IV

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

1. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

To the extent that humanism is rooted in Greek antiquity, it also stands in the sign of the post-Socratic *paideia,* which as we have said before, is not only upbringing, but particularly education. Via *anthropismos* it arrives in Latin as *humanitas* (Cicero) and finds from there its way to the humanists of the Renaissance. Education was and still is a central idea in humanism, so that as we have already seen it has become a key word, particularly in Germany and France, for the literary education in the classical "humanist" grammar school. But in humanism as a conviction, education also plays a major role. Humanist education of young people, but also of adults, gets much attention. In the past humanists expected much if not all from humanist education for the improvement of the human lot, and they are still very much geared toward education. But particularly after the Second World War, more and more attention has been paid to the social situation in which people live, and education more and more refers to social responsibility and social action. Yet here, too, the educational element keeps its importance. The humanist contribution to social activities actually consists of humanists clarifying those activities on the basis of their convictions and giving them their own impulse when they work together with others in this framework. The typical thing of humanism is as a matter of fact based on this connection between reflection and action.

The humanist trend not only aims at the development of humanist thought in order to achieve a satisfactory moral conviction, but it also

attempts to provide a framework within which meaningful action can take place. All kinds of aids used in the humanist movement serve this purpose, especially the many different types of humanist counseling. It covers many methods of moral training and moral care that gradually change into one another, though they do require different specializations. From the outset individual assistance and group work were thought of as complementing each other, and they are both directed at self-determination in a social context. Stories about their parochial and schoolmasterish character have practically no basis and are not borne out in practice. It is true that moral care—as opposed to moral education—has developed in many different parts of the world parallel to religious pastoral care because a number of humanist communities started as nonconformist churches. All the same, humanist counseling has from the beginning taken a different road from its traditional equivalent, if only because humanists cannot treat their conviction in the same way priests handle the Bible and church dogma. They must obviously appeal to personal capabilities. In any case, it has always been accepted that people experience a great number of needs that may require counseling. The undermining of traditional behavior patterns in a radically changing society and the secularization of the perception of life results in questions that many may not be able to answer without assistance from others. That is after all not surprising; there is no area in life in which we would find it normal for people to find their way without assistance. Why would that then be required in the existential area?

Nor can one let existential questions disappear among problems with regard to personal relations, cultural design or social structures. Though they are related to these, they do have their own character. This is also quite clear if one thinks of the fact that people must in literally all circumstances face themselves. This was achieved even in concentration camps and was basically a condition for survival. Circumstances can never be so bad that it isn't still possible, and no circumstances are so favorable that it isn't still necessary. This is not to belittle the importance of circumstances; the creation of favorable structures is a task for humanists because that is the very thing that requires people who understand what is important in being human. One cannot chase away inner dissatisfaction with a lot of useful activities, but one can on a basis of inner fulfillment act in a meaningful manner. The perception of life in an organizationally technological society provides a temptation to answer existential challenges by functional measures, namely, by modifying the circumstances. Though this isn't wrong, it is not enough. If humanists can contribute something specific to the solution of the manifest or hidden needs of the people of today, it is because they can recognize the moral component in these functional measures. Only then will their help be more than just sectarian busybodying, which can be done as well or better by other institutions more specialized in the functional field.

Humanists aim at action to realize human dignity, but a condition for this is dignity in human actions. This requires the insight that people are not only intersections of influences and relationships but also centers of action. They themselves can and must give shape to their existence. That is the challenge brought by humanists: by calling for reflection, by furthering exchanges of opinion, and by availability for service. They always appeal to a freedom of choice, even though a restricted one. One cannot think about people without it. Neither Marx nor Freud actually wanted it. Marx mentioned a change in the relations of production as a pre-condition for changes in consciousness. But consciousness is not just a reflection of this ownership situation and cannot very well be perceived as such. If that were the case, his call for becoming aware of the right consciousness would not make sense and the liberation of the true creative person would also remain hanging in the air, because one cannot liberate something if in one way or another it is not already potentially available. According to Freud, too, man lives in a precarious equilibrium between I and It, between eros and death, and between drives and repression that cannot quite break away from his freedom. By choosing between suppression and becoming aware, he himself shapes his existence and balances between necessity and responsibility. After all, it is the patient who decides on relapse and neurosis, or growth and fulfillment, because of his own position in the cultural pattern. He has chosen that "because of."

One could hardly imagine it to be different on the basis of existential experience. Choosing continuously is inevitable and, to the extent that occasionally it is possible to consider necessity in this context, one selects those considerations as the reason for one's choice. The question is not whether the will to choose one thing or the other is absolutely free. No humanist will really maintain that the values that influence choice are random. They are controlled by the nature of being human, personal growth, the challenge of the situation, but always in the manner in which these factors are understood by the person himself. They do not form a clear-cut system with predictable results. No person can avoid choice, and if someone prevents him from carrying out his choice he feels genuinely constrained. The idea of freedom is based on the experience of that type of constraint and the freedom of choice must be taken very seriously in order to be able to defend oneself against that type of constraint. That is also everyone's inescapable responsibility. The recognition of freedom of choice results in the necessity to answer the challenges that occur. Everyone's real responsibility is contained in that answer, and beyond that in the readiness to justify that answer before oneself and others. This responsibility, by which someone becomes an independent person, cannot be taken away from him by anyone; nor can anyone take it over, because that is one's genuine individual responsibility.

If one considers all of the above, an obvious question is what the

function of humanist counseling could possibly be if it cannot replace one's own freedom and responsibility. As a matter of fact it is his own choice if he looks for counseling. It is obvious that that influences his decision: at a certain moment he encounters the choice of either accepting or rejecting counseling. And the counseling itself will reveal new choices. How can this be justified from the point of view of the counselor? To start with it must be made clear that freedom of choice is not the same thing as freedom from being influenced. Each choice is influenced by all kinds of factors and one of these factors is the responsibility shared between human beings. To leave someone free does not mean being indifferent to him; to the contrary, indifference does not provide freedom, but forlornness, and therefore a lack of possibilities to choose from. If I see someone drowning I try to save him, provided I am not too indifferent, too indolent, or too cowardly. That is an intuitive reaction, based on a sense of sharing people's fate, if that sense has not been destroyed for some reason or another. I put myself into the place of the victim; I find life too valuable just to let it slip through my hands. On further consideration, I would perhaps say that life is something that goes so far beyond us that I cannot dispose of it at random and that no one knows what might be a further purpose of an individual existence: no one knows whether someone isn't waiting for him somewhere.

Yet all these are my considerations that control my responsibility. But who can say whether someone might not have chosen to die for reasons that were convincing as far as he was concerned? Suicide confronts the humanist counselor with the ultimate consequences of the tension between freedom and responsibility of the one as well as of the other. In 1940 Menno ter Braak, a well-known Dutch author and anti-fascist, consciously and freely chose death because he did not wish to continue living under the barbaric Nazi regime. This must be respected, because it was a matter of his freedom. But no one knows what he could yet have done for the freedom of others, if only as a hostage. Killing oneself is something different from voluntary euthanasia, because that is based on the assumption that life has already irrevocably lost its luster and is moving toward death. If one decides to kill oneself, there are always a number of possibilities left and one can only speak about a complete freedom of choice if all those possibilities have also been considered. But who is going to decide that? It is impossible to make a decision for someone else, though it is known that the decision to kill oneself is very often made in a condition of narrowed consciousness. But surely there are exceptions. It is also known that, among the Eskimos, weakened old people seek their death in order to enhance the chance of life for the younger generations in that severe climate. But one must not confuse killing oneself with sacrificing one's life in order to save others; that is not what we are talking about here. Killing oneself remains an incomprehensible decision for any counselor.

However—and this must be strongly underlined in this context—in

practice the conflict of responsibilities we were talking about is very rare indeed. The suicide attempts one generally encounters are not at all an expression of a conscious choice, but an act of despair meant as a cry for help or a cry of resentment in the loneliness in which a person has been left. In those circumstances this matter of the freedom of the other is just a sick joke; what he is actually asking for is the help that will enable him to regain his freedom. A condition for this is that there is someone who breaks through his loneliness, so that he is not left helpless to his fate and can make a new start with a consideration of different possibilities and making a choice. In general this is the usual situation in counseling, though the despair is fortunately rarely so deep and often only just present. Humanist counseling reacts to signs observed by the counselor, or by third parties, that indicate that counseling is required. The art is to understand the signs and react to them, without ever urging counseling on anyone. This attitude is different from the "traditional" reticence of social workers and psychotherapists, because it allows the interhuman responsibility to operate to the full from the very first encounter and at the same time takes the maturity of the other totally seriously, as well as his freedom of choice. In groups, this freedom to participate or not and to decide the extent of participation is generally rather obvious, but it should not be any different when dealing with individuals.

This puts a considerable responsibility on the counselor. He (or she) must obtain and strengthen his own professional skills, partly by joint reflection with other counselors. In order to improve his own knowledge and also in the interest of his clients, he will of course also have the necessary contacts with professional workers in similar areas, e.g., social workers, psychotherapists, and other skilled helpers. In this context, he should never lose sight of the confidentiality of his activities. If at all possible, he should obtain approval from the client before mentioning his case to anyone else, and such an approval by itself is not sufficient. The counselor has his own responsibility with regard to confidentiality, because it is the basis of his relationship, more particularly because it is a part of the feeling of security that the client needs to be able to be himself. Therefore, professional secrecy is one of the cornerstones of counseling. Even if the counselor works within a particular organizational framework, he has a responsibility to the organization with regard to his actions, but never to such an extent that confidentiality is jeopardized. Only if there is a risk of serious danger to third parties will it be impossible to keep total professional secrecy. In that case the counselor must decide what to do according to his conscience, if possible still being honest with his client. Even if the counselor is called as a witness before a judge, he must remain conscious of his special position and may find himself in a situation of having to convince the judge of the necessity for confidentiality to exercise his function and its rightness in the case under consideration.

Humanist counseling acknowledges the value and peculiarity of each individual. The assumption is that everyone is capable of dealing with his own problems. The counseling is nondirective in the sense that one does not offer ready-made solutions to the client but puts the client in the position of carrying his own responsibilities, though that may not be at all what he really wants. This illustrates the fact that the expression "nondirective" must be understood as relative. Though one does not wish to direct the client toward a particular solution, the counseling relationship has a potential for influencing that should not be underestimated, if only because attention is paid to particular points and not to others. That is inevitable and not a disadvantage if one is conscious of one's own values and assumptions. To the extent that the counselor mirrors what the client radiates it is, in humanist counseling, a humanist mirroring. And that as a matter of fact should be exactly what the client wants; otherwise he would not need this particular counselor. This in no way means that humanist counseling consists of a transfer of humanist opinions, but it is characterized by humanist starting points in all its aspects. This is the systematic basis of a humanist approach in counseling. It has its starting point at the level of naturalness, relatedness, equality, freedom, and reason. This starting point defines the counselor's attitude as acceptance, availability, equality, respect, and openness. With regard to technique, it means empathy, concern, encouragement, safety, and perspective. All this is directed toward a learning process for the client, characterized by the stages of self-acceptance, directedness toward others, self-confidence, and self-determination. This is the manner in which humanist counseling can fulfill its purpose from a humanist point of view. Where could one after all find the purpose of counseling if not in a (humanist) conviction.

It is also on the basis of such a concept of man that a counselor may reach the conclusion that the needs of his client are caused by his personal or social circumstances. Even then it is not the task of the counselor to offer solutions. The question is how the client, once he has also made this discovery, wishes to react to it. It may not be possible to change circumstances in the short run, and therefore the client will have to live with them. This does not necessarily mean that he has to adapt. He can also live with them with a critical approach and opposed to them. In other cases he might be able to find himself by actively resisting the hindrances and by trying to change the circumstances. The counselor can help him in discovering the possibilities, but the client will have to make his own choices. It is certainly not the function of the counselor to make his client realize the counselor's own ideas. That would be manipulation. Obviously this does not diminish the duty of the counselor as a citizen to attack social evils and, because of his experience in counseling, to reveal the social obstacles to a really human development. With regard to the client, the point is to enable him to defend himself against obstacles and to enable him to take

responsibility for himself in the world, not by announcing a particular concept of man and his world but by enabling the client in this framework to discover who he is and what that means for him and others and for society in general. Counselors do not know everything, but are pathfinders in the literal sense.

2. HUMANIST GUIDANCE AND PSYCHOLOGY

Humanist guidance is not mental hygiene, but it is related to it. A humanist concept of man cannot avoid acknowledging the relationship between existential and psychic elements in being human. The problem in this context is that a concept of man must over and over again be tested against the results of psychological research, but results are also dependent on anthropological assumptions. In psychology too, one only finds what one is looking for. In any case, a humanist concept of man will have to find a way between the two main trends in psychology, psychoanalysis, and behaviorism. Some elements of Freud's concept of man have already been mentioned. As is often the case with great pioneers, his work is characterized by a strong internal tension that one could almost call a creative inconsistency. In spite of the fact that it is a closed system, human freedom does find its way through—with difficulty. This, by the way, applies to Adler and Jung as well. Thus psychoanalysis, with its various branches, has supplied an enormous contribution to a better understanding of the human endeavor. But it cannot be denied that it also takes many rigid forms that hardly take human creativity into consideration. Man appears as a plaything of his passions, and one gets the impression that all one can do is to try to modulate one's passions in such a way that one is enabled to live with them in a more or less acceptable way. The fact that psychoanalysis originated as a theory about neuroses, which means that it was a theory about illness, is not without importance in this respect.

The latter was not so much the case with the other important trend in psychology, behaviorism, which most often deals with "ordinary" people. Its origin was mainly in the United States and its purpose was to handle psychology in a scientific manner. It limited its research to directly observable and, if possible, measurable phenomena, namely, behavior. The behaviorist interest in influencing behavior is connected with this. Following tests on conditioned reflexes, meaning reflex behavior that under certain conditions has become automatic, B. F. Skinner proposed a theory on the conditioning of human behavior that caused quite a stir. One could summarize his ideas by stating that there is only one way in which one can bring people to live together in a reasonable manner and that that is to condition them in such a way that they cannot do otherwise. Who should do this, according to what yardstick, where the power to do it has to come from, and

how one can motivate these yardsticks is not really explained by Skinner. Another problem is whether all of humanity could ever successfully be conditioned in this manner, i.e., people might "spoil" the system by their creativity, which can never be totally suppressed. Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World* poses the question whether living in a world like that would be worthwhile. The question, "What do we really want from people?" is becoming inescapable.

After the Second World War there was a growing dissatisfaction among American psychologists both with behaviorism and with the psychoanalytic tradition, though most of the psychologists themselves were analysts. According to them, within each of these theories man as a person risked disappearing behind a number of partial observations: behavior or passions. But where is he himself? A new psychology was needed, a third psychology, a third way to mental health that would deal with the entire human being as an organic entity. That is what they wished to express with the word *humanistic.* In this case it does not so much apply to a philosophy of life, but rather to a psychological concept. As a matter of fact, this notion was not entirely new. As early as the beginning of this century a number of psychologists in the south of Germany and in Switzerland, among them Charlotte and Karl Bühler, had reached similar ideas. Their opinion was that any observation is dependent on the entire field of observations. This obviously also applies to observations on and of people. This opinion was called Gestalt psychology, because one tried to look at totalities, shapes (in German: *Gestalt).* Subsequently Kurt Lewin extended this observation theory to include feelings and actions, as a matter of fact to the entire field of existence. At an even later stage, Fritz Perls started using the concept of Gestalt for complexes of feelings, fears, and frustrations, which someone places opposite himself as a "Gestalt" in order to deal with them and integrate them into his personality.

In the meantime the concept of man as a coherent entity had again become topical in the United States during and after the Second World War. A number of prominent psychologists and psychotherapists worked accordingly, each one of them in his own way. In different ways it played a role in the work of Erich Fromm, Erik Erikson, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Charlotte Bühler, who now lived as an immigrant in the United States, and others. Around them a third force took shape and met with considerable success as "humanistic psychology." This led to the development of a number of variants and subtrends with which we shall not deal in our present context. The original assumption is that in every human being there is a fundamental orientation toward growth, not only biologically, but also mentally. Within this concept the two cannot be separated from each other. In favorable circumstances the result of that growth is maturity. This is not considered to be an end stage, but a condition within which people can utilize their abilities to the full. Though a number of blocks can occur

during the growth process, people are in principle considered to be able to choose in favor of their freedom, with or without some aid. And when they make a choice in favor of themselves they simultaneously choose in favor of others, because self-love is a precondition for loving others. Acceptance of the self, and with that acceptance of others, is necessary for this purpose. Whoever establishes and reinforces his identity in this manner, opens the road to self-actualization within which the mature personality reveals itself in a self-confident and unselfish, original and creative manner. Therefore the keywords of humanistic psychology are growth, freedom, maturity, acceptance, love, and actualization.

It is obvious that humanistic psychology does not intend to propagate a concept of man. As a group, these psychologists were not interested in this. On the contrary, they attempted to make their opinions acceptable to anyone, of whatever persuasion. But that does not alter the fact that Fromm and Maslow were explicit humanists, while Rogers and Erikson never concealed their interest in philosophy. It is after all quite clear that this psychology presumes a certain concept of man. And that had to be so. This concept of man is closely related to that of humanism as a philosophy of life. The fact that all psychology is based on man as a natural being, which means that he is produced by nature and is culturally oriented toward that nature, makes psychology a humanist-oriented science, though what assumptions with regard to man are made in this context is relevant, as mentioned earlier in this section. But in the case of humanistic psychology the relationship with humanism as a philosophy of life is obvious and can easily be demonstrated by looking at the ideas of some of the humanistic psychologists.

Fromm is a humanist; he interprets humanism as a belief in the relatedness of the human species and in man's capability of perfecting himself by his own efforts. Man is changeable, but not in an unlimited manner; he has a particular nature, but society sets limits. Yet he has a certain freedom of choice and is led in his choice by his capacity to evaluate, which is a product of his essential character. If a human being does not exercise this freedom but allows himself to be led by would-be values, the result is frustration, which means a lack of mental health. This is the core of Fromm's concept: morality, not in the traditional sense, but understood in a creative manner as a condition for health. And the same thing applies to a certain extent to society: a society is healthy if it promotes the health of its members, and it does that if it offers them a possibility for creative morality. This morality starts with self-love; self-love is the condition for love of others, and whoever does not love himself does not know what love is and can only use others instead of serving them. On this basis we can become what we already potentially are. People form an entity consisting of body and mind; they can choose life over death in a community of fate with others, who are again all unique, in an attempt to provide meaning for an existence

that in itself is absurd. An insight into the social conditions that must be met for this purpose led Fromm to a form of Marxist humanism.

Erikson is less well known than Fromm, but not less important. He is a psychoanalyst and an artist and, like Fromm, also a sociologist, though as an amateur. Erikson accompanied an expedition to a Sioux Indian reservation in order to make drawings, but while there he was struck by the loss of identity of the tribe and thereby that of its individual members, particularly the children. This seemed to have been the result of a change in circumstances. Their traditional roles no longer corresponded to their situation. The question that occurred to Erikson was whether this was not also the case for many people within Western culture. Since then, he specialized in the problems of identity. The awareness of these problems was further reinforced by certain psychoanalytical experiences. Erikson found that it was quite possible to cure patients using the rules of the art of psychiatry, but what remained after that? The symptoms of the illness would disappear, but in their place a void was created. The former patient fulfilled his social functions in a more or less satisfactory manner, but he only half-existed. The psychiatrist can re-enable the patient to use his abilities, and in that sense he can restore his mental health; but mental health depends on the use one makes of one's abilities. This is the area within which the sense of identity operates. A weak sense of identity leads people to make frantic attempts to be someone all the same, generally by conforming to the group within which one lives; this takes up practically all one's energy. A strong sense of identity, on the other hand, is expressed in an independent self-confidence that leaves energy for one to be available to others. The basis of this sense of identity is provided in the first years of one's life, when physical and mental safety create a basic trust on which later development rests. But the strength of this sense of identity is also dependent on the extent to which people by their own abilities and external circumstances can provide their life with meaning.

Rogers, too, was interested in questions of the meaning and sense of life and the potential of people. The therapist is most effective if he does not behave as if he is better than he really is and if he can accept other people as they really are. People can rely on their experience and discover an order in it. Then they will realize that what is most personal is also most general, that it is not the judgment of others that is important, but the discovery that one is worth being loved. Let a person search under the surface of his behavior for who he really is. Then he will become a person who relies on himself—who chooses his own values directed to self-determination, development, individuality, openness, acceptance, and self-confidence. Enable people to be themselves and then they will develop, not like beasts, but like human beings. At a later stage, Rogers also applied his opinions to learning. Once the foundation of knowledge has been laid—and this may obviously not be done in an authoritarian manner—people can, with a little guidance and

together with others, determine their own road in the learning process. And this also applies to the lessons taught by life. Any person, according to Rogers, can learn how to control his own life and his own learning. He has the potential for it and the important thing is to make him discover his potential. All Rogers's writings illustrate his confidence in the human potential.

This is perhaps even more true for Maslow. To a certain extent, one could perhaps call him the leader of a new generation of humanists. His basic thought is that people are by nature motivated for development. Their destiny is not so much a balance, as expounded in the Freudian theory of drives and in behaviorism, but growth. People grow according to a human pattern, provided the required conditions are present. That is the essence of the organism. These conditions consist in satisfying needs: food, heat, safety, social relationships, and recognition are the first needs. If they are not met, deficiencies occur and, with them, physical and mental symptoms. If these conditions are met, then the basis is laid—this is Erikson's basic trust —for further development: knowledge and skills, experience and insight can continue to grow and a person can have peak experiences, which could be called religious, that make it possible for him to experience the world in a more intense and more original manner. The importance of this is that that type of person can check what Maslow calls the ultimate danger with which we are threatened: a lack of values. Developing people know the meaning of existence. As yet, only a few develop into self-actualizers, but that is our destiny. Self-actualizers are real and recognize shams; they think in nuances, yet see what is unique; they are anti-authoritarian, but not weak; they are involved but keep their privacy; they are self-confident and accept others in their being different. This is the pre-eminent man within humanistic psychology.

The question is, What is humanist in humanistic psychology? According to the humanistic psychologists their humanism lies in the opinion that man must be understood as an entity. However, humanism as a philosophy has a more or less defined concept of man, and what of this do we find in humanistic psychology? All humanistic psychologists base their theories on the naturalness of man. He is the product of nature and has been provided with a growth principle that demands realization. In particular, Rogers and Maslow show an overriding optimistic confidence in this human potential.

Human relatedness is another element that plays a role with all the humanistic psychologists we have dealt with here. But in reality it is only Fromm and Erikson who give it a social content. A strictly personal idea of relatedness, as important as it may be by itself, does not pay sufficient attention to the role of power in social realities and the resulting conflicts. Power structures influence personal growth and can seldom be changed without dirtying one's hands. The element of human similarity (what is called equality) appears in the background, but is not explicit. Human

potential is something all people are entitled to, but attention is mainly paid to the conscious individual. Only Erikson, with his interest in personal identity, really considers the situation of other social levels. Freedom, too, plays a considerable role for all humanistic psychologists. One might even call it a freedom optimism, which does not always give its due to obstacles of a mental or social nature. It is again Fromm, and to a certain extent also Erikson, who realizes that there are certain social conditions necessary for freedom. And finally reason: reasonable evaluation is a factor only for Maslow and Rogers, meaning that for them it has its own function, while others consider it rather a minor element.

Thus we see that the elements of humanism as a philosophy occur in different degrees with the different humanistic psychologists. One cannot say that humanistic psychology and humanism as a conviction are identical, but humanistic psychology does provide an important contribution to humanism in practice. It stresses the experience of being fully human—the human growth potential (which it perhaps overestimates), creativity, and the provision of meaning. It promotes self-knowledge, openness, and freedom, consciousness of one's own limitations and potential, personal relatedness, and acceptance of one's own self and the self of others. These are the positive values of humanism, and they present themselves as a real experience that can direct actual existence. In the world of humanist thought, which is often quite cerebral and therefore not very efficient, this is a contribution that should not be underestimated. Grafted onto psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology provides an aid that can be handled even with limited training to take the road from reflection to experience. It is easy to forget that both the content and the course of thought are based on experience. Humanism is basically not a manner of thinking but a manner of being. That is why humanists in their moral counseling are pleased to use the elements of humanistic psychology, while the opinions of the humanistic psychologists are certainly not without importance for shaping humanism in general either.

On the other hand, one must ask whether there are any shortcomings of humanistic psychology. Surely there are. Each of the humanistic psychologists has supplied a valuable contribution and each of them has his failings and biases. Perhaps the main bias is a type of optimism within which there is hardly any space for problems and conflicts that cannot be solved. This is accompanied by an underestimation of routine and ritual and of the fact that it is often useful to have a certain reticence in social intercourse. The disadvantages are reinforced by the fashionable character of humanistic psychology, which threatens to make it into a surrogate philosophy of life. This is even more applicable to the modern group work, which will be discussed later. This can deteriorate into an irrational sectarianism and egocentric escapism. Yet that is not a reason to throw out the baby with the bathwater, though it is a good reason for placing the

implementation of humanistic psychology, particularly as combined with modern group therapy, within the larger context of man and society. This has even certain technical advantages. It increases the chance of fertile changes if the process takes place within the framework of a larger project for change, if the change in behavior is geared to situations in the family, at work, or in society, and if the emotional experiences are placed in a conscious relatedness that can be verbalized. In that situation one also has a better chance of catching crisis situations within an organizatinal context. But the most important thing is that in this manner personal growth will better serve the common destiny. Obviously we must respect everyone's own development and everyone's own choice. But it still contains the thought that in spite of multiformity it is possible to be a human being who represents common values and is geared to a society within which those values can be realized.

3. HEALTH AND MORALITY

Mental-health counseling and, more particularly, humanistic psychology play an important role today in helping people, especially in group situations. Thus one may be given the impression that humanist counseling is identical with therapy based on humanistic psychology. However, that would be an incorrect interpretation of the character of humanist counseling, which is different from psychotherapy. It is also obvious that it is not based on traditional Christian pastoral care. The latter is often directed at the "soul" as something separate from the body. But that would not fit in the humanist view of man as a unity consisting of body and mind. The soul cannot be taken as a separate "something," not even as a separate part of the mind. What else could it be apart from intelligence, reason, will, inclination, and conscience? Therefore humanists do not mention the soul. They think of humanist counseling in reference to a particular aspect of the mind. Would it be correct to say that psychotherapy refers to the repercussion in one's consciousness or subconscience of the vital biological forces, while humanist counseling particularly refers to what could be called self-consciousness, the contemplative return of consciousness upon itself. The first meaning can be described as psychological or mental, the second as reflective or moral. Moral then covers the meaning given to the awareness of the self (and the other). This meaning, though prestructured in the cultural pattern, is a very personal creation.

Initially the word *meaning* is not very clear in itself, but the opposite, *meaningless,* can provide some clarification. Meaningless is what is incoherent and thus has no sense, the absurd. If that is the case, meaning can be interpreted as cohesion, order. People have the ability to relate separate experiences to each other, and this ability can operate also with regard to

decisions people make in their personal and social relationships. That is what we mean by providing meaning as the real content of moral life. As we have seen earlier this ability also plays a considerable role when establishing and reinforcing one's own identity. This provides people with a better resistance to the uncertainty that is so often experienced in our present-day world with its rapid changes, and which can lead to a confusion of roles and disorientation and thus to inner chaos and alienation of the I, the other, and society. The salient question is not whether disorientation occurs but whether the ability to orientate oneself has been jeopardized. If it has been, then reorientation under one's own power it not possible. I have proposed that in matters of life and death this ability is supported by one's outlook on life. Everyone has some kind of an outlook on life, though often it is an unconscious one, but in critical situations one becomes aware of what one considers crucial and thus conscious of it. In that case a system of rules is not sufficient. What one needs is the convergence of a provision of meaning, a sense of identity, and a sense of direction grafted onto notions about man and his world, which can be called a philosophy of life. This can provide an inner certainty, which can be called self-confidence. A self-confident man is capable of accepting others in their otherness, because he is also able to accept himself with his limitations and his potential.

A lack of self-acceptance is one of the most prevalent characteristics of disoriented people: One would like to be someone else and one would like others to be different. One has a fundamental feeling of failing and is continually irritated by the failings of others. Nothing is so destructive of one's self-respect and so paralyzing. It leads to feelings of powerlessness when confronted by "circumstances," which "first" must be changed before one can do anything oneself, or to fantasies of omnipotence that may be realized "once," but which at this moment do not get one anywhere either. Self-acceptance, on the other hand, means being reconciled with one's own being and that of others as a starting point for change. Human existence is by definition living with change, but the problem is whether we can determine our place in this context. It is assumed that people shape their lives by continually making decisions. Against the background of provision of meaning, a sense of identity, the ability to orientate, and self-confidence, the important thing is that people by their decisions direct their lives in such a manner that it gives them a sense of purpose, which makes their life worth living. That is what we have called self-determination. Self-determination is an expression of a sense of direction in a confusing and incomprehensible world. Together with the provision of meaning, a sense of identity, a sense of direction, and self-confidence it gives a content to moral life.

We can now differentiate between moral health and mental health. These days *health* is a key word. Often the success of assistance is measured against the feeling of health that results, though it is not particularly clear what health really is. It is not the absence of failings or stresses; if that were

the case, life could be very drab. Rather it is a condition within which man can live creatively with his failings or stresses. Moral health is based on connections within the personality that have been mentioned above. It is something different from mental health, which consists perhaps in the handling of one's psychosomatic abilities without their being blocked or warped by neurotic or psychotic frustrations. In moral health it is rather a matter of the use that is made of these liberated abilities. The one is a psychohygienic value, while moral health is more of an existential value. Obviously there is a connection between the two. A certain amount of psychological health is a precondition for moral health, and the opposite is also true. But it is possible to have mental health and not moral health, and one can be morally healthy without being able to handle one's abilities to the full.

There is another connection between the psychological and the moral area, namely, the fact that with regard to both the method and the content of psychological assistance the concept of man plays a continuous role. From a methodological point of view, the client may not be an object. He is a living being, and appeal is made to his own recuperative abilities. In this respect the therapist is his guide. The therapist must be aware of his own concept of man and his own philosophy of life in order to avoid manipulating his client. He must maintain a position of quasi-neutrality that will allow him to deal without criticism with matters that do not do justice to the client. The therapist also must be convinced with regard to the contents of the therapy, because in cases of deviant behavior, the problem of what being human really means always arises. This type of behavior also brings cultural, moral, and social values into the picture, apart from medical ones. It can happen that medical values must be balanced against moral and social values, if the behavior damages others too much. This brings us into the area of morals. If moral values are rigid and unconditional, they can create neuroses. On the other hand, psychological derailments can disturb morality. This also applies to mental health. Without a certain amount of mental health, morals remain rigid and not very creative. But without morals there cannot be mental health, because morality is one of the most important foundations of the cohesion of decisions. It would be good to distinguish the different areas, however much they influence each other. An opinion on morality is something different from an opinion on psychological health.

In what has been said hitherto, no mention has been made of the framework within which all mental and moral life takes place—that is, society. Obviously it has been assumed that society is included, because it is only in society that personal life has real meaning. Society provides the conditions for psychological, moral, and mental life. On the other hand, society is tested, and we hope also changed, against the yardsticks of health and morality. To the extent that society furthers or hinders mental and moral health, one can call that society, in the metaphoric sense, either healthy or

unhealthy. It is obvious that this means making a choice on the basis of one's concept of man and the related social values. The changes that always take place are tested and, if possible, directed in order to make sure that they will also be improvements. That is "the revolution within the revolution." The idea that one basic evil—capitalist production—spoils everything to such an extent that it would make sense to destroy the entire social structure and start anew does not fit very well into this concept. It is rather an expression of a lack of mental health and of moral immaturity than of solid social criticism. The humanization of society is a slow process within which power and inventiveness play a role. It requires purposeful, morally and mentally healthy people. This is one of the points of contact between humanist counseling and social change. The realization of the social framework within which personal problems occur also belongs, as we have already said, within the domain of moral counseling. But here again self-determination is the main point. There are many humanist concepts of society and many humanist methods for change. The counselor will often already have made his choice and will act accordingly, but the client must choose for himself. The counselor can help him by clarifying matters, but he cannot take the responsibility from him. Occasionally it will also become clear that certain problems cannot always be solved quickly and that one will have to learn to live with them, albeit critically.

I have tried to give an analysis of what could be called the moral and mental process of gaining self-confidence. Thereby the specific character of humanist counseling as an existential relationship can be explained. It is too often thought that it is sufficient for humanist counselors to use various techniques of psychological counseling and social work in a dilettantish manner. But, as has been said earlier, if that were the case it would be nothing more than a form of amateur sectarianism. Humanist counseling has its own character and requires its own specialization. As a simplification one could say: The therapeutic model is characterized by symptoms, diagnosis, and prognosis; it is directed at discovering and changing deep-seated inner patterns. Social assistance acts in a model of situations, relationships and structures and is directed at a satisfactory participation in society. Providing meaning, identity, and self-confidence are typical aims of moral counseling and it is directed toward existential self-determination. It is obvious that these descriptions do not imply that the three concepts are separate. They rather determine the point of contact of the specializations. Depending on the personal talent of the counselor he will feel inclined or forced to cross frontiers. There is no objection to this, provided he knows what he is doing. Anyway, this illustrates the desirability of team work.

Humanist counseling is a professional systematic approach in an atmosphere of safety and empathy to activate the client's ability to provide meaning, orientation, and self-determination to his life and, by means of a confrontation with the human potential, according to humanist insights, to enable

him independently to design and handle his own view of life.

In this context *professional* means that it is not just a casual relationship like that between friends and relatives, and *systematic* means that the counselor must operate in an expert and functional manner. This does not in any way exclude human warmth, which is even a condition for a fruitful relationship. It is the basis for the required atmosphere of safety and empathy within which the counselor and the client meet each other in a world of their common experience—as equals but in different roles. The starting point is always the client's situation and what he wishes to discuss. But the counselor enters the relationship with his humanist conviction and his insights, which determine his attention and are reflected in what he says, even if he does not express them as such. That is how he creates the space for the client to separate himself from his disorientation and to independently create a new vision and learn how to handle it. This does not necessarily have to be a humanist vision. It should be obvious that the above is not a humanist proclamation. Although humanism is the basis of the counselor's position, it should not affect the independence of the client. It would be a misunderstanding of the potential maturity of the client if the counselor attempted to hide his convictions from him, even if he could do so. But that is psychologically impossible and one must furthermore assume that the client has freely chosen this particular counselor with his convictions. This is even more important because humanist counseling does not want to offer ready-made solutions, but starting points and possibilities, and these are the very things that one cannot detach from the view one has of being human. In this context the counselor is not neutral, but a selfless instrument; he does not want gratitude, but to be of service. And he must by aptitude, training, and experience by capable of it. And above all he must have integrated his humanist conviction and the problems of human beings to such an extent that, without making an effort, he can act on the basis of this.

4. WORKING IN GROUPS

Mental care and moral education are traditional terms that have their disadvantages, but they are accepted. One also speaks of humanist counseling and working in groups. This is rather a matter of initiating processes than proclaiming truths. In the previous pages the moral content of this work was stressed, but that does not diminish the fact that these processes take place between hard-working people and groups of people in real situations and in society. Thus a continuous interaction between needs and starting points takes place. This can also open the way toward individuals and groups in social stress situations, and then social action groups. Moral guidance then approaches the field of community organization. There, too, reflection on man and the world will be a support in coping with an

unavoidable disappointment and continuing to work in a creative manner, because anyone who thinks that the sense given to his existence depends entirely on direct results will always be disappointed and thereby fail in permanent creativity. That is the very thing that can be avoided by conscious humanist training. Originally this training work was mainly educational. Not without cause, education was considered important for the development of the personality. At a later stage the growth of the total person received more attention. Yet it is one-sided to neglect in this context the elements of knowledge as well as of consciousness and conviction. They assist in creating self-confidence, world-orientation, and self-determination. They lift the training process out of haphazardness and make its results more permanent. The stress when working in groups, however, is on emotional and relationship processes. The rather spectacular development of group work in the United States plays a considerable role in this respect.

Shortly after the Second World War, a conference was held in the United States on the implementation of the Fair Employment Practices Act. A number of sociologists and psychologists, among whom Kurt Lewin, had been requested to participate to improve the communication among the delegates. They "discovered" that the experiences of the participants in small discussion groups were important for their personal development and their relationships in day-to-day work. This was the birth of modern group work. A number of formats developed and the different terms are not always quite clearly defined, e.g., laboratory groups, training groups, sensitivity-training, encounter groups. This work in groups stresses the here-and-now of experiences instead of explanations based on the present or the past; feedback is also stressed, playing back the experience of one another's behavior and stimulating new forms of behavior; further, in the safe climate within which failure is not punished one becomes aware of one's feelings and structures one's learning experiences. Added to this is a considerable stress on the relationship between mental and physical being. Furthermore, this work in groups has (often without mentioning it) a number of other objectives that go beyond those mentioned above, such as openness toward oneself and others, expansion of consciousness and choice of behavior, deeper human relationships, skill in cooperation, and conflict solution by rational means. All these are elements that fit very well into a humanist outlook on human relationships.

The reason these are referred to as laboratory methods is because the group situation has been detached from daily existence and one can experiment without problems, and because, according to American opinion, one can thus achieve an insight into personal behavior and group dynamics. It was expected that these experiences and insights would be found relevant to democratic forms of organization in large institutions and companies. Originally the "T-groups" had this organization development as their main

objective. The whole system was viewed as a learning organization within which a sensitivity for interrelationships is developed, often in a dramatic manner; hence also the name sensitivity training. Open encounter groups introduced by Schutz were something quite different. Though one could use the expression "learning" as well, it rather takes place in the sphere of personal emotions. A number of different techniques are used—exploratory games, role playing, psycho-drama, development of sensory consciousness, and different types of meditation. Under the influence of Wilhelm Reich and Alexander Lowen bio-energetic processes receive much attention: physical tension and relaxation, breathing, and movement influence the mind, and vice versa. Some elements are also borrowed from Fritz Perls's Gestalt method. This is not really group work in the proper sense of the word, because one member of the group always feels called upon to start "working." He gives shape to his fears and frustrations in order to progress. Gestalt wishes to re-incorporate those parts of the person from which one feels alienated in the totality. All this has obvious therapeutic objectives, and it is even hoped that a new kind of life will thereby become possible.

Thus a type of group work has been developed that often takes place under considerable pressure. All kinds of circumstances can contribute, e.g., long duration of the sessions, abstinence, staying awake, and meditation. The latter often makes this type of work in groups come close to Zen-Buddhism. After all, it is not surprising that situations within which so much happens to people give rise to a certain amount of mystical expectation with regard to the human potential. It is often difficult to draw the line between ecstasy and exaltation. The human potential movement in the United States has resulted in the creation of more than one hundred "growth centers." Outsiders may have a tendency to stress the dangers of this movement, namely, the possibility of moral and mental distress. This actually does happen, particularly with trainers who are called "energizers": emotionally stimulating, aggressive, confronting, charismatic. Much less with "providers" who are directed to the person, have warmth of feeling, give of themselves, and are paternalistic in an enlightened manner. One can also have objections of a socio-cultural nature: this work in groups can lead to irrationalism, socially destructive attitudes, and sexual licentiousness. But the question remains, how much of this would have occurred without the group experience, or even because of the lack of it? Another objection is that the personal growth movement might keep people from being socially active and might have a certain addictiveness. Again one must wonder what is the cause and what the consequence. In any case, much will depend on the framework within which modern group work takes place and on the content of the objectives. The real point is whether one wants to see it as a frequently useful tool or as a gospel.

In this connection the encounter group of Carl Rogers must be mentioned separately. Here one really finds the interface between humanistic psychology and modern group work. Rogers once called the encounter group one of the most important social discoveries of this century. It is very different from the open encounter group of Schütz. Rogers wanted to provide a counterbalance to the alienation that undermines human relationships in our times. His working method is mainly verbal; Rogers does not avoid expressions of emotion or gestures that express emotions, but his method is directed at achieving awareness. On the basis of acceptance of oneself, a basic encounter with the other is possible and an enriching relatedness can be achieved. His groups are directed at more complete humanity. For this purpose he accepts that everyone decides whether and how he will give of himself within the group, whether he wishes to speak about the past or the present in emotional language or more reflectively—emotionally or intellectually. For this reason it is not difficult for Rogers to apply his methods to real learning groups in the narrower sense in which intellectual study is the purpose. For Rogers the intellect is not taboo. The remarkable thing is that he does not call the leaders of his groups trainers as the others do, but facilitators: their task is to assist people in finding their real self, and for Rogers this means a self that is aware. The facilitator or counselor is not outside the group, but offers himself to the group simply the way he is.

It is not surprising that Rogers in particular has exerted considerable influence on humanist education. After all, people are experiencing and reflecting beings. This is why, in humanist group work, it is not only a matter of creating an environment, achieving relationships, and training in skills, but also of offering basic materials and a reflective evaluation against the backdrop of a humanist conviction. Though there are differences in stress between groups geared to skills and those centered on the individual—that is, between training groups in the narrow sense and encounter groups—the training of the person as well as developing awareness play an important role in both. Moral education requires a situation without threat, enabling people to review their orientation patterns in order to improve their consciousness of their role. The process is neither purely intellectual nor just psychological. It aims at achieving a more realistic appreciation of the manner in which one functions, but it also always refers to the relationship with other people and with society. The underlying purpose is to provide the meaning and self-determination that can open new perspectives to the social structures that often create obstacles to a life worthy of human beings; it is a challenge for change. The intention is not to duplicate the work of the various training institutes; the point is to use experience and reflection to create an awareness of the function of a philosophy of life as an indispensable element for finding a place in a personal and social context.

In task-directed training, the subject is selected by the group and will be

the center of attention. It can deal with family and education, marriage and sexuality, emancipation and discrimination, politics and culture, social order and survival. Yet the purpose of humanist education is not just to further a practical point of view. Before anything else it will be directed at reinforcing one's own identity, because that is the starting point for a sense of responsibility for better human and social conditions. This may lead to a variety of activities, occasionally in a humanist framework, but quite often as participating groups in social, cultural, and political bodies. Humanists can provide their own contribution in these groups, provided they do not act as know-it-alls, but as the bearers of their own responsibility. This is why there is no contradiction between action and reflection, because the reflection meant here also leads to activity in personal, socio-cultural, and political fields. In this context it must be clear that people aren't all the same and that humanists can be usefully active in many different ways. Another difference between specific socio-cultural and political training and humanist education is that in the latter no particular points of view are either recommended or invited. It is not the content that is important in this context, but the starting points. The objective is the self-reliance of the participants who must make their own choice between the alternatives presented to them.

These groups attempt to deal with some of the inner problems of the participants. Uncertainty, discrimination, and loneliness prevent many people from functioning fully. Furthermore, many people need greater self-knowledge and more openness in their relationships with others. Contact groups and encounter groups can serve to alleviate these problems and to meet these needs. However, one should not think that this type of group has an intentional therapeutic function; that is not what they are meant for and the counselors are not qualified for it, though they must have the necessary skills in modern group methods. It is not their task to find and remove deep-seated frustrations. The counselors are "providers" and work in groups with low pressure. Yet crisis situations can occur in the same way as in task-directed groups and, should that happen, the members of the group should accept responsibility for each other. The counselor, too, must be capable of taking individual care of the members of the group and if necessary refer them to therapeutic possibilities. Humanist counseling as such only tries to achieve a sufficient amount of clarification with regard to one's own person so that it opens the road toward self-awareness and self-determination. This is the reason that elements of conviction must eventually be brought into play, so that what has been experienced can also be consciously made use of in the future. This is the point where education geared to the personality links up with task-directed training.

This description of training would not be complete if we would not also pay some attention to what is called humanist education or moral education. Humanist education was created as a counterbalance to religious

education. That means that it is based on a philosophy of life, i.e., humanism, and that it may also pay particular attention to that philosophy. Obviously this education is not intended to transfer humanism as a system of experience and thought, let alone push it. Humanist education is an educational activity within the framework of school education. It particularly underlines experience and its purpose is to integrate the personality on the basis of day-to-day experiences. Yet it would fail in its purpose if it did not both provide the conditions for answering questions with regard to man, society, and the world (obviously depending on the age of the participants) and create a challenge to interpretation as an insight into the coherence of experiences. This is how the true humanist aspect of this education is expressed. The point of it is that the student is confronted with the possibility of charting his own course based on a philosophy of life. He or she does not necessarily have to accept this humanist philosophy, but may be encouraged to obtain a conviction of his own.

To sum up, we can say that all education aims at achieving maturity. Maturity is not an end result after which no changes will take place, but a condition within which people are able to grow independently while taking full responsibility for themselves. Moral education plays a decisive role in this context, because it calls for self-acceptance, a sense of identity, (re-)orientation, and self-determination. And all thse are characteristics of maturity. Moreoever, group work also provides a retreat from one's daily worries and can thus provide fresh inspiration. It is not meant to be a cult, but a means of becoming a complete human being. It must also be applicable, particularly in its task-directed format, to groups of people who are not very much interested in pure reflection but can in this way come into contact with the human possibilities raised by humanism, though the scope of their interests will have to be broadened for this. The counselors must not only have the skills required for modern group work but also have sufficient knowledge and insight into man and society to be able to stand squarely within the reality of life. They must accept themselves to such an extent that they can also accept others in their otherness. They are not expected to offer ready-made solutions but they should propose so many behavior alternatives that others can independently make those decisions that are necessary and justifiable for them.

5. COUNSELING

Though humanist counseling started as a counterbalance to religious care, it has a basically different character. Religious care is based on the duty to preach The Word and administer sacraments and is aimed at the eternal salvation of the soul. This care operates in the area of sin and grace. Psychology and agogics are aids to making the word or the sacraments

effective, though there is also a more modern approach to religious care, which pays more attention to this worldly life for its own sake. If the latter is accompanied by doubt about the truth of one's beliefs, it may result in religious care being totally absorbed by (amateur) psychotherapy. But that is the very thing that humanist counseling should not do, and there is a definite risk that it could be swept along into this type of dilettantism. This is partly because in some circles of religious counselors the opinion has gained ground that it does not matter very much on what basis mental care is provided. But even if the client has complete freedom to select the counselor that suits him best, this does not diminish the fact that humanist counseling in particular has its own character and its own content and meaning. Practical help and psychological insight can be useful in this respect, but if that is all that is accomplished, the suspicion of dilletantism voiced by social workers and psychotherapists cannot be considered unjustified. The specialization of the humanist counselor is different from that of other people who provide assistance. His function is characterized by the clarification of the human situation on the basis of his humanist convictions.

This is why it is incorrect to think that humanist conseling is particularly meant for those who are occasionally described as lame ducks. Any person can get into a situation in which he needs re-orientation, and many will find it useful to have a trained discussion partner. Here one can ask who should take the initiative: the counselor, either man or woman, or the client? Because of his method the psychotherapist will never take the initiative. But the situation for the counselor is slightly different. In a way, he represents human involvement. His responsibility may mean making contact without being asked to and he certainly must understand the signs the clients transmits, very often unconsiously. The efficiency of the contact can, on the other hand, be damaged if it is too forward, because then the client may feel threatened. Furthermore, the humanist philosophy implies that the counselor fully acknowledges the right to self-determination of the client. Therefore, the main point is not whether the counselor is the one who goes to the client, but how he approaches him. It must be expected that his eyes, ears, and heart will be open to the feelings and thoughts of his fellowman in a disinterested manner. He must be warmly and quietly attentive to their attitudes and problems, without wanting to make them happy at any price. He will take into account their life and potential as far as possible and always in such a way that shows acceptance of the real person being expressed.

By promoting re-orientation, humanist counseling can carry out a mental-hygienic function by preventing a flight into neurosis. But it is also possible that various emotional obstacles will prevent the client from dealing with a new view of life in practice. And this may be a task for a psychotherapist with his special skills. The counselor can as a matter of fact

also play a role in the handling of mentally disturbed people; not instead of the psychotherapist, but in cooperation with him. It can also be the task of the counselor to strengthen and support the client in his contacts with the therapist. Moreover, apart from this support it makes perfect sense from the point of view of humanist counseling to listen attentively to someone who is disturbed or even mentally deficient. Though one cannot remedy his handicap, one actually does help him, provided one has the required calmness, devotion, and wisdom for the purpose and provided the advice of the therapist is heeded. Furthermore, the counselor also has a function after therapeutic treatment. The point is then to give a meaningful purpose to the liberated potential that can give a new content and meaning to existence. However, in all cases the counselor will appeal to the self-determination of the client. As long as at all possible he will have to meet him as a person who, however confused, lost, or even deprived he might be, is responsible for his own life and must deal with it himself. The function of the counselor is to fulfill a serving role. This requires a professional approach in which performing his function takes precedence over his own feelings. That does not only mean a trained approach but particularly a consistent devotion that is based on a systematic development of a professional personality, capable of temporarily ignoring his own problems. That is also a condition for the empathy required from the counselor.

Empathy is the capacity to enter the world of the other. Although people, because of the similarity of their structure, live in a common world, this same world has also a strictly personal experiential value for each individual. If, for instance, two people are together, one of whom is working hard and the other is dreaming, it is obvious that they experience a different passage of time. After half an hour on the clock, the first will be surprised that it is already that late, while the second will be surprised that only half an hour has passed. The time on the clock is not equal to the duration of the experience, which is different for each of them. In the same manner the experience of each person is different from anyone else's, but if for a short period of time the worlds of two people are opened to each other, because they try to enter into each other's sphere of experience, that might be called a real encounter. In order to come truly close to the other person, the counselor will have to identify with the other's experiential world. Only in this way can he more or less understand and re-feel experiences. Yet he lives at the same time in his own world. If that were not the case he could not be a counselor, because he would be immersed with the client in the latter's world. It is the paradox of an encounter in counseling that it cannot mean complete identification, because then it would be impossible to achieve an encounter as equals, but with different roles. In a way the counselor always remains himself within the encounter; he lives simultaneously in two worlds.

One may ask how such relationships are created in practice. But one cannot make any general statements in this respect, though it is possible to

discern the different stages that can serve as indicators for the counselor. It is not surprising that during the first stage the counselor does not achieve the full confidence of the client. It may even be that the inner problems of the client create a resistance that can be directed at the counselor. If the counselor can accept this with equanimity, a second stage will be reached in which a closer bond between the counselor and the client is formed. This bond can simultaneously have both an appreciative and an aggressive character, but permits a more profound contact. In this stage the counselor can require more from the client and try to get to the core of the problem with him. In the third stage the preparedness of the client to confront his real situation grows. Though this can repeatedly lead to flight and relapse, the client, provided he feels safe, will gradually attempt to discover new objectives for his life. He might also ask the counselor about his outlook on life, and there is no objection to going into the subject, provided it remains clear that it is not the counselor but the client who must decide about his own life. During this stage, the counselor and the client can, as complete equals, have an open exchange of views. Finally, the time will come when the client is no longer very dependent on the counselor, and at that point the counselor must begin to loosen the bond with the client, but without sacrificing the warmth of the relationship.

The most important thing about this relationship is the feeling of safety that must always exist between counselor and client. A condition for this is that the client must know that the counselor is not there to condemn him, though he will not always be able to avoid a judgment. During the entire course of the relationship, the counselor must be fully aware of the fact that both partners are basically equal, though they are acting in different roles. This implies the acceptance of the other in his otherness, but without the counselor giving the impression that he always agrees with his client's opinions and behavior. For this purpose the counselor uses his professional know-how and that consists in his mastering his tools. These tools are obviously not the client, nor are they just the knowledge and skills of a counselor, but mainly the counselor's own personality. It is his personality that is the real means for creating a relationship with the client, and for maintaining it. When training for counseling, the main point is to learn to understand and handle one's own personality. The counselor will have to gain an insight into his own unsolved problems, his individual preferences and unconscious needs—such as, the need for recognition—in order to serve in the real sense of the word. That enables him to enter into a useful relationship with the client. Quietness is also necessary for this, in the surroundings, too, but mainly an inner calmness of the counselor. Interruption by third parties during the sessions is extremely disturbing, but any impatience on the part of the counselor in his desire to achieve results can form an obstacle to the relationship, as much as one can appreciate his zeal. It is better to stop the interview and take it up at a later time. An interview of

more than an hour in duration is generally too exhausting for both parties. Interviews of more or less uniform length are recommended, because both participants must have the opportunity to view what has been achieved so far and put it into perspective.

The part played by the counselor in these sessions is mainly that of a listener, asking questions and occasionally answering them. Being a listener involves giving the utmost attention to the emotions of the client. It is, so to speak, a creative participation in the experiences of the client, which cannot be fully expressed using only words. His attitude and gestures are also important. What do they express? The counselor also listens to the often quite long silences that occur during the interviews. Occasionally it is a pause of natural relaxation or reflection, but it may also be the sign of accumulated tension, when the client cannot or will not say what he is worried about. Then the counselor can help by asking questions, provided he does not do it too soon. Questions do not serve only to obtain factual information but are often used to reach the essential things that the client may obviously be avoiding. Good questioning assists the client in clarifying his thoughts. It shows that the counselor has listened attentively and, perhaps, has understood. It can occasionally be used to indicate certain possibilities to the client, though it must be done in a careful manner. It is brief and deliberate. It goes without saying that only controlled and sparse questioning does not disturb the listening function. Though answering, too, can be purely factual, it is occasionally also a reaction to the questions (often not voiced) that permeate the entire interview. It means putting choices into words without moralizing or sentimentalizing; it indicates fulfillment, whatever the circumstances. It leaves more to be guessed than is voiced, it gives cause for thought and action.

Motives and interpretation play a role in this context. Motives are attitudes that can move people into action and interpretations, possibilities that can provide meaning for a person's life. It is obvious that one can think of many motives and interpretations for any person and that everyone must make his own choice among them. That does not diminish the fact that it is possible to speak about basic motives and basic interpretations. Two of these motives are sincerity about one's situation and courage. And two interpretations are creativity and community. Motives and interpretations are an appeal to the healing force of life and evidence of the meaning of existence.

Sincerity has to do with the acceptance of existence, the self, and the others, as mentioned earlier. Sincerity is not used here in its traditional meaning, but as taking the situation in which a person finds himself, partly as a result of his own decisions and partly as a result of the circumstances of his life, totally seriously. It means renouncing wishful thinking in the sense of "if only this or that would have been different..." It is a recognition of one's own position as a starting point for all subsequent action. It implies

that one is confronted with one's totally unavoidable here-and-now, which provides a challenge that must be answered with one's entire person. This attitude is not an attitude of dutiful loyalty to people, replacing devotion or love, but a complete identification with the reality of one's own existence. The complement of sincerity is courage. Courage stresses the unavoidability of making decisions with one's entire personality. It requires an insight into the limitations and potential of oneself and others, and the readiness to shape the situation one finds oneself in.

Creativity is rearranging existing data into a new entity. It can be based on material and immaterial things. If one can see these things as a challenge to creativity, that is a point at which meaning is provided. Even normal work, in spite of any circumstances that threaten the joy of it, often has this meaning. Activity, however simple, can cause a person to feel at home in the world. This is also why he can feel he is part of the chain of events. People who act do not despair. In addition to creative activity, the experience of community also provides meaning. Renewed attention to one's surroundings breaks through isolation. This is even clearer if it was a feeling of guilt or failing that led to the isolation. Loneliness is the basis of mental disturbance. Re-integration in some kind of community opens new vistas on ways of living. No one is so abandoned that there is not a world within which he can function, and that implies a partial liberation from human failings. The question is obviously how to bring this into practice for people in crisis situations. It is the personality of the counselor that works as a catalyst in this context. By his presence he represents sincerity and courage, creativity and community, and he provides the challenge to try it out. If counselor and client have worked toward self-acceptance and self-confidence, then it is only a small step toward providing a meaning and self-determination.

In this connection it is often asked to what extent the counselor must be directive or nondirective. In no case may his influence be underestimated. He provides frameworks and exerts influence, even without being conscious of it. Some people think that it is possible and even desirable to proceed by only "mirroring" as it is called. That means that the counselor only reflects what the other one emits, even though possibly in a slightly more concentrated form. But completely neutral reflectance is as impossible as a totally valueless science. Records show that suggestions always slip in. This is not serious if the counselor is aware of it. It is an illusion that one can act in a totally neutral manner. There are all kinds of uncontrollable biases that without doubt will influence the result, though no one knows how. Influencing someone is in itself not to be rejected. Wherever two people are together, they influence each other; and after all one comes to the counselor because one expects help from him, which in a certain manner is influence. But what kind of influence may be provided? Humanist counseling is nondirective to the extent that the counselor will be very careful not to offer ready-made solutions for any kind of difficulty. The safeguard against this

must be the counselor's respect of the other's own nature and liberty and the belief in his potential and creativity. This, however, does not diminish the fact that any counselor, as a matter of fact any person, has a frame of reference within which he places the statements of the other. It would not even be possible to process information if that were not the case. However, the humanist counselor, in particular, needs this kind of framework and should be aware of the existential tenor that it holds.

Consideration of the problems presented to the counselor can only take place in a meaningful manner by arranging them within a framework. As soon as one wonders what the other one means, one already creates a provisional hypothesis, which in the course of further revelation—or on the basis of questions, if the conversation is flagging—is confirmed or modified. The knowledge of the range of human problems is acquired by psychological training, humanist reflection, and not least by experience of life. In that case the counselor can also become an assistant in the independent solution of problems, by opening up perspectives by means of questions and sometimes suggestions, so that the other can progress further. That requires a sensitive empathetic understanding to prevent forcing the other into a particular pattern. But the very awareness that one is acting according to a definite method within a conscious, though open, frame of reference can aid the counselor in critically evaluating his own share in the encounter. From the point of view of method, he does not work very differently from other assistants, but his frame of reference is different. He does not so much wonder why, but rather what for: How does someone live with his reality and what can that lead to? What does he do with guilt and failing, acceptance of himself and partnership, love and tolerance, fear and loyalty, responsibility and liberty? How can these be made to serve the meaning of existence?

The expression "providing a meaning" often makes one think of an all-embracing vision of life and death. Philosophical systems and religious convictions have also always searched for this. But in humanist thought providing a meaning has a more limited sense. It indicates, as mentioned before, the coherence of experiences in life. It poses the question of what one really wishes to do with one's life. It is an attempt to understand the meaning the ups and downs of existence—in the family in one's circle of friends, and at work—have had or can get. Failures, imperfections, sadness, and loss can also find a place in it. They are all elements of life that have made people what they are now, and that has a value, that is its value, whatever one might think of it. It also has a value for the here and now, because it is that with which one encounters one's fortunes and provides a meaning for one's own life and that of others. It often means dealing with the normal things that happen. The rediscovery of one's own activities and thereby one's own potential, the re-experience of existing among people and situations and thereby of functioning within an entity, the re-experience of

day-to-day reality as a challenge and thereby sharing in a continuing process —all that provides meaning. Meaning is not so much thought out, but rather experienced. Providing meaning is always located at the change-over point of past and future. The present is the key to both. From the present the past can still obtain a coherence and the future a destination. Occasionally someone can by a single action in the present provide the past with new meanings and open up new perspectives. Occasionally he only needs a new awareness of what he has known for a long time in order to get reconciled with his reality.

Even toward the end of life, when the senses are restricted or deficient, there is still a yesterday, today, and tomorrow in which one can sit in the sun or listen to someone or smile at someone. When that is no longer possible and it is only the moment that provides its rest or unrest, its pain or forgetfulness, the only thing that remains is living with it; and the question is whether one is prepared to live under these conditions. Yet, as long as a sufficient number of the human faculties have remained intact, there is still the possibility of providing a meaning for it. The condition for this is self-acceptance, with all the restrictions. This is what the provider of meaning must achieve: the acceptance of what one can really be and to see the value of one's life in this. For this it is necessary to see oneself as someone that can be loved. The very fact that the counselor with his interest is there supports the client in his awareness that he is worthwhile. Let him talk about himself and his life, and he can discover that with all his ups and downs he is still somebody who has given content to the human adventure. Obviously the counselor will wonder where the cross-over points lie in this existence that is unfolding before him and what the other really needs with regard to self-confidence, contacts, and development potential. Therefore, the counselor will very carefully bring the discussion toward the self-examination the client will have to undertake. A careful question, a modest suggestion, can serve this purpose. If there is any sign of a short-circuit, the counselor will wonder where he went wrong: Did he intervene too early, press too much, demand too much? That may jeopardize the condition of safety in the relationship, and the best thing is for the counselor to face this squarely and, if necessary, admit it openly to the client. That can create a new opening, provided he can again listen with warmth and attention.

Though intuition plays an important part in counseling, one cannot exclusively rely on it. Intuition works if based on careful consideration. The empathy during the interview requires subsequent reflection as a counterbalance. The question the counselor must ask himself continually is: What is really happening? What is my role in it, and what should it be? How can I help the other in liberating himself from the stereotypes within which he has become trapped, from the attitudes that hamper his growth, from the powerlessness that he feels? How can I assist the other in discovering his potential, in finding himself worthwhile and learning to appreciate others?

How can I aid him in opening up new perspectives on relationships with his family, friends, and co-workers, on meeting his desires and the meaning of existence? All this requires intense involvement with the client, supported by records of the interviews held. Yet this task should not discourage the counselor, because when it comes right down to it, it is the client who provides the solutions. If one provides him with the security and the space, he is the one who will make the breakthroughs, through which new perspectives can be seen. Provided one has learned to watch out for it, at the right moment the real solution for the client will be discovered. The surest ally of the counselor is the healing force of life, provided this force is given a chance.

6. MEANING AND MODE OF LIFE

The difference between humanism and many religions is that it does not really offer complete, rounded-off answers. It is a continuous challenge to everyone to make life worthwhile, each one in his own way. That this is a fundamental need is increasingly stated by different scientific disciplines. Humanistic psychology is a symbol of the interpenetration of a vision of life and mental health. As mentioned earlier, it was Erikson in particular who expressed at a very early stage that though psychotherapeutic techniques can by themselves remove frustrations, this does not necessarily mean that one will be able to give a content to one's life. To the contrary, the mental disturbance can provide an unusual content, and after therapy this is not necessarily replaced by something else. Erikson used Luther's life to illustrate that a lack of satisfactory content can even be the cause of mental disturbances. Once Luther had found a belief that for him was convincing, his quasi-epileptic (hysterical?) attacks disappeared. This is also borne out by the results of a number of surveys, which found that what most young people need more than anything else is a purpose to live for. On the other hand, the majority of mental disturbances are accompanied—caused?—by a feeling of aimlessness. There is a massive feeling of existential emptiness that is expressed as an ever threatening sense of fundamental boredom.

That sense of boredom results in a craving for sensation, pleasure, and happiness. In itself there is nothing wrong with these, and one will never hear humanists say so, but they cannot really fill the void. The first thing needed for this is an awareness that life consists of continuous tensions. Human existence is an entity of opposites; it moves between needs and fulfillment, guilt and acceptance, aggression and belonging, fear and ecstasy. One can appreciate the pleasures of life without afterthought about their being bad or inferior, and yet be fully aware of the tragic accent that is characteristic of human life. Not all humanists will stress this point, but nobody can deny that sorrow is an essential element of existence. As a matter of fact a recognition of this is a condition for fully appreciating joy.

Sorrow and joy belong together, like summer and winter. One cannot deal with sorrow by just considering it a fortuitous incident. In our technological culture it seems as if personal sorrow is really an injustice—which sometimes it might be—but in any type of culture people have to learn to deal with their sorrow, though one can imagine cultures in which one finds greater support for doing this than in ours. If, however, one thinks that unhappiness should not exist at all one feels even unhappier, because one is unhappy about one's unhappiness. Yet people can handle their sorrow as something that contributes to providing a content to existence and in which their humanity can express itself as much as in joy.

Life and death belong together in a similar manner. Without death, as we have already said, life would not be a human life for people anymore. It would be time without end, in which no task would be a task anymore and where it would be possible to postpone everything for all eternity. As a matter of fact, death is the ever present possibility that brings people back to the one and unrepeatable here and now, which, between a past that has gone and a future that is uncertain, is the only moment in time and space that is available to man for expressing his humanity. Being aware of death, namely, one's own death, provides life with its full intensity as it is lived in the awareness of its limitation in time. If it is lived with this awareness, it can reconcile a person with his own death as the completion of his existence. This is certainly not easy, particularly if death comes early and unexpectedly. Humanist counseling can be a support in this situation, not only for the one who is dying, but also for the family and the nursing and medical staff who are involved and play their part in it. Together they must attempt to face death and to respect the dying in his freedom, his independence, and his dignity: his freedom to want to know or not and to determine at what moment; his independence to achieve eventual acceptance between negation and anger, hope and despair; and his dignity to be taken totally seriously as a human being with all this, and perhaps in spite of his decline, and not to be treated as if he were under age. If at all possible, people must be allowed to live in a dignified manner until they die.

Human existence cannot be fully understood. Whatever the human sciences teach us about people, they cannot explain their existence in such a manner that there is no essential question left to be answered. In the human sciences man is "nothing but" a product of biological, psychological, and sociological factors. And yet he escapes these explanations in some way or another. It is obvious that man is conditioned. His liberty does not mean that he is free from the conditions of existence, but that he is free to handle these conditions. Caught in the world, but with this liberty, man wants to know the purpose of his existence. In his development, he attempts to answer the challenge with which he is confronted. That challenge means overcoming his ordinariness, his indifference, his timidity, and his powerlessness and to rebel against his fate, to become a rebel. And as Camus said

when he accepted the Nobel prize: To be fundamentally human; that is a person who can easily be hurt and destroyed, who can be egotistical and unjust, but who at the same time hungers for peace and for justice and who forever hopes to be able to conquer despair. There is no reason whatsoever to be optimistic with regard to human potential, but neither is there sufficient reason to deny it. It exists because occasionally, in a flash, the urge to make the seemingly impossible possible breaks through. This is the human tragedy that consists in the unavoidable tension between capabilities and desires. If the desires were not there, there would not be any tragedy, but only a void.

The humanist vision of life holds that people within the dependencies in which they are placed can never be understood as just a product of their circumstances, but because of their nature also always as designers of their own fate. That is the basis of a responsibility consisting in creating new possibilities with one's own talents, however insufficient they may be, and breaking through to new territories. That is a direct challenge for practical living in the sense that what it means is the realization of being human here and now in one's family, in one's own circle, in one's working environment, groups, organizations, and movements. The world can only be reached through the concrete possibilities that are within reach. That requires inventiveness to open up new perspectives and patience to offer others the chance to come to their senses and participate in the growth. All models for ideal types of societies are in themselves sterile if they do not lead to practical tasks. Anything that distracts from these is an escape from one's concrete responsibilities and blurs the meaning of life. One can only learn to understand this meaning by paying positive attention to one's own task, as an expression in the given circumstances of one's given abilities. There is a type of idealism that is no more than an alibi for a lack of creativity and perseverance: The perfect is the arch-enemy of the good.

We have gone into some detail concerning the meaning of life and responsibility, because this provides the framework within which humanist counseling takes place. It must be said over and over again that within that framework everyone must create his own concrete realization. All the same, the humanist counselor needs a general image of a humanity that is at least possible in order to put the various concrete realizations into some kind of context. Even so, for some people it will not be possible to achieve even a minimally satisfactory realization, either because their faculties by predisposition, disturbance, or deterioration are too weak or, what comes to the same, because the problems in their lives are too great. Then the counseling will be permeated by the humanist philosophy of life, but it will not be able to open a window to an independently handled view of life. A counselor who can really listen means a great deal to the other if the listening creates a climate within which he feels liberated from his heavy burdens and taken out of his perhaps strangling loneliness. No one knows in advance

what regenerating forces can still be liberated by this. Often the seemingly impossible becomes possible because someone really believes that the other is capable of it. What is miraculous about miracles is that they can happen, provided the correct conditions have been created.

Even then the effort remains directed at independence, though this objective is not always achieved. No one is bound to do the impossible, neither the client nor the counselor. But the client is helped by the very fact that he gets a chance to look anew at his difficulties in an atmosphere without threat and to pick up the loose ends again. In this way the humanist counselor exists in an existential "we" with the other: expecting nothing, hoping for everything; not having a magic word at his disposal which solves all difficulties; fully aware of the mystery of life that itself provides the regenerating forces that push it further, at least as long as the life force has not been completely exhausted. This is fortunate, because otherwise his responsibility would overwhelm the counselor. But now he can accept his task, modestly entering the reality of another person, serving in the awareness of his own failings. His consolation is that, after all, all people must lead their own lives, of which no one knows the meaning it might have for whomever, wherever, and however. It is not essential for the proper course of the universe, but it may have a meaning in itself. The Dutch writer Menno ter Braak probably meant something like this when he wrote about a mushroom, which for a long time gathered its food in its network underground, until at last with great effort and patience its crown pushed upwards, for a moment parading as a precarious compromise between temporality and durability, after which it just dropped back into the primeval slime that produced it. According to ter Braak it played its role in a superb manner, even though it was not used for mushroom soup. That is what he called mushroom responsibility, namely a responsibility that is based on nothing but the factual function.

The objective of humanists is to genuinely function as human beings. Doing this is what provides their life with meaning, what fills them with that undefined tension between the will to live and the possibilities of life, which carries its satisfaction in itself. It means acceptance of the sensory world, of the enrichment by form, color, and sound, of the enjoyment of this vital being; it also means acceptance of sorrow, misery, and insufficiency as unavoidable parts of existence. It means realizing oneself despite hostile circumstances and finding satisfaction in creativity and community as an expression of being human. But above all it means discovering one's own potentialities within its dependencies and experiencing freedom in this. Can this be sustained in a world which every day so clearly demonstrates its demonic character? Isn't this just romantic optimism or dogmatic superficiality? Not really, because there are two kinds of optimism: an optimism of judgment, which is like looking through rosy spectacles that color the grey reality, and an optimism of the will, which is an expression of the belief

in change for the better in spite of everything. This will does not mean an accidental random impulse, but a direction that is present in people and which becomes evident as inventiveness, as creativity. Humanists often do not have many illusions with regard to the results of that kind of activity, which, under continuous threat from our own failings, exhausts itself in a recalcitrant world. But, at the same time, they recognize this effort as an indestructable urge to become what we really are. Humanist acceptance of life, therefore, does not at all mean underestimating the demonic character of reality, but an urge to permeate the world with humanity in spite of it.

Providing meaning is the most fundamental need of human existence. We have paid much attention to the functions by which Western man is able to provide meaning. These days this seems irrelevant to many people. They underline the structures and circumstances. We did not lose sight of these, but structures and circumstances are not things that exist independent from human interpretations. Structures put their stamp on the thought and action of man, but they do it in his interpretation and he influences them by the thought and action that follow from that interpretation. The same thing applies to circumstances: there are no circumstances so degrading, even in a terrorist prison or concentration camp, that man cannot give his own meaning to them, and thereby overcome them, even maybe in the physical sense. The reports on this are very clear indeed. A human being has a place somewhere outside structures and circumstances. That is where he finds his responsibility, that is where he starts providing a meaning. If his life does not make sense, if he lives in an existential void, that is when he is really in distress. No experience or reflection can liberate him if he cannot provide a meaning for it. Whoever has ears to hear cannot misunderstand the call for meaning, even if that call is often smothered in indulging in pastimes or action, theory or practice. Providing meaning is the key to a life worth living, not free from structures or circumstances, but directed to an inner force that makes their humanization possible.

The content of the provision of meaning is based on a very personal choice. Everyone must create the meaning that provides his existence with a purpose. It may lie in the sphere of work or enjoyment, of art or expression, of agogic or social action, of relationships or enlightenment, but always operating in a pattern of creativity and respect, of meaning and values, of relatedness and love. That is what provides people with the resistance to overcome temptation and suffering. Thus reflection and experience flow together in a self-determination, which at the same time makes us available to others. That is everyone's individual task, which all the same can only be carried out together with others. One might wish that humanists were aware of their unique contribution when they are working in this sense. Among other workers, like therapists, social workers, social action leaders, and sociologists, and of pastoral workers who either spread the Gospel or imitate other workers, humanists can remain themselves by bringing to the fore

the real humanity of man as a being who must create his own meaning and purpose. Fortunately they are not alone in this. There are an increasing number of philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, agogues, and pastoral workers from all kinds of religions and schools who stress the importance of man's capability to provide meaning. Humanists can operate in this turn to a meaningful future. This future is not assured, but without providing meaning in the present, there will certainly be no future worth living.

Conclusion

MAN BECOMES HUMAN

Humanism is an intuitive manner of being and thinking, within which hope and doubt fight for precedence: hope that the human potential will be fulfilled, doubt that this will happen in a recalcitrant world, if only because fulfillment and temptation are inextricably linked in man himself. Yet there is always an intuition that cannot be suppressed that it will be possible to achieve meaning and fulfillment in existence. This experience is not necessarily based on optimism, it is rather an ability to resist, which lies between hope and doubt. Resistance presupposes creativity, the capability to provide seemingly immovable situations with new meaning. Humanists live on the basis of the intuitive suspicion that people can do this, provided they use their potentialities. That in turn requires education, which is the key word next to resistance. Training can free forces that will enable people to give shape to human dignity, which is the third key word: humanists cannot resign themselves to the given reality, however much it might restrict their freedom. Yet they dream of a freedom that with however much effort can go beyond the given circumstances. In Western thought it is almost impossible to ignore the concept of determinism. Our thought is interlinked with the assumption that, by looking back, sufficient causes can be found for any event. But at the same time humanism represents the idea that, if one looks to the future, all people can do is embody their freedom. Any choice appeals to human creativity; however much with hindsight all decisions appear as links in a causal sequence.

In this situation humanism does not provide certainties: it does not know about eternal truths, nor about circumstances that may be susceptible to one explanation only. This is why it can occasionally seem to waver when refusing to choose between alternatives that never unequivocally do justice to the value of being human. The truth of being human lies in its nuances. It requires a particular independence if, being aware of this, one yet makes unequivocal choices, often standing alone because of these. But only in this manner can humanists do justice to the precarious position of humanity, always on the edge of the abyss. But surprise, surprise, it still exists. That gives a special meaning to our own existence as a link in the chain of generations. We are the inheritors of over a milliard—i.e., a thousand times a thousand times a thousand years—of life on earth. If we consider that period equivalent to twenty-four hours on the clock of the world, then it was only rather late in the evening (around 11:00 P.M.) when the mammals appeared. A part of the nerve system, the new brains that appeared for the first time in reptiles, now develops into the large brains, the seat of consciousness. That is how the primates appeared: the brain animals from which the apes developed. The hind brain develops and the possibility not only of consciousness but of self-consciousness occurs, of reflecting on things and on oneself, of intelligence. Out of the primates a new species appears, different from the others. What is the time now? One minute to twelve: man is born, Homo sapiens. We are at the dawn of a new day.

The exceptional thing about man in the entire natural development is that he is characterized by his thinking. Man can give names, because he can separate himself from the rest of nature: therefore things exist for him in time. That is how human language develops; and language again enables him to hold on to experiences and to transmit them. That is what his culture is based on. It started with handling lumps of stone and using fire. Because of all this man is also a technician, and as a technician he progressed from inventing fire and the wheel to technical domination of the world. As a matter of fact his struggle for existence is no longer a struggle for survival over other species in hostile circumstances, but a struggle for survival of his own species with the other species and natural circumstances. That is his inheritance. When did that history really start? Hundreds of thousands of years ago when the first humanoid types appeared? Or ten thousands of years ago when according to the cave paintings man had consciously investigated his environment? Or five thousand years ago, when immense empires had appeared in Egypt, India, and China? The carriers of these old cultures had obtained fire and tools from pre-history as well as language and art. They tilled the land and invented writing. They knew the course of the stars and created a state organization. The horse was domesticated and they had carts and levers. They had a lot of things and knew a lot of things as well. But there was one thing they had not discovered yet: man.

Then like a thunderbolt this discovery was made. Between 700 and 400 B.C. man discovered man at different places in the world. In a narrow belt of culture they appear, philosophers and prophets, searchers and heralds: Kung-fu-tse, Buddha, Zarathustra, Jeremiah, Socrates. They open the road to self-knowledge for man, and they are followed by more and more people; history consists to a large extent of this. But it is a road of blood, sweat, and tears, this road to becoming fully human. Since the Renaissance a torrent started in Europe that eventually carried the entire world with it. Old peoples achieved a new consciousness, young peoples became mature. Limitless possibilities appeared, but also incredible threats. It has become trite to say that the development of consciousness has not kept pace with the development of machinery, but it is still true. Hence the confusion and the chaos, the mistrust and despair. These have always existed, but never were people so aware of the fact that they themselves were responsible for them. But we are still young; history is only beginning, provided, of course, that we do not commit suicide. Man has appeared at one minute to twelve. This is the time. The reality of becoming human starts. There is no certainty, but certainly no reason to despair. The new dawn lies before us.

Or is it foolish to believe in new perspectives? In a society geared to maturity, new perspectives are undeniably connected with the possibility for the masses to take part in the process of humanization, and that can only happen by proposing it in their language. But people must often still learn to handle their own language. As long as other people speak for them, they remain dumb. To speak, one must be challenged in and by the social reality. That is why many pioneers only believe in a change of social structures. But change can only liberate if people themselves are involved in it; their awakening is a condition for their maturity. Some people think that power and injustice oppose this absolutely, and that therefore these must be broken first, using violence. But power and injustice are not absolute: they can be understood and overcome. Violence in opposition to existing violence does not overcome it, but reinforces or replaces it. It is perhaps not always possible to avoid revolutionary violence, but in itself it denies the very humanity one wishes to liberate: it smothers maturity. The danger of all utopian ideologies is that there is no cause that has brought so much unhappiness to man as the desire to make him happy against his will.

The idea of human dignity appeared with the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Some people think that therefore this concept is doomed to disappear, that it is a temporary phenomenon in a bourgeois society. This is based on certain approaches to history: organic—everything that appears is destined to disappear again; or structural—certain structures produce concomitant ideas. But history can also be understood as a process of gradual discoveries that, though they take different shapes in different circumstances, never again get lost. The idea of human dignity is a principle of

emancipation, which seems to be destined to become meaningful for an increasing number of groups and classes. But that principle must be anchored in a manner of being and a matching language, which can only be experienced if one is challenged to it by becoming oneself in one's own concrete situation. That means that a humane future is indissolubly linked to a continuing real democratization, in which what is good for people has not been decided in advance. Does this mean that a concept of the future always constitutes an obstacle? Not if it limits itself to a sketch of what is really necessary for the fundamental needs of the individual and society and furthermore guarantees maximum liberty so that one can organize one's personal and social life according to one's own convictions. Then it comes up to the old humanist maxim for a social order: unity in what is necessary, freedom as far as possible, and in everything, belonging (*caritas,* love).

Where then must we find the inspiration necessary to prod people into action? Is the desire for living together naturally in relatedness—related in equality, equal in freedom, and free to a reasonable extent—enough to free the forces that can change the world? Nobody knows, and yet that is the thing on which a worthwhile future depends. Only then can a type of human being appear that is neither perfect nor naive, suitable for survival without horrors, more driven by eros than by aggression, more by restraint than by a craving for abundance. A new type of human being! Who can hear that without laughing? Or are there, all the same, some starting points in education, behavior, working environment, and society; starting points of trust, relatedness, and opposition? If they are there, will we then make sufficient use of them? That depends on whether humanism can bring the myth of becoming human to life. The myth: that does not mean a fairytale of imaginary things, but a symbol of existence and experience, will and thought. A myth dies if it no longer refers to reality, and it becomes a straitjacket if it entirely coincides with reality; but it is productive if it provides that reality with a new dimension and opens up new distances. The myth is not an escape from reality, but a dream about the possibilities it contains. In opposition to the immovable world lives the unquenchable desire for a new man in a changing society; a reformation and a renaissance at the same time.

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