a “curable” or “incurable” malady.

Such discussions almost always confuse three kinds of person: the individual who prefers a member of his own sex within the same limits of monogamy and fidelity as those set for current heterosexual preference; the individual who is compulsively driven to an endless and almost inevitably exploitive and antisocial search for new physical satisfaction; and the individual whose involvement in homosexuality is also an involvement in crime—because our laws make homosexual practice a crime, and so some individuals become involved in a variety of criminal activities such as drug addiction (another example of a criminal activity by ill-advised laws), prostitution, procurement, and so on. The failure to distinguish among these very different types results in the furtherance of a large number of socially undesirable activities—the harassment of socially harmless individuals, blackmail and police corruption and an actual increase in crime.

One partial explanation of the seeming growth of homosexuality might be an increasing sophistication among Americans as we have shifted from a frontier society, with very primitive codes of human relationships, to a cosmopolitan society, which like all cosmopolitan societies has more room for the nuances of human behavior and a greater toleration of individual choice.

Another partial explanation might be an increasing scientific sophistication based on knowledge of other cultures, other periods in our own culture and the behavior of other living creatures. Out of this knowledge comes a recognition that bisexual potentialities are normal and that their specialization is the result of experience and training.



Many liberal statesmen and scientists have criticized the enormous effort and sums of money we are spending on our

race to the moon when these resources are desperately needed to fight problems—such as disease and poverty—right here on earth. Would you comment on this?

SEPTEMBER 1963

This would be valid criticism if our country were suffering from a shortage of resources and if, by diverting capital equipment to the moon race, we were interfering with the construction of schools and hospitals or, by diverting manpower from agriculture, we were letting people go hungry. This was the case in the United States during World War II, when many essential services were neglected to speed up war production. And the criticism can be applied with some justice to the Soviet Union today. But for the United States, the argument is a specious one. And it is a pity when those who are deeply concerned about the human race join others—and there are too many—who oppose our space activities simply out of a lack of military or general imagination.

We are not a poor nation. We are not a recently industrialized nation like the Soviet Union. We are not a nation, like China, with both a new political system and all the new problems of industrialization, as a result of which tens of millions may face famine. We are not a new nation, like Nigeria, with scanty resources to meet skyrocketing aspirations. Nor are we an old nation, like Egypt, with few resources and a desperately poor majority. The United States has resources, space, know-how, plant, materials and people. What is lacking is only the will and imagination to put as much energy into the fight against disease, poverty and illiteracy and into meeting our obligations to the underprivileged of this nation and the world as we are putting into a quasi-military, international sports event. We can well afford to carry on the moon race *and* to work on other pressing problems—both.

Our race to the moon may be questioned on two other counts. It can be asked: Is it wasteful to have the United States and the Soviet Union duplicating each other's activities instead of co-operating with each other? This charge is questionable. Co-operation in as many fields as possible is important. But competition leads to the development of dif-

ferent and novel solutions, and a race for prestige is far safer than an armaments race in which dangerously explosive nuclear weapons are stockpiled. It can also be asked: Does the moon race absorb too much of our scientific manpower and is it directing research into too-narrow channels? The answer to this double question seems to be yes.



Your columns generally take an optimistic tone about such forms of "progress" as automation. Isn't it equally possible that instead of freeing man's spirit, all these engineering triumphs are simply dulling it? DECEMBER 1963

There seems to be some confusion here between "automation" and "mechanization." When the mechanized factory system developed in the 19th century, man became part of that system as hour after hour he tended a machine, performing some monotonous, routine task. This did dull the human spirit, and critics of the social order rightly protested and called for a return to the spirit of individual workmanship and for the development of ways in which men could do more diversified and meaningful work. In contrast, automation is a method that removes the need for human beings to act like cogs in a machine. The subhuman, routine tasks once performed by factory workers can now be performed automatically by machines.

It is certainly not conducive to human dignity to have men perform any kind of repetitive, meaningless labor that can be done by some other method—for women to carry loads of bricks on their heads, for men to stoke furnaces, for girls to work hour after hour pouring chocolate into molds. The whole history of civilization has been the history of how first some and then many individuals have been freed from drudgery so that they might have time to think, to paint, to pray, to philosophize, to observe, to study the universe. Leisure and the cultivation of human capacities are inextricably interdependent.

But even though automation makes possible high productivity and great leisure, there is no guarantee that we shall

make good use of this new freedom. Indeed, if we think of automation chiefly as something that deprives whole armies of men and women of their livelihood and the means of acquiring necessary goods, then we are certainly making poor use of it. The effect that automation has on us depends on our own attitudes and reactions to it. It is not "engineering triumphs" but men themselves that create the conditions that dull—or free—the human spirit.



Are funeral practices in the United States really more garish and outrageous than those in other cultures, as charged by Jessica Mitford in her best-selling book *The American Way of Death*? MARCH 1964

Cultures vary in the importance given to death and burial. People in many lands have expended more than they could afford on funeral rites, sometimes destroying the house and all the possessions of the dead. What is shocking about American funeral practices is the combined denial and commercialization of death.

Our usual method of changing our value system is to turn those who participate for profit into whipping boys. So the mortician is now accused of having caused the denial of death, when actually he has only responded to what mid-century Americans wanted. When commercial interests pick up a theme in our culture, they simplify it in such a way that it comes back to us bizarrely overemphasized. So the embalming of a corpse may be seen as a method that makes it possible for a funeral to be postponed until relatives arrive from the four corners of the nation to share a common grief. But if it is represented as making the corpse "lifelike," a different note is struck. The serene appearance of a relative who has died may be a tremendous comfort to the survivors who knew his last painful months or years; as an advertisement for a flourishing business, it grates on our sensibilities.

Yet I think it is a mistake to forget that we are not a society in which the dead can be washed and laid out by the women of the household, while the coffin is shaped and the grave

dug by the men. We depend upon an industrialized and technical group for these last rites; as we wish them celebrated, so they will be celebrated. It would be a pity if, in our present national turning toward a greater realism about death, we should also reject and punish those who have only ministered both to real need and to our fears and prejudices.

It is always a temptation in the United States to make a needed reform by going to extremes. So, accompanying the present furor about expensive funerals, there is a tendency in some quarters to reject all ceremony. Yet burial without ceremony is so empty, and often so damaging to at least some of those who would have wished to mourn, that almost inevitably the pendulum will swing back again. An era of flowerless funerals and gifts to CARE or the Home for Crippled Children will only usher in a return to more extravagant mourning behavior a couple of decades from now.

A religious funeral with flowers and music, and afterward food and drink at the home of the mourners, need not be treated as an alternative to a set of idealistic good works. Instead of "please omit flowers," we could have "no set pieces," or some equivalent that would suggest moderation. In the case of those who have bequeathed their eyes or their kidney for others, or their brains or bodies for research, the notice of death could include a statement of what they had done, perhaps with the phrase "closed casket" as a positive rather than a negative statement.

Right around the world it is the people who take death simply, who openly sorrow for someone who has gone from their midst and can speak easily of both the virtues and the vices of the recently dead, who are able to have the simplest funerals.



How do you explain the fact that the Chinese, who live as unassimilated a life in America as Negroes do and who have suffered similarly from the effects of poverty and prejudice, have been so remarkably free of a criminal record? MAY 1964

In spite of superficial resemblances, the experiences of

Chinese in America and of American Negroes have been very different. For the most part, Chinese migrants to the United States came of their own accord, and while they lived and worked here most of them remained closely related to their own society, to which, in theory if not always in practice, they expected to return. The Chinese have an ancient tradition of living in extraterritorial communities, and those who settled here organized a way of living which in some respects paralleled the way of living organized for Europeans and Americans who went to Chinese cities. Except for the scholars who came as students, most of those who left China were very poor, and they bettered their lot—and sometimes the lot of their families in China—by coming. Until recently the overwhelming majority were men, and the few women and children were protected within the Chinese community.

The Chinese living in American cities had their own system of community administration; this meant that they could preserve order, exact conforming behavior and punish infractions of accepted rules without, in general, appealing to American law-enforcing agencies. Abandonment of his fellow Chinese was something an individual was seldom prepared to risk, and intervention in Chinese affairs by the larger American community was something most Chinese hoped to avoid. Poor communication and the sense of dealing with an alien people, a feeling shared by Chinese and Americans alike, helped keep the Chinese communities in America apart and intact. The Chinese were, in effect, members of a self-selected colony who were temporarily exploiting the economic possibilities of an alien land.

When Americans exploited the Chinese through their unfamiliarity with our style of life or treated them to the kind of racism we have meted out to the other non-Caucasians (or sometimes to non-Northern Europeans or non-English-speaking peoples), the Chinese colonists were angry and resentful, but the individual was not effectively damaged as a person. The greatest damage was to American clarity—to our own ability to see and understand a people different from ourselves. For this lack of clarity we paid heavily in our unpreparedness for dealing in wartime with the members of

another Oriental civilization, the Japanese. And today, on a world-wide scale, a heavy price is being exacted for the fact that Chinese and Americans have traditionally regarded each other as alien peoples to be excluded from each other's way of life.

The condition of the American Negro was and is strikingly different. The ancestors of these Americans were brought from Africa by force, torn from a score of very different societies, speaking many different languages, without any traditional way of bridging the gaps between them and without a means of communicating with their own people still in Africa. Under slavery the family system, which was as strong in Africa as it was in China, was destroyed, and men were denied the right to have responsibility for their women and children. From the beginning, white men ruthlessly abused African women, and a new population grew up that was both bound in speech and custom to its white ancestry and punished by social ostracism and poverty for every trace of its African ancestry.

Throughout most of their history Negro Americans, defined by visible color or simply by some remembered American Negro ancestry, presented no picture of social solidarity. The differences among them were in themselves a cause of disunity. Unlike the Chinese, Negro Americans have had no ongoing style of social regulation to fall back on; what they have shared is the knowledge that the law is administered in one way for white men and in other ways for themselves. Whereas the Chinese community has been able to protect its members, control its children, mete out informal punishment and reward, and cover for its members who break American laws, Negro Americans have had until very recently few means of protecting themselves to give them a sense of security and pride as a group.



The U.S. Court of Appeals has ruled that a pacifist should be permitted exemption from military service even if his pacifism is not based on a belief in a Supreme Being. What do

you think are the implications of this ruling? JULY 1964

I agree with the recent statement by the World Council of Churches that freedom of religion includes the freedom to question all religion. I also think that on an ethical issue for which the community is willing to make sacrifices, the individual who takes a contrary position should also be willing to make sacrifices. The treatment of a conscientious objector should not be conceived of in a punitive or self-righteous spirit, as has so often happened in the past. Instead, the tasks he is asked to do should be in keeping with the ethic he has advanced. If this is a lively concern for the well-being of his fellow men, for whose sake he is trying to speed up the elimination of war, he can be given a task concerned with his fellow men—working in a hospital, for example. If his concern is only for his own soul, he should at least give up, temporarily, involvement with this world's goods and spend the same number of months spent by his fellows in the armed services in some overtly self-sacrificial manner.

However, our present methods of selecting men for the armed services are themselves manifestly unfair and discriminatory, working to the advantage of some and to the disadvantage of other young people. We should have national service for every able-bodied young person. In such a setting there would be room for everyone to serve the community for a period of time.



Aren't today's chores of washing, ironing, cleaning and meal preparation infinitely easier than they were fifty years ago?

NOVEMBER 1964

Taken individually, yes. Each of these activities has been mechanized and streamlined over the last fifty years. An electric steam iron is easier to handle and more efficient than the first clumsy electric irons, and much easier than the old irons with detachable handles that used to be heated on the stove, or the still older box iron (known as a "goose") into which one put burning charcoal.

But in making this kind of comparison we forget the change

in our whole style of living. All the washing and ironing equipment is there to make work easier. But whereas in the past the family laundry was done as routine once a week, today women may load the washer every day, sometimes more than once a day. The vacuum cleaner is a wonderful invention, but today few people are as careful about tracking in mud or spilling ashes as they were when a thorough housecleaning was a major, semiannual event. Nowadays men wear clean shirts (instead of clean, starched, detachable collars and cuffs) and children wear clean clothes from top to toe every day, and the housewife almost literally follows in her family's footsteps, vacuuming, waxing and polishing away the unwanted residue of their activities.

There is only one way in which household work can be said to be easier than it was—it takes less muscle and so it is less backbreaking and easier on the elbows and the shoulders and the knees. But in fact, the largest part of homemaking is a continuous response to the recurring needs of others—another meal to be prepared, a message to be taken and delivered, a child to be chauffeured somewhere away from home and back again. Only by keeping a careful count of the hours a homemaker spends looking after the house and responding to the needs of her family could we find out whether her life actually is easier than her mother's or her grandmother's was.



Are there really so many more youth crimes today than in previous eras, or are we simply more aware of them?

NOVEMBER 1964

This is not a question that can be answered simply by quoting statistics. There are many factors that must be taken into consideration.

First, there is our constantly growing population. At the time of the Revolution, in 1775, it was estimated that there were 3 million people in the thirteen colonies; in 1850 our population was just over 23 million; in 1910, approximately 92 million. And since the turn of the century our population has more than doubled. Even if the crime *rate* had not

changed over the last fifty or one hundred or one hundred and fifty years, we would have a constantly increasing number of crimes.

Second, our cities are enormously larger than they were and the proportion of people living in cities has increased tremendously; between 1900 and 1950 our *urban* population alone increased by 66 million. The mass movement to cities had begun by the time of the Civil War, but today's urbanization is a phenomenon of this century. And crime flourishes in the big cities.

Third, the practice of treating delinquent youngsters differently from adult criminals, of sending young offenders to reformatories rather than to adult prisons, is a process that started only in the 19th century. And the first children's court in the United States (in Cook County, Chicago) was not established until 1899. So it is very difficult to assess accurately changes in the actual number of juvenile offenders.

Fourth, we have a national communications system hungry for news, and much of it hungry for news of a morbid character. The sensational press gives preference to crime news that occurs far beyond any one locality; so the reader, the television viewer or the radio listener is continually given the impression that the nation is crimeridden. This is particularly the case where juvenile delinquency is concerned, for both those who batten on crime news and those who, for the best reasons, want to goad the authorities into action—to clear the slums or improve the schools or deal with the problems involved in school dropouts and unemployed youth—keep the picture of juvenile crime, especially violent crime, before everyone's eyes.

Fifth, the age at which juveniles become involved in law-breaking activities is becoming lower. This is to be expected in our society, of course, as we permit ever-younger children more freedom of movement outside the home and the school without in any way providing new kinds of protection for these young people who, with adult encouragement, are set loose on the streets.

But there is also an important factor of confusion. People tend unthinkingly to lump together school and college pranks

(which have, it is true, become more and more expensive and destructive), the teen-age crimes of undereducated and unemployed young people, the casual crimes committed by juveniles who have fallen prey to drug addiction, the crimes in which young offenders are associated with adult criminals. Taken together, the various ways in which young people clash with the law can be the source of very formidable statistics.

Yet we must seriously consider whether, in a rapidly changing social world, the statistics gathered today are fully comparable in kind and in meaning to those gathered twenty-five or fifty years ago. The fact that there are more people who care—more people who do not take it as a matter of course that we must expect to waste a large proportion of our young people who grow up in difficult and deprived environments—in itself affects what we look at and try to quantify. When people become conscious of some social evil, the evil is made more visible and seems much “worse.” And if we are to come to grips with the problems we are beginning to identify, it will not do to concentrate on comparisons with the past. Instead we must sort out and think about the sources of maladjustment and lawbreaking and violence in the expression of disturbance in our contemporary life.



Do you think membership in the John Birch Society should disqualify a man from being a policeman? JUNE 1965

The status of the John Birch Society is ambiguous. If the Department of Justice were to pursue the identification of possibly subversive organizations with the same zeal it displayed during World War II, very probably the John Birch Society would be included on a list of those so defined. In that case police departments, federal, state and local, would have acknowledged grounds for excluding from the force a known member of a local chapter. But in the absence of consensus, it can be claimed that exclusion by reason of membership alone constitutes capricious persecution on the grounds of guilt by association, and that this is no more desir-

able when it is directed to the extreme right than when individuals belonging to liberal organizations are indiscriminately branded as Communists by members of the John Birch Society and its sympathizers.

However, an important distinction must be made between the extreme left and the extreme right in their advocacy of change in governmental form. Extremists on the left give great importance to the ideological positions of other countries—both those with which they do and those with which they do not sympathize. In contrast, extremists on the right are preoccupied with local, domestic battles. They pursue a course that endangers the country from within through their accusations against responsible elected and appointed leaders of the people. This preoccupation with dangerous neighbors, rather than with foreign ideas, is a particularly precarious ideological position for a policeman, particularly a policeman who carries arms.

There is also another important consideration. Both groups, the adherents of the radical left (particularly in earlier years, in the 1930s and 1940s) and the adherents of the radical right (in the present as well as in the past), include many deeply *sincere* people. But in neither case is sincerity alone a guarantee of good sense or effective patriotism. Sincere, unsuspecting fellow travelers could be—and have been—manipulated by ruthless, purposeful Communist leaders; and sincere, unsuspecting sympathizers with the extreme right by their very sincerity and naïveté may enable fanatical leaders to attain the ends toward which they are working. Then, when one realizes that the immediate consequence of the rightist position is a deep suspicion of elected and appointed officials and of a military leadership that has been exemplary in its devotion to the causes espoused by the American people, one may well ask whether sincerity that is linked to distrust and suspicion is not in itself a potential danger.



Why do you think our public schools get involved with such trivia as how their students wear their hair—as in the case of

the boy in Connecticut who was expelled because he refused to cut his hair to the proper length? JUNE 1965

Your question raises another question: What is the “proper” way for a boy to wear his hair? Clothing, ornaments and hair styles are extremely important in every society, for they provide a series of necessary clues as to the sex, age, caste, status, occupation and sometimes even the religious, artistic and political position of the individual. Every change in these very significant markers reflects a change in public attitudes. I remember very well the evening when a famous sociologist, a friend of my father’s, pointed to my bobbed hair and said, “That girl’s short hair is more significant than all your theories!” It *was* significant—in 1920.

While people are adjusting to a change of this kind—women in slacks, men in colored vests, women with short hair, men with long hair, men with beards, students with bare feet, old ladies in Bermuda shorts, tourists without ties—many people feel embarrassed. Embarrassment tends to make people angry at whatever has caused it, and they are likely to demand special rules aimed at banning or at least limiting the questionable behavior. So a rule is made that bathers must take a special stairway to the beach, that girls must wear skirts to school, that all males must shave or that only males wearing coats and ties will be served.

Demands of this kind and the responses made to them test the strength of feeling for and against some new practice. If the protests fail, eventually there is a new “proper” way of wearing one’s hair or dressing for some occasion. But until a change has withstood such tests, it will be opposed as “improper” for certain places, occasions or persons.



In other societies, do the adults attempt to control adolescents in the consumption of alcohol? OCTOBER 1965

The handling of adolescent drinking depends both on the way a people thinks about alcohol in its various forms and the way it thinks about childhood and adolescence. In most of Western Europe the use of alcohol is highly ritualized, and

different kinds of alcoholic beverages are defined as appropriate for different kinds of people at different times. There "drinking" in the negative sense of the term means inappropriate drinking. Men drink "spirits" or "hard liquor," but women and children do not. Traditionally, students drink beer but no spirits. Family groups drink in public what family groups also drink in private. The Italians, who think of wine as part of man's normal nourishment, give children a little wine as they also give them bread. The French, who regard drinking with moderation and discrimination as something that must be learned, give children wine as a matter of course. For just as children must learn to read and write correctly, so also they must learn what and how much to drink.

In every European country there are also class and regional differences in custom. For the peasant or the workingman, beer or a simple wine is part of everyday life. For members of the upper class, connoisseurship adds to the complication of the ritual. In England, children and young adolescents who are sent away to school have for the most part a stern and rigorous diet. For them a glass of sherry is a holiday symbol, just as beer is a holiday symbol for the working class and the country child, and once a wealthy English father laid down wine for his son's coming of age. In countries where different patterns of drinking alcohol are highly elaborated, the question is not, "Do adolescents drink?" but, instead, "What do adolescents drink?"

In the United States we run into two major kinds of difficulty when we try to regulate drinking among young people. The first is that we tend to include every form of alcoholic beverage, from beer to brandy, under the single rubric of "drink." The second arises from the distinction we make between children, adolescents and sometimes women, on the one hand, and adults, sometimes excluding women, on the other, in our thinking about things that are "bad" and "bad for you." Whatever is bad for adults—and here "drinking" is classified with a whole set of activities that may also include smoking, gambling, card playing and dancing—is worse for children, adolescents and women than it is for grown men. Adults (or at least men) may be able to set limits for them-

selves or may be able to recover from a lapse, but others should as far as possible be protected from temptation. So even though the prohibition laws failed dismally when they were applied to adults, those who wish to regulate others' lives still insist on what amounts to a prohibition law for youth.

Our feeling about this is strengthened by our traditional linking together of moral and physical well-being, particularly where anything that is taken into the body is concerned. This in itself makes a disapproved substance "worse" for women and children—the two groups whose health we care for most vigilantly—than it is for men. Perhaps this is why cigarettes—"coffin nails"—were especially strongly disapproved of when they were taken up by young boys and women. Cigar smoking was, strictly speaking, an adult male habit. Cigars made boys go pale and the very smell of stale cigar smoke nauseated many women. But cigarettes made tobacco available to those who needed most to be protected from its dangers, moral and physical, as we saw the problem.

Much of this feeling is breaking down today as Americans have brought drinking into the home and many other formerly forbidden activities have become everyday, harmless pleasures. Many parents feel that it is all right for adolescents to have a drink at home "with us." But we are still struggling with confusion about what is "a drink"—beer? wine? spirits?—and with the problem of how to become more discriminating in our patterns of serving and drinking. Meanwhile, as we continue to combine vague moral disapproval and general toleration of law-breaking, young people "drink" as a way of testing out the pleasure of doing things that are "bad for you" and that adults somewhat uneasily reserve for themselves.



Will you comment on the changing role of grandparents in American society today? JUNE 1966

In relatively unchanging, traditional societies, closeness to grandparents means closeness to old, accepted modes of life.

Intimacy with their grandparents gives children a sense of how a whole life is lived into old age, and unconsciously they set their sights to follow in the same path. Among American Indians, the most conservative peoples have been those among whom grandparents have played a decisive part in rearing children.

In our American past, many grandparents were immigrants who, though they lived in new homes in a new country, kept up customs that related them to the life they had left behind. Their American grandchildren, to whom these ways seemed increasingly old-fashioned and strange, felt separated from them by an almost unbridgeable gulf. Later, when the grandparents died, parents and children adopted fully American ways, and nothing remained of old customs but the memory that they were unyielding and different. This picture, true of the past, still shapes our American image of grandparents. Even when grandparents have been American-born and speak English as their native tongue, there is a tendency to equate them with whatever appears to be out-of-date in contemporary life. Pediatricians, public-health nurses and schoolteachers are likely to depreciate grandparental advice, and housing authorities plan for modern homes in which grandparents have no place. As we still visualize them, grandparents are old people—old physically and old in the sense of being set in their ways and probably better off and happier living in Florida and California with others like themselves.

This picture of what grandparents are supposed to be like masks a very different reality. In a changing society, grandparents themselves change. Far from representing what is stubbornly old-fashioned, they are the men and women who in the contemporary world have the greatest experience in incorporating new ways and ideas. Very often their daughters are mired down in a thousand details of baby care and house-keeping, and their sons are struggling to establish themselves in the world. But grandparents have the leisure to follow up what is most modern and new. And unlike their own parents, who grew old early under physical stress, today's grandparents generally have years of vigorous living ahead.

More often than we realize, grandparents who move away from the homes where they brought up their children are not settling into "retirement," but instead are launching into new activities. Some of them have—and many more could have—a very important role in their grandchildren's lives. Because as adults they have lived through so much change—the first "talkies" and television, the first computers and satellites—they may well be the best people to teach children about change. With a lifetime of experience of how far we have come and how fast, grandparents can give children a special sense of sureness about facing the unknown in the future. Having experienced so much that is new, they can keep a sense of wonder in their voices as they tell their grandchildren how something happened, what it was like the first time, and open their grandchildren's eyes to the wonder of what is happening now and may happen soon. And as men and women who are making new beginnings, developing new interests, they can demonstrate to children that growing up is only one stage in a lifetime of growth. As in the past, they represent continuity. But now, in a changing society, this continuity includes the future and acceptance of the unknown.



Would you impose any limitations on scientific research into the creation of life and the alteration of genetic patterns?

JANUARY 1967

I do not think we can impose limits on research. Through hundreds of thousands of years, man's intellectual curiosity has been essential to all the gains we have made. Although in recent times we have progressed from chance and hit-or-miss methods to consciously directed research, we still cannot know in advance what the results may be. It would be regressive and dangerous to trammel the free search for new forms of truth.

It is true that research findings are almost daily becoming more significant for our understanding of human life. But it is in the *application* of these findings that new controls and

new canons of responsibility must be developed. This necessarily involves not only research scientists and professional practitioners but also the citizenry of every country.

The recognition that this is so is the basis of the Information Movement, organized in different parts of the United States by scientists who have banded together to inform the general public about problems of great consequence, such as the use of nuclear power, including nuclear tests; problems of water and air pollution; the need for population control; and problems of race relations.

Two things are necessary for the success of the Information Movement. There must be groups of dedicated scientists who can organize information about the applications of science in such a way that it is meaningful to laymen. But also there must be groups of responsible citizens who want this information and who are willing to grapple with the problems that are posed by the new possibilities of its application. Those of us who are involved in this venture believe that scientists should take the responsibility for informing the public; we do not believe that scientists can take the sole responsibility for decisions on the applications of science. Without technical information, discussions are likely to produce more heat than light. But decision making is a process in which scientists and citizens, working together, must take part actively, continuously and responsively.

The question of positive, purposeful intervention in human genetic processes is certain to arise very soon. It is important that we be prepared to think about it. Of course, certain types of intervention already exist. Examples are found in sterilization laws, in voluntary abstention from parenthood by individuals bearing a known heritable defect and in changes in endemic disease patterns. Negative intervention also occurs wherever there are so-called apartheid laws that prevent free interbreeding between different races. Many older social customs and legal measures must now be called into question in terms of the doubtful genetic theories underlying them and in terms of human rights as well. As our knowledge grows, new ethical issues will always arise, and we must be prepared to reconsider practice in the light of human values.

The answer is not to limit research. What is needed instead is careful and profound discussion based on the best knowledge we have—knowledge that is shared and understood by all responsible citizens, not only those who are scientists. This is the step we must take, and soon.



Professor Hans Morgenthau has indicted the academic community for having abdicated its social responsibilities in failing to speak out on crucial issues. What is your view of the matter? JUNE 1967

Society accords the academic community, as a whole, special rights and privileges, and its members carry special responsibilities. Universities and colleges are tax-exempt, endowed and supported in the public interest. Young men and women wishing to work toward an academic career receive fellowships and grants. Older members of the academic community, who are trusted with the induction of the young into the intellectual traditions of their culture, are treated with respect. And today, in a changing world, they have the responsibility of developing new knowledge and applying it to the basic problems of our lives.

I consider teaching and developing new knowledge to be the primary responsibility of the academic community. Taking a stand or speaking out *without* the appropriate knowledge is a betrayal of trust. I would indeed criticize many parts of the academic community today for failing to do research on critical problems, as well as for failing to alert the public to issues on which members of certain disciplines have special competence, such as the hazards of radiation; the dangers of air, water and land pollution; and the vital necessity of controlling urban growth and overpopulation. But I would also indict those members of the academic community who speak out without special competence or who substitute political passion or individual conscience for the competence they are believed to have.

The problem of acquiring and interpreting data on human races illustrates what I mean. In the 1920s and 1930s an-

thropologists devoted very considerable research time and effort to certain problems that puzzled the general public, such as the apparent association between skin color and various forms of education and economic "inferiority" or "superiority." One outcome was the demonstration that members of a racial group might make significant contributions to civilization in one period, but in another period, when they were cut off from the main stream of development, might sink into insignificance. Similarly it was possible to demonstrate the critical importance of social expectation on children's achievement in situations in which invidious comparisons were made in terms of racial heritage. This research and its application to everyday life contributed materially to the creation of a new social climate of opinion within which Americans could reformulate the goals of democracy.

More recently, however, younger anthropologists have concentrated far more effort on "speaking out" than on careful research and critical analysis of problems related to race. A few of them have even denounced research that undertook to explicate the relationship between long-continued malnutrition or endemic disease and poor performance in groups defined as racially distinct or—as in the case of American Negroes—racially mixed. These anthropologists have been particularly vehement in their denunciations of research which has demonstrated that the effects of deprivation are real and lasting, though they are the result of conditions that could be eradicated for a new generation of children. In doing this, they have hindered the public understanding of the incapacitating effects of social conditions that can be changed. This is a situation in which members of the academic community *have* spoken out, but in doing so have failed in their primary responsibilities.

It appears to me that wherever demonstrations, manifestoes, sit-ins, teach-ins and other similar activities are treated as substitutes for the search for new knowledge and ways of applying it to the living world, the academic community is failing to take responsibility for its position of trust. In contrast, when scientists have taken the initiative in organizing their knowledge so as to make it really available and have

worked on the problem of how best to inform the public on areas of urgency and danger, I believe they are meeting their responsibilities. The rapid dissemination of knowledge about the dangers of atomic fallout and its effectiveness in leading to social action locally, nationally and even internationally is an outstanding illustration of wholly responsible standing up and speaking out.



With American crime rates on the rise, do you think it possible that our police and courts are taking the wrong approach? Are there any lessons we can learn from primitive cultures and other societies? MARCH 1968

Our police system and our courts, like our school system, are essentially localized and diverse. This makes it difficult to generalize about "the" approach to crime. Two things can be said, however. One is that almost every kind of reform that has been suggested is being actively advocated or tried out somewhere in the United States. The other is that while most such reforms aim at altering particular procedures or methods of organization, or attempt to eliminate injustice rooted in prejudice, they also tend to be regarded as keys to change on a larger scale.

A few examples are enough to show the range of thinking about new approaches to crime and law. Legal experts working on a project initiated by the Vera Institute of Justice are trying to eliminate bail requirements in New York City's Borough of Manhattan for persons accused of crimes other than homicide, narcotics violations or some sex offenses, holding that detention before trial of those unable to put up bail works against justice for the poor. Police forces are steadily upgrading their educational requirements. There also are advocates of differential requirements for police-recruitment at various levels of education for varying jobs connected with public safety. Especially in large cities there is interest in automating settlement of minor traffic cases that clog court calendars.

Another wide variety of reforms aims at the redefinition of

criminals. In a growing number of prisons and reform institutions, experiments are being carried out to replace punishment with remedial care and rehabilitation. A parallel development is the "halfway house," where those re-entering the community can live during the difficult period of job hunting and social readjustment.

A related way of thinking underlies the various efforts that are being made to redefine drug addiction not as a criminal offense (as one result of which an ever-increasing number of addicts are becoming involved in crime), but as a medical problem that can be handled through research and, in practice, by treatment. At further remove, but still part of the effort to try new approaches, are the attempts that are being made to alter conditions in slum schools and to devise new ways of training and finding work for young people who otherwise may be alienated from society.

Taken alone, none of these reforms can eliminate crime. But each can contribute to its reduction.

Comparing the kind of society in which we live with small primitive societies, we cannot avoid realizing that crime as we know it is a by-product of complex civilizations and written codes of law. For diversity and crime appear to be related to the extent that codes of law representing the beliefs and moral standards of only part of the community are imposed on the community as a whole. In a small primitive society there is much greater homogeneity, and although occasional deviant individuals may become disturbed enough to break known and accepted rules, there is little crime. Crime as we know it develops in urban settings.

In such a society a major problem arises when one group in the population is in a position to incorporate its special values and code of morals into the law and tries to regulate the behavior of all members of the society. Some of the quaint efforts of our ancestors, such as a law forbidding a man to kiss his wife on Sundays, seem ludicrous. What we do not see is that many contemporary laws, such as those that forbid drinking or the use of marijuana or that prescribe the private sex life of adults, are similar.

The difficulty is that laws that attempt to enforce special

forms of moral behavior breed disrespect for the law and for law-enforcing agencies among those who do not share the beliefs on which these regulations are based. And where disrespect and lawbreaking by the respectable are combined, one also finds connivance with crime in other areas of living.

The more complex a society becomes, the more fully the law must take into account the diversity of the people who live in it. The approach to crime is not a matter for the police and the courts—or even the lawmakers—alone. It is a matter in which the whole society is involved.



Why shouldn't we have schools of homemaking whose graduates would receive diplomas? Wouldn't this give greater dignity to the work that most women spend most of their adult lives doing? MARCH 1968

The first question is: For whom would the training course and the diploma be intended? For the future homemaker who expects to manage her own home and care for her family? Or for the domestic worker who will earn her living by taking over the tasks in a home not her own? Or for a member of a profession in a career that is not as yet defined?

In the applied arts and sciences a diploma carries with it the assurance that the recipient is qualified to begin practicing a set of skills as a professional person. The student who has majored in home economics at the college level has various occupations open to her. She can teach homemaking to others, for example, or she can become a dietitian. Going a step further in her training, she can enter the applied scientific field of nutrition studies.

A few attempts have been made to provide domestic workers with very elementary training in household work. Usually such courses have been arranged for new immigrants, young women who have never worked in a city household, who are unfamiliar with our standard equipment and the routines of American family living. Such a course does no more than prepare a woman for the labor market—but now even newcomers prefer almost any employment to that in homes.

So far, American women have not been willing to accept real professionalization of domestic workers in their homes. Perhaps hotels and inns might be willing to try the experiment as one way of cutting down the tremendous turnover of their employees. But would a professionally trained domestic worker be willing to do the kinds of chores that are part of room service? Paradoxically, women in their own homes take on the most exacting tasks of housekeeping—tasks they would regard as beneath their dignity if done for pay.

At the same time, over the years the skills practiced by the homemaker have been separated one by one from homemaking into specialized occupations. Cookery, performed by a man, may be treated as a fine art. Performed by a woman, even when she is paid for her work, cooking is regarded as drudgery. The exception is when it is treated as the avocation of a professional woman, such as an opera singer, or a professional hostess, such as the wife of an ambassador.

In the past, women who looked after small children in a crèche had little standing. It was only when girls of good families, backed by college courses in child development, entered the new field of nursery-school education that work with little children acquired the dignity of a profession. Much earlier, nursing also acquired high status when gently bred women, moved by compassion and religious dedication, undertook to care for the sick and the wounded. And today nursing and specialized teaching of children are among the few sex-typed professions for which women themselves have a high regard. Social work, in contrast, has risen in esteem to the extent that it attracts both men and women.

Even today, when the battle to open the doors of "masculine" occupations is all but won (except, perhaps, in some women's minds), women accord higher prestige to those professions formerly confined to men, and relatively few men would be willing to choose an occupation traditionally defined as "feminine." Up to the present, caring for small children, for example, is only occasionally a masculine vocation.

In spite of the proliferation of specialties that have separated off from homemaking, the skills of the homemaker as a *whole* have remained remarkably intact and unchanged. And

the tendency is still very great to regard homemaking as a tradition-bound occupation and the homemaker as someone trained at home who passes on to her daughter the lore she acquired from her mother. In fact, of course, this is not so; what does remain unchanged is our attitude, sometimes expressed with enthusiasm and sometimes with chagrin.

It is our attitude that must change if we want to give those who work in homes, as homemakers or as paid professionals, special training and a new kind of dignity. This, of course, leads to a second question: Would such training be limited to women or would it be open to men as well?

Today young fathers—as the only collaborators available to their wives—have taken over many aspects of homemaking. How many have acquired special skills that could be part of a new but growing tradition? Including men in the planning for courses in homemaking might well initiate changes that would lead in the direction of greater dignity and a new view of homemaking as a real profession.



In California and several other states, single women are being permitted to adopt children. Do you think this is a good idea? JUNE 1968

Basically we have developed three forms of adoption in the United States. The first is modeled on the ideal of the American family. The adopting couple want an infant who will resemble as closely as possible the child they long to have. Adoption agencies, in turn, set very high standards for the prospective parents, specifying good health, financial solvency, a desirable age combination, demonstrated compatibility and suitable social circumstances.

The second form of adoption is contrapuntal to the first. Although there are long historical precedents, this form of adoption really became popular in the years after World War II, when returning servicemen and their wives began to bring small children from distant lands to live in towns all over the United States. The prospective parents look for a

child who not only needs a home but who also is different from themselves; sometimes such adopting parents seek two or more children who are different from each other. Here it is quite clear to the children and to the world at large that these are adopted children—Japanese or Chinese or Vietnamese or Cook Islander children, even children from newly contacted tribes of the New Guinea highlands—who are being proudly brought up by adoptive parents in an American home. Adoption agencies were slow in approving adoptions of this kind, in which the older rules were reversed. Yet this form of adoption also is related to the ideal of the American family, which accords each child recognition as an individual.

Both these forms of adoption emphasize parental choice of a child. The third form emphasizes instead the child's need. In adoptions of this kind the central consideration is the provision of a home for a child who would otherwise have none. The child may be a member of a minority group, deprived of his parents by illness or accident; or he may have a serious physical handicap; or there may be serious doubt about his health or intellectual abilities or emotional stability. Many such children have lived in institutions or have been moved in and out of unsatisfactory foster homes. For these children good homes are hard to find. Any home where they are really welcome and can hope for understanding of their troubled lives—with a single woman, with aging and less-ideal parents, with an adult brother and sister who live together in the family home—offers a kind of security they may never otherwise be fortunate enough to receive.

So I would say yes—where the need of the child is great and is matched by the willingness of a single woman to create a warm human relationship, this form of adoption is a very good thing. Mutual love and acceptance are fundamentally important to the development of a good human being.



What changes do you foresee as a result of the liberalization of abortion laws? JULY 1971
I foresee a great deal of trouble.

Initially the passage of legislation liberalizing practice in a matter such as abortion may seem to have a good effect. It encourages those who have been fighting the old restrictions and it has a mildly modifying effect on negative opinion. Surveys have shown that more doctors now are accepting the idea of legal abortion and that more laymen think abortion may be justified under a wider set of circumstances.

But the liberalization of laws about which there is deeply felt conflict of opinion is asking for trouble. Those who disagree with the new restrictions still will try to evade the law or, alternatively, will continue the fight for greater liberalization. Others, consciously or unconsciously believing that abortion is wrong, will attempt to hedge the law with new kinds of restrictions in the name of good medical or social practice. So the question of how liberal or how restrictive laws about abortion should be will be opened again and again, always in an atmosphere of tension and conflict.

Where abortion laws have been modified, new arguments already have been raised.

Some groups in the Women's Liberation Movement are protesting the fact that the whole burden falls on women in a situation for which both sexes are equally responsible. It is likely that increasingly noisy demands will be made for male sterilization as the better method of dealing with the problem of couples who seem to be unable or unwilling to take contraceptive measures.

Psychiatrists are expressing concern about the effects of abortion on the women who feel bereaved but cannot mourn as they can when they have lost a child as the result of a miscarriage or of a stillbirth. Of course, women vary in their response to abortion, depending on how they envisage a conceived child.

The woman who thinks of her unborn child, no matter how young, as an individual, the potential bearer of a name, with a soul and an innate personality, cannot lose that child without a sense of deep loss. The woman who reacts to an abortion as she might to the loss of part of her own body—her tonsils or appendix—in an operation has somehow to come to terms with an altered self-image. Still other women seem to treat an

abortion simply as the process of removing an unwanted intrusion into the body.

All these attitudes exist, and we are only beginning to understand what the different consequences are. Researchers in Catholic countries are discovering the effects on women who are unable to live out the experience of mourning. From Eastern Europe, among groups that have rejected religious belief, we are obtaining accounts from women who have had many abortions, apparently without significant disturbance.

These are long-term problems. There are others as well. Almost no one has asked about the effects of abortion on men's attitudes toward and feelings about the unborn child, toward the woman who has the abortion or toward themselves. Continuing conflict about liberalization and law enforcement simply deflects our attention from these very serious issues.

In the long run, the only viable solution is the repeal of *all* restrictive laws controlling abortion. Only then will we be able to face the basic issues.

For the truth is, reliance on abortion is at best a poor solution. It is humane to interrupt a pregnancy in certain circumstances—when a woman has suffered rape or when disease threatens the normality of the fetus or the life of the mother. But abortion, no matter how phrased, is too close to the edge of taking life to fit into a world view in which all life is regarded as valuable.

Once abortion as such has ceased to be the issue, we can concentrate on establishing widespread knowledge of contraception and on the development of life-styles and personal relationships that are consistent with the idea of conceiving, bringing into life and caring for children, all of whom are desired and loved.



Do you believe that young people today are more realistic about love than their parents? Or are they more idealistic?

JULY 1971

I think that young people today are typically the children of

their parents. Their feelings about love and marriage are a response to their parents' attitudes as they have understood them.

The generation that came of age in the late 1940s and early 1950s—the parents of most of today's young people—was singularly unromantic. What most young people of that generation wanted above all else was to *be* married. They wanted to marry early and they settled for marriage at almost any price. The idea of waiting for someone for three or four years was inconceivable. Few couples thought of each other romantically, as lovers. They were too intent on matrimony. They made love in order to get married, rather than marrying because they were in love.

A great many young people today distrust the institution of marriage, into which their parents rushed so precipitately and single-mindedly. They want to be much more sure of each other before they marry. They want to see themselves and each other as individuals. When they make love it is as persons, not as a way of acquiring a mate. They are not more or less idealistic than their parents. They have a different ideal of personal relationships.

However, their relationships are more fragile than their parents' marriages were. They meet and part even more readily. In this they are the children of their parents—who wanted marriage but not the responsibilities of a loving relationship. Far too few people in these two generations have thought very intensely about the seriousness of taking the responsibility for another person's happiness or of the mutual responsibility of parents for the happiness of children.



With increasing international communication through radio, television and films, do you believe that social values and ways of thought and behavior are becoming more standardized—and Westernized—around the world? Or do you believe there is a reaction occurring as evidenced by the interest in the United States today in the philosophies of the Far East? FEBRUARY 1972

All the various forms of popular culture are becoming more alike around the world. At any one time the same hit records, television shows and newest dance steps can be heard and seen from New York to Indonesia. There are, as well, highly standardized reactions against what is popular. Some take the form of nativistic cults, in which people wish to throw out everything that is Western (or modern) and return to the ways of their forefathers. Others take the form of anti-nativistic cults, in which people turn, for example, against the Western culture into which they were born and decide to study Zen or attach themselves to a guru.

Fascination with Eastern religions and philosophies is by no means new in the Western world. My own great-granduncle became a Muslim during his travels in the East. Periodically, critical young Americans, and some not-so-young Americans, become enthusiasts of the art, the ethical system or the religion of some other area of the world. Fifteen years ago it was Zen. Later, India was considered more interesting. Since the choices are limited, one must expect repetitions over time.

What is new and an intrinsic part of our present flat, oversimplified, world-wide mass-media culture is our handling of fads. Each new one, as it sweeps the cities of the world, expands into a major portent of disaster or an indicator of some significant change of heart. At the time, as we look at ourselves and one another continually and anxiously, without critical cross-cultural or temporal perspective, we see only our own reflections magnified and infinitely multiplied, like people gathered in a room of grotesque mirrors. Then we move on. For a fad is still what it always has been—a fad.

In time, as the world becomes in a real sense an intercommunicating network, we may hope for change in two directions.

On the one hand, we may achieve world-wide standardization in those activities on which safety, health and some kinds of convenience depend—as we have already done to some degree in international controls connected with air and sea travel, currency exchange and protection against epidemics. On the other hand, with better communication people may

be led once more to care about and develop their own half-abandoned traditions and also with respect and a deeper awareness to draw on the highly developed traditions of other cultures, as in recent years architecture in the United States has drawn on Japanese models in creating new forms.



Is the world really coming together into a “global village,” as Marshall McLuhan claims? FEBRUARY 1972

I do not think that the figure of speech “global village” is well chosen.

It is true, as McLuhan has so aptly put it, that we live in a simultaneous world. That is, we are constantly exposed to news about events taking place even in the most distant parts of the world. Wherever we are, information about what is happening reaches us by television and radio more quickly—and often more accurately—than the news that was passed by word of mouth from one village to another even in the recent past. In this sense we are living in a shared—a simultaneous—world.

But in a village everyone knows everyone else. People know the family history of almost every individual and children who have grown up together know just what to expect of one another. True villagers speak the same language, laugh at the same jokes, share the same expectations and remember the same past. Their lives are inextricably interwoven.

In this sense I think McLuhan’s “global village” is inappropriate and a deceptive metaphor. The world’s population exceeds 3.5 billion people and is increasing at the rate of some 200,000 persons every day. We may know something *about* many of the world’s people, but we have face-to-face contact with only a few. Wherever a person travels, most people are strangers with whom there is little or no possibility of real communication.

The news media bring the peoples of the earth within view of one another. But the sheer numbers of people of whom we are made aware diminish the possibility of any feeling of closeness and community.

Seen from space, our planet may look like a little, blue, spinning top. But the world is not, nor is it likely to become, a global village.



Do you agree that American television is a cultural wasteland? SEPTEMBER 1972

American television is what Americans make it.

Our national news programs are among the best in the world because there is a vast, diverse audience for them. And if the majority of those in search of entertainment on television tune in on sports and talk shows, Westerns and soap operas, the networks, responsive to the techniques for measuring audience appeal, will provide more programs of the same kind.

Others—the people with different preferences—seldom take the trouble to praise the kinds of programs they like and approve of. Instead they simply grumble and tune out the programs they dislike. And so far, in spite of all their complaints about the fare offered them by the networks, they have signally failed to support the heroic efforts made by public and educational television to provide more varied and intelligent programs.

Television is what we—the viewers and the nonviewers, the producers and the reviewers—make it. We cannot blame “television” for something in which we all have a share—those who turn it on, those who turn it off and those who are turned off by it.



What has happened to the generation gap? SEPTEMBER 1972

The “generation gap” is the phrase we have been using to describe the deep break between the generation of those all around the world who grew up before World War II and the generation that has grown up in the changed world of the past twenty-five years.

Most people first became aware of the generation break in

communications in the 1960s, when members of the new generation began to arrive in college and to express their dissatisfaction with attitudes, beliefs and ways of looking at the world and organizing society that appeared to them outworn and unbearable. Some of them dropped out and went their own way. Others rebelled and gathered around them very large numbers of other dissatisfied and alienated students.

These students were rebellious, not because they were the young rebelling against the old, but because the world as it was presented to them and the world as they perceived it were quite different—and they wanted to initiate changes that would be in keeping with what they saw as the new realities.

These realities included the life they were expected to live in college. They wanted student voices to be heard in policy making. They wanted places on the boards of trustees; they wanted more student choice in the organization of teaching and the curriculum; they wanted greater freedom to decide how they, as young men and women, would live. They wanted their colleges—as the one place where students could form organized groups and bring pressures to bear on the faculty and administration and, through them, on the community—to take a stand on matters of great importance to them: the draft, the war in Southeast Asia, civil rights, the conditions of urban living, the right to education.

In response to student dissatisfaction, expressed sometimes in mass demonstrations, sometimes in threats of destructive action and often in long, long meetings, most college administrations and faculties have moved in the directions advocated by the student rebels. And in the country at large students won—in record time—the right to vote at the age of eighteen.

The students who started the movement are no longer students. The older members of the new generation are now out in the world as young lawyers, teachers, doctors, architects, engineers and politicians. Their successors in school know where many of them are and what they are doing. The struggles that began on the college campuses have been carried off-campus to outside spheres of action.

And in many cases, today's students who have inherited from their activist predecessors a part in college policy making have found that it is a rather unexciting, time-consuming activity. It is exciting to take part in mass demonstrations against a particular company known to make the deadly chemicals used in the Vietnam war. But trying to change the real-estate policy or the investment policy of a university board of trustees is a far slower and more tedious business, and at any particular time this kind of effort seems to be less rewarding.

As only a few students can actually participate in policy-making discussions, the excitement of being temporarily unified in a common cause dies down. What does go on is less enjoyable and far less publicized. The mass media look for trouble, and sober, quiet committee work seldom makes news.

But I do not think the students of the 1970s are less opposed to the war, less worried about the danger of nuclear explosions, less concerned about the environment or less committed to a democratization of life through change in the future of minority groups or in the rights of women. Rather, they no longer feel that they, while they are undergraduates, are the ones whose actions will be decisive. Many of them are working very hard, and they object to being politically manipulated by fellow students or by others, even in the best of causes.

These young people in college know something about what the students of five or ten years ago are doing now as working citizens to change political alignments, to alter institutional arrangements in the courts and in the practice of law, in the care of young children and the elderly, in the fields of education, equal rights and consumer and environmental protection. Many of today's students are dismayed by a national administration that takes away with one hand what it seems to be giving with the other. And many are biding their time. They are politically aware and waiting to see what they can do with the vote.

The generation gap is not something that will go away. It was brought about by changes that altered the life view and

the life expectations of a particular generation. But the older members of that generation, many of them now young parents, have moved out into a wider world. They are moving toward responsibility.



Have we the right to demand that parents limit their families to two children? SEPTEMBER 1972

I would not restrict the matter to "parents." Have we the right to demand that people who are married and those who intend to marry limit their families to two children?

If "we" in this question means the human community, I do believe that the human community must now take responsibility not only for the present generation but also for the next and the next. We must establish a climate of opinion in which people will wish to work toward a balanced population for the whole world, so that our children's children will have a chance to have a good life, preferably a better life than ours.

I do not think that any government should—or can—legislate the number of children people may have. But we can demand that all governments take responsibility for establishing a climate of opinion and for making it easy and desirable for people to limit the number of children that are born.

This means that contraceptives, with abortion as a back-up measure, must be freely available to everyone, adolescent or adult, single or married. It means that we must make it possible for large families to share their children with those who have none and much easier for people who wish to bring up children to adopt those who are in need of care. It means that we must cease to penalize the childless with especially heavy taxes. We must rearrange our mode of living so that children become true and considered members of the community.

In the past, when many children were needed because so many of them died, this need was incorporated in the ethical, social and economic framework of almost every society.

Today we must recognize a new need—to keep the conditions of human life humanly livable. And I believe we can develop a new ethic of responsibility for every human life only if we can accept responsibility for limiting the number of human lives to be cared for—in some countries because adults cannot care for an exploding population of children, in others because each child born lays such a heavy burden of energy consumption on our endangered planet.

This new social ethic will involve everyone very personally. Those who are thinking of having children—not two, but any—will first ask themselves why, indeed, they should have children. Will they—as a couple, not as individuals—make good parents? Will they be able to stay together long enough to rear those children?

If not, perhaps they should wait until each finds a more suitable partner. Or if they stay together, loving each other, perhaps they should adopt children or in other ways devote themselves to the care of other people's children, helping the overburdened instead of insisting on possessing children of their own. Or perhaps they should ask themselves what other contribution they can better make to strengthen their relationship and to further the well-being of the human community.

But there also are those who joyfully hope for children, those who will welcome them with love and be able to raise them with thoughtful care. And these people, as responsive and responsible parents, will make their own vital contribution to the world.



Why do we have such a high homicide rate in the United States? And what can we do to curb violence? MAY 1975

Americans have a long history of violence. But one reason violence so often leads to bloodshed and homicide is the extraordinarily easy availability of guns, particularly handguns that have no other purpose than to kill human beings. Almost anyone who is enraged or frightened, who wants to

threaten another person or who feels threatened, can acquire a gun.

The facts speak for themselves. In the 1960s, when the rate of violent crime was beginning to escalate, historian Richard Hofstadter pointed out that the gun-homicide rate in the United States was forty times as great as in England, Scotland and Wales, Japan or the Netherlands and that in the 20th century alone we had suffered over 265,000 homicides, over 330,000 suicides and over 139,000 accidental deaths from guns—a total greater than that of Americans killed in battle in all our wars up to then.

In other urban, industrialized countries of the world, governments very strictly control access to firearms—who can sell, buy or possess anything but a sporting gun. In large measure this is done to protect those governments against armed uprisings and rebellions. But it also protects the private citizen, the criminal and the peaceful man alike.

In the United States we have not feared armed uprisings. Americans habitually turn their aggressions against one another, not against the government. From the beginning of our history as a nation we have interpreted the right of citizens to bear arms—a right incorporated into the Constitution—as the right of every peaceful, responsible man to carry a gun to protect his own life and the lives of those dependent upon him. In our idealized picture, having a gun makes the good man equal in strength to the bad man—the robber, the cattle rustler, the burglar, the mugger. And the oftener crimes of violence are committed, the more necessary it seems for nonviolent people to be armed.

So we have a runaway system. The more guns are readily at hand, the more they are used by people with evil intentions. And as more people with good intentions feel they must be armed in self-defense, the more the criminal will use his gun because he believes his victim must be armed—and the oftener the police will shoot first and ask questions afterward.

There is only one way we can break this vicious circle—by very strict gun control. And as the first step in this direction we must stop thinking of guns as a means of defense against

dangerous individuals. That is, we must shift our emphasis away from people to guns as a prime source of violent danger.

It will not be easy. Again and again we will want to make exceptions. Today, every time a doctor is robbed or burglarized—and this is a very common occurrence because doctors' offices are a source of drugs—ten other doctors feel they must have guns to protect themselves. And it will take time, probably quite a long time, to gain control. Police everywhere admit that we have no knowledge of the number of unregistered guns Americans—peaceful citizens and criminals alike—possess.

We also shall have to convince the so-called gun lobby that there is an intrinsic difference between the licensed sporting gun in the hands of a skilled and presumably disciplined user and a handgun that, obliterating caution, can translate a moment of suspicion or fear or passion into death for a human being.

The more clearly we can differentiate between the idea of the rifle used for sport and the idea of the hidden handgun designed only to kill human beings, the more hope we shall have of winning consent to gun control, not only through legislation, but also in people's minds.

Gun control alone will not solve our problems of violence. But as we know from the experience of other countries, it will reduce enormously the number of homicides—accidental, self-inflicted or intentional—and this in itself will make a great difference.



Can we reconcile the democratic right to know with the glorification of individuals like Lynette Fromme and Sara Jane Moore and Patty Hearst, who have been charged with very serious crimes? JANUARY 1976

I see no good reason for doing so. In a democracy we have responsibilities as well as rights.

Certainly everyone wants to know something about a per-

son, woman or man, who is accused of attempting to assassinate a public figure or who is charged with any other major crime. But this need not mean they should be given magazine-cover and day-after-day front-page publicity.

We have arrived at a dangerous state of mind when we cease to discriminate between the women and men whose actions we most admire and those whose actions are abhorrent to every sane adult. We bracket fame and notoriety, service to our country and crime, when we accord the heroine and the criminal essentially the same treatment—front-page headlines, cover stories in the national news magazines, repeated exposure on television and heavily publicized opportunities to talk or write about themselves.

Yet we know from long experience that this kind of false adulation of the criminal invariably leads to repetitions of the same kinds of crime, both by criminals and by disturbed people who are excited by the chance to become "famous." Robert Kennedy was killed only two months after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. And it was estimated that overt threats against the life of President Ford tripled—from about one hundred to over three hundred—in the brief period between the failed assassination attempts with which Lynette Fromme and Sara Jane Moore are charged.

But we also know from experience that when the excitement dies down—when a kidnapper or highjacker, for instance, receives the most minimal notice—fewer people try to kidnap or highjack, for a time, at least.

Cooling it helps. And we have a responsibility, I believe, both to those whose life and well-being may be endangered and to those who may be led to commit some terrible crime against a fellow human being. Our responsibility is to keep our curiosity in check; the responsibility of newspapers, magazines, television and radio is to avoid the exploitation of crime and violence. New Zealand has recently passed legislation forbidding public mention of the very name of a person accused of a crime. We would never go that far, but we can, I believe, learn restraint.



I must comment on your characterization of suburbs as non-supportive. I have just lost my husband and have had wonderful support from my neighbors. JANUARY 1976

Many people living in suburbs do have good neighbors. This is especially true in older suburbs where families have lived for two generations or more and have relatives and old friends living nearby. In other suburbs there are pockets of warmth for the newcomer and friendly help in the crises of birth, illness and death. But this is not usual.

Suburbs for the most part are places to which families move as their economic status improves or where they live for just as long as their company job keeps them in that area. Families like these have broken their deeper ties to the past and they are not looking for the kind of close ties they have recently given up. People who are bent on improving their status are concerned mainly with the chances for their own children, for whom they are seeking safety from the terrors of city streets, health away from dirt and pollution, better education and association with the children of parents who have achieved security. Families who are living in a suburb because of a job are always poised to take off again; the center of their lives is elsewhere.

All this means that neighborly relationships in suburbs usually are quite superficial. The play groups of small children provide temporary co-operation among mothers, but this is reduced as children grow older and make their own friends. Commuting husbands, and to an increasing extent commuting wives, often are too tired at night to enjoy the kinds of social contacts that are suburban substitutes for long-standing, affectionate relationships—clubs, associations, politics, causes.

Undoubtedly many women have found close and supportive friends in the suburb in which they live. But the support given a woman—or a family—in a time of crisis is likely to be more transitory than in a community in which neighbors have lived through many crises together.



With so many young couples living together without marriage, what do we call the pair who have this arrangement and how do we introduce them to other people?

JANUARY 1976

Institutions need names so that we can think about them, and having an accepted way of referring to a relationship between two people helps us to respond more easily and spontaneously when we meet them.

In the past there have been definite phrases: She's pinned, she's engaged, she's married. She's his wife, he's her husband. In different social settings such words as "steady," "intended," "betrothed" and "fiancée" have come and gone as appropriate descriptions of a girl preparing for marriage.

Today's young people are uncertain about what they prefer. "This is John Jones and Mary Smith; they are living together" is a frequent way of introducing two people living in such an arrangement. But some young women active in the Liberation Movement prefer simply—if the couple are at home—"This is Mary Smith. She lives here." They feel that "here" denotes sharing, but nothing connubial. Away from home, introducing to others a couple who live together is more difficult. There is no accepted style, no phrasing that young people agree is comfortable for everyone.

Many people are groping for words to describe the partners in this kind of relationship: girl friend and boy friend, companions, housemates? Others feel that any attempt to define may be an invasion of personal privacy.

I would, myself, appreciate knowing from young people who are living together as well as from older people who approve of this new form of relationship what they think is a suitable and unambiguous phrasing.



Since we seem to be approaching a time when we shall be able to select the sex of our unborn children and since many

psychologists tell us that most people prefer to have boys, do you think the world will ever face a woman shortage?

MAY 1977

I doubt it. When psychologists refer to "most people," they usually mean Americans or Europeans. They seldom are talking about the human race based on a good knowledge of people all over the world.

Societies differ enormously in their sex preferences for children. Sometimes girls are more highly valued, for example, because they bring a big bride price or constitute a valuable family working force. In societies in which male activities, such as hunting or herding, are very important, parents want to have sons. And there are contradictory situations, as among some Eskimo groups, in which polygamy exists alongside female infanticide—that is, societies in which a man may want to have two wives and yet girl babies are often rejected.

There is also the well-known fact that the chance of having a boy decreases with each successive birth to the same mother. Almost everyone knows of a family in which the parents have gone on having girls in the ever-fainter hope of producing one boy. Sometimes, of course, they succeed.

The discovery of a certain, ethical and humane method of choosing the sex of each child would have enormously beneficial effects. The birth rate would decrease immediately, as couples could plan with certainty for the sex as well as the number of children they wanted to bring up. Equally important, every living woman would know that her parents did not merely accept or tolerate her out of necessity, but chose her to be a girl.

It is possible that here and there around the world there might be a temporary woman shortage. But as women come to play their full part in the modern world, I believe, this will change. For wherever women are accorded dignity and importance, families welcome daughters. What is likelier is that societies will differ in their sex preferences for elder and younger children. Some American couples want a boy first and then a girl; very probably many families will make this choice.



The United States Supreme Court recently ruled that employers have the right to exclude pregnant women from sick-leave benefits. What are your views on this? FEBRUARY 1978

I think that a mother, before and after the birth of a child, and a father, before and after the birth of a child, are entitled to a childbearing leave of absence that should not prejudice their seniority or other job-connected benefits. The right to a childbearing leave should be accepted in the same way as is the leave to vote, to do jury duty, to continue one's education or to perform religious duties. The length of childbearing leave and whether it should be with pay are matters for negotiation.

I do not think that childbearing leave should be treated as sick leave. It is important, however, that a medical-benefits scheme include a physician's care both before and after birth, as well as hospitalization for health disturbances during pregnancy and medical care at birth.

There was a time when pregnancy was regarded as an act of God for which no one—neither the pregnant woman nor the man involved nor anyone else—was responsible. Today pregnancy is a matter of choice.

By treating pregnancy as an illness we obscure the fact that it is a normal, healthy process. And by combining demands for a childbearing leave with demands for affirmative action, we obscure the very real difference between women and men, as far as pregnancy itself is concerned.

We are right to make provision for working parents to spend some time with their newborn infants, rather than placing them directly in nursery care. Childbearing leave should not be coupled with sick leave, but should be regarded as a right that grows out of one's responsibility for another human being.



How do we reconcile population control with charges of genocide by minority groups and loss of personal freedom by all groups? FEBRUARY 1978

Personal freedom is a matter of cultural definition. Americans are likely to treat any new social restriction, even one that is essentially protective, as a blow to personal freedom. Currently a great many Americans are refusing to accept a lower speed limit on highways and are unwilling to invest adequate funds for the improvement of mass transportation. They act as if such measures constituted an invasion of personal freedom instead of somewhat isolated efforts to make better national use of limited resources.

Actually, the idea that individuals have ever been entirely free to decide about such a matter as how many children to have is an illusion. All kinds of social and cultural pressures always affect people's beliefs about having—or not having—children, when and under what circumstances.

And fashions change. In the 1950s in the United States, every young person, woman or man, was pressured into marrying and every married couple was pressured into having or adopting several children. Today the current is running the other way. No laws were passed. But as fashions change, most people float with the stream.

Others, usually only a handful, rebel. They have to be willing to pay the price: virtual ostracism in the 1950s for couples who insisted on remaining childless, heavy disapproval in the 1970s for couples with large families. But today it is not a matter of fashion that may change in a decade or two. It is a question of balancing the world's resources and the world's population. It is a question of acting responsibly in the light of our best knowledge.

As long as each country accepts the responsibility for balancing its population in accordance with both its own resources and the resources of the world, there can be no charge of genocide. But a claim by any group that it has a greater right than others to have children—because its members are richer or brighter or belong to a superior race—opens the door to charges of genocide. And keeping any group in circumstances of ignorance and poverty, as a result of which more of its children die, is a form of genocide.

I do not feel we are losing personal freedom by choosing to have fewer children. Instead we are ensuring, as best we can, that our children will be free to make choices of their own.



Have cities outlived their usefulness? AUGUST 1978

Cities have outlived many of the special uses that have been made of them since the Industrial Revolution that began in the mid-18th century. Cities near seaports, on rivers and later at important railway junctions and terminals became centers for gathering masses of cheap labor—recruits from the countryside and immigrants from overseas. These people were needed to work in the new factories and foundries and to amass the raw materials and distribute the products into which they were transformed.

As time passed, great urban populations grew up whose members had no ties outside the cities and knew only the life of city streets and tenements and sordid places of work. Some city people prospered but many remained very poor and dependent. Nowadays, those who work in industrial cities have to carry the great weight of those who are too old to work, the handicapped and the unfit, and especially all the children who must be cared for and educated.

Meanwhile, as new sources of power have been developed to turn the wheels of factories and to provide for transportation, cities have become less necessary for industry. Electric power can be transmitted over great distances and cars and giant trucks have replaced streetcars and trains as a means of transporting working people and the products of their work. So while the big city is no longer crucial for industry, industry—in the sense of providing jobs—is essential to the city.

In spite of this, planners all over the industrialized world are relocating industries and the effective workers for these industries. This, of course, leaves the cities with great numbers of dependent people, many of them too old or too young to work and others quite unfit for the labor market, and without clearly established ways of caring for all the unemployed—and unemployable—men, women and children.

Modern cities in the United States still carry all the financial responsibilities that were appropriate to smaller towns and that could more or less be met as long as industries paid their way in cities. At the same time, as industries have

moved out of cities a passionate struggle has developed over where the workers who have followed industry should live. Is low-cost housing to be built in the older suburbs that have widely spaced houses and pleasant green lawns and taxes already high for schools for privileged children? And if not there, then where?

In Europe many of these problems are being met by new cities, which are carefully planned to receive industries that have agreed—or have been ordered—to go there and to house both the needed workers and the technical staff. But the few new towns that have been built in our country are still primarily suburbs, better planned and with greater diversity in housing and among the residents, but places where people in general do not work.

We have not solved the problems of our outmoded cities or worked out adequate alternatives for all the people who work in industry.

Other uses of a city—as a center of culture, of government and of contact with the rest of the world—have not been outlived. The mass media can bring much of what is developed in cities to people who do not live in them. But wherever the distant audience may be, the symphony is in New York or Boston or San Francisco. Young musicians go to the city to study and stay there to play their music. And in the city authors seek publishers and publishers seek authors, art galleries show the work of artists and theaters struggle to survive and show plays and ballets and other works of the human mind and imagination.

The city as a center where, any day in any year, there may be a fresh encounter with a new talent, a keen mind or a gifted specialist—this is essential to the life of a country. To play this role in our lives a city must have a soul—a university, a great art or music school, a cathedral or a great mosque or temple, a great laboratory or scientific center, as well as the libraries and museums and galleries that bring past and present together. A city must be a place where groups of women and men are seeking and developing the highest things they know. This can never be outlived.



Do you believe that the violence shown on television has increased the violence in our daily lives? Or is it the other way around? And is there anything we can do about it?

OCTOBER 1978

It is a circular process, I think, in which violence in the world and violence portrayed feed each other.

National television draws on acts of violence of many kinds in the whole nation and elsewhere in the whole world. So there is always, somewhere, some act of violence—the more gruesome and bizarre the better—to feed a public that is believed to be voracious for sensations of horror and frightened thrill. The wider the base, in terms of the world's population, on which the media—television, radio, magazines and newspapers—draw, the more numerous the violent acts that can be, and are, vividly reported. In the past, before radio and television, murders, unless they involved people of great importance or notoriety, were matters for the local press. Now any murder—any violent act—anywhere is likely to be reported; any victim may be shown; any person who has committed a crime of violence may look out at us from our own television screen.

It is well known that violence breeds violence. A well-publicized crime increases the frequency of other similar crimes, whether it be a bank robbery, a kidnapping, a rape, a hijack or a spectacular multi-murder. This is true also of violence shown on the cops-and-robbers “series” programs and other weekly fictional shows that feature crime. The disturbed and suggestible individual has a recipe spelled out on television and may well act out an event that has become dangerously real and available.

Of course there is something we can do about this situation. Sponsors of commercial television are among the most sensitive and responsive people in the world. Well-organized, insistent and widespread pressure, such as that already initiated by Action for Children's Television and the Parents and Teachers Association, have brought and will continue to

4 PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

Do very primitive societies have humor? What forms does it take? MARCH 1963

Laughter is man's most distinctive emotional expression. Man shares the capacity for love and hate, anger and fear, loyalty and grief, with other living creatures. But humor, which has an intellectual as well as an emotional element, belongs to man. Primitive peoples laugh at surprise, incongruity, shifts in timing, wisecracks and reversals, just as civilized peoples do. They differ, as do individuals and civilized nations, in the kinds of humor they enjoy.

In many of the cultures of Africa, laughter seems to have been specially cultivated. The Pygmies of the Ituri Forest have songs as filled with joy as a six-month-old baby's crowing; when they laugh, they fall to the ground and roll in delight. While an outsider is often puzzled by the different ways some Africans express their humor, he almost always finds it contagious.

The amount of humor in a society—which invariably includes the ability to laugh at oneself and to feel that those who laugh at one are not hostile—can be used as a measure of the sense of freedom and security individuals feel in that society. The Manus people of the South Seas, for example, used to make up songs with disguised names in them; when they came into conflict with government, they took great pleasure in singing these songs in the presence of officials, trusting each other and laughing together against the foreigner. For genuine humor, there must be trust.