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THE APPEAL TO REASON

THE general breakdown of the rational approach to human problems is a contemporary fact which needs explanation. There is no doubt about the fact. Peoples and nations are notably unresponsive to rational appeal. The best minds among us have repeatedly pointed out, for example, that the path now being followed by the great powers is a path which inevitably leads to war. In the past, militarization has always produced war, and the rational conclusion to be drawn from present national policies is that they will produce another war, more devastating than the last. But we are not impressed by this rational analysis. We continue to prepare for war. We are also told by the chief exemplars of rational technology, the physical scientists, that there is absolutely no defense against the atom bomb; that unless we can evolve a bombless world, we shall eventually have no world at all. But we are not impressed by this, either. We continue to stockpile atom bombs. In the past few years, literally hundreds of idealistic schemes founded on rational argument have been presented to the public. Almost no one takes them seriously. Even their advocates would probably be appalled if very many people suddenly joined these movements—appalled, that is, not by the popular support, but by the extraordinary organizational problems that would at once appear, and by the chaotic and undisciplined emotions that would start to flow through channels unprepared to control them.

To say that the appeal to reason has no effective grip on the modern mind need not imply the idea that human behavior was once rational, but is rational no more. It is rather that rationally supported ideals once had the capacity to engage the imagination of large numbers of men, but can no longer do so. The moral energy of thought in terms of progress through rationalism that was unleashed in the eighteenth century is exhausted, and it has also met with obstacles that seem far more powerful than any form of reasonableness. We no longer think in the rational idiom of progress, but in the idiom of fear, and fear reduces the appeal to reason to a nerveless, academic formula. We suffer, in short, from a paralysis of a fundamental capacity of constructive human life—the will to apply reason to the problems of human relations.

At this point, there will be an advantage in some historical review of man's consciousness of the rational and irrational elements in human experience. Until about the eighteenth century, except for the heretical ideas of such groups as alchemists and Platonizing kabalists, human nature was regarded almost entirely in theological terms. The poles were typified by the saint and the sinner, and salvation and damnation were the significant processes of life. Then, with the Enlightenment, proceeding with the birth of modern scientific inquiry, the concept of rational man gradually gained acceptance. This development reached its apex in the French Revolution, which actually deified Reason for two or three years. This eighteenth-century optimism, spreading throughout the nineteenth century and reaching into the twentieth, produced an extraordinary wave of "progress." Then, with not illogical coincidence, both history and psychological theory revealed the unmeasured power of the irrational in human nature. What reason cannot assimilate, Freud explained, becomes a depthbomb of emotion beneath the threshold of respectable, rational existence. A little later, whole nations rejected the now traditional rationalism with loud and violent contempt. The logical weaknesses in the political theories of rationalism were turned inside out and made into barbarous war cries of the new

irrationalism: the inequality of man was declaimed as the foundation for systematic brutality; blood, not reason, was the revealer of human objectives; and the partisan passion of nationalism became the solvent of every iniquity. In a half-century, the progressive, rational, optimistic world was transformed into a vast clinic of frustrated and neurotic men and nations, among whom "normality" is only a question of degree. This evil—an evil which we do not understand—is abroad in the world, every day creating anew the fear which numbs the rational hopes of men, making them turn, more and more, to a blind emotionalism for their sense of "security," for that limited wholeness of anger and the integration of destructive energies which anti-rationalism is able to produce. Psychologically, the process is similar to what happens when a man joins the army or accepts a dogmatic religion. It is, "My country, right or wrong," or, "God will look after me," instead of the perplexing search for justice and truth in an obviously unjust and increasingly irrational world.

This problem works itself out at the ideological level in the bewildered efforts of the United Nations Assembly to find some common philosophical ground for its deliberations. The question first arose at San Francisco, during the days of the formation of UN, when the United States Secretary of State opened the Conference on International Organization "with one minute of silent and solemn meditation." Since then, disturbed religionists have been demanding that the UN take cognizance of the existence of God. The Secretariat of the UN has been obliged to write numerous polite letters explaining that "the UN is not unmindful of God and that the failure to open the meetings with prayer is not due to a feeling of self-sufficiency." A Catholic delegate has asked that the preamble of the Human Rights draft contain "a reference to God as the absolute origin of the rights of man and of all rights." The Soviet representative, however, replied that the declaration "should not include statements of a theological nature because such statements were not acceptable to a number of delegations." At the Paris meeting of the Assembly, last fall, a compromise was sought by P. C. Chang, of China. According to a press report:

> He [Dr. Chang] urged viewing the declaration in the light of eighteenth-century philosophy, which "had believed in the innate goodness of man ... that although man was largely animal, there was a part of him which distinguished him from animals. That part was the real man and was good, and that part should therefore be emphasized."
>
> "There is no contradiction," Dr. Chang argued, "between the eighteenth-century idea of man's essential nature as good and the idea of a soul endowed by God, for the concept of God laid particular stress on the human, as opposed to the animal, part of man's nature." And he thought that "those who believed in God could still find in the strong opening assertion of the article an implication of God, and at the same time, others with different concepts would be able to accept the text." (New York *Herald Tribune,*Oct. 28, 1948.)

Most observers will probably regard such efforts to agree on the wording of the preamble to the Human Rights Declaration as little more than face-saving operations, without important bearing on the major problem of establishing the conditions of a warless world. Yet the questions of the existence of God and the nature of man are basic to the springs of human action. It is to be noted that the argument is still at the eighteenth century level: The Christians are for God; the Atheists are against Him; and the Deists are for the goodness of non-animal, that is, rational, man. No account is taken of the psychological consequences of either belief in or denial of God, nor of the fact that the UN exists as a result, not of the goodness of man, but of his excesses in evil. In other words, while the questions debated by the Assembly were real issues in the eighteenth century, they are only superficial questions, today, the inherited forms of yesterday's ideological differences. It might be said—with justice, we think—that there is a kind of blasphemy in this bland disregard of the fundamental problems of the time, a blasphemy against the deepest hopes of all mankind. Instead of seeking a nice

metaphysical compromise between deism, theism and atheism for the preamble of the Declaration on Human Rights, the delegates to the UN Assembly, if they possessed the same serious intent as the constitution-makers of the eighteenth century, would instead ask the basic questions of today, and attempt to provide basic answers, with the same unequivocal determination as that which ispired men like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson.

They would first investigate the roots of human fear. It is this fear which has rendered the appeal to reason impotent and futile, and it is this fear which must be overcome, before there can be the slightest justification of hope for enduring peace. If the philosophers of the eighteenth century could discover the power of reason, then the psychologists of the twentieth century ought to be able to uncover the roots of unreason, and the rest of the world, including the diplomats of the United Nations, ought to be willing to listen to what they say. It happens that a few psychologists have already made preliminary reports, in which their finding is that certain religious dogmas, pre-eminently that of the Original Sin, have indoctrinated the great majority of Western peoples with self-contempt, and that this guilty hate or derogation of self has in turn produced the anxiety states and pathological self-justification which result in the endless aggressions of war. This is a considerable step in advance of the eighteenth-century conclusions concerning the evils of dogmatic religion. The pioneer agnostics of the pre-revolutionary epoch—men like D'Holbach and Lamettrie—were essentially pragmatic in their judgment of religion. They saw the alliance between Church and State and the indescribable suffering of prolonged religious wars. They were not metaphysical critics of dogma, nor depth psychologists. They hated the oppressions of kings and the guile of priests and they became republicans and atheists in reaction. The eighteenth-century credo, repeated by P. C. Chang, was the result of their attack on religion.

Present-day psychologists have carried the analysis deeper into the human psyche. Not priests and kings, they say, but concepts, are the ruling evil. Without either Platonic idealism or Christian transcendentalism, they say, with Plato, that "Ideas rule the world," and, with the Christian proverb, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." The modern psychological or psychiatric criticism of traditional rationalism would be that it ignores the tenacity of deeply ingrained emotional attitudes toward the self. Here, then, is the area of fundamental reform, in man's idea of himself. But how does the idea of the self relate to the omnipresent problem of fear?

It seems fairly evident that the idea of an acquisitive self, with or without the burden of Original Sin, will still be victimized by fear. The acquisitive self is a self which obtains its security from material possessions, social status, and deference—all things which can be taken away by the aggressions of others. The fearless self will have to be a self whose goods are inalienable in principle and in fact—the kind of goods which were consciously possessed by men like Socrates and Gandhi. And Socrates and Gandhi, be it noted, were both fearless human beings. This is a way of saying that the psychiatrists, if they really want to abolish the roots of fear, will have to do more than repudiate Moloch and Jehovah; they will have to break with Mammon, too, which will probably be a little difficult for most psychiatrists, considering their rates. Meanwhile, during the long interval of waiting for psychiatrists to become nonattached men, full advantage should be taken of their analysis, as far as it goes.

This would mean thoroughgoing discussion, as public as possible, of the psychological effects of various religious dogmas and clear distinctions between the qualities of revealed and philosophical religion. The assumption of Dr. Chang, for example, that there is "no contradiction between the eighteenth-century idea of man's essential nature as good and the idea of a soul endowed by God," needs critical

examination. It seems to us that Dr. Chang is wrong and that a great contradiction is implied. A soul supplied by God is responsible to God, and the responsibilities of man to his God, according to historical experience, are almost always interpreted by priests in the terms of temporal advantage to the earthly sacerdotal institution. This is precisely the result which the eighteenth-century philosophers sought to avoid. In the deist idea, the soul of man—the good, that is, in man—is responsible to the good in other men, requiring, not a theological definition of God, but a reasoned account of what is generally good for mankind. But there, again, arises the danger of dogma—in this case a secular dogma. Dogmatic religion, when it dominates the material and political life of the community, rules through the fear inspired by a perverted transcendentalism. The soul may be either saved or damned by an outside power. Secular dogmatism, on the other hand, rules by a "this-world" fear, through the despotic power of the State. A truly free society, then, will be a society which is psychologically emancipated from both fear of a jealous, avenging God and from fear of death and punishment by the State for political heresies. Is such a society attainable at all?

This question can be answered, it would seem, only by looking for an idea of the human self which is invulnerable to both of these fears. Examining history, three great world-views suggest themselves: the Platonism of Socrates, movingly represented in the *Phaedo;* the pantheistic stoicism of the declining period of the Roman Empire, as stated, for example, in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius; and the popular Buddhism of the Burmese people of the nineteenth century, as described in Fielding Hall's *The Soul of a People.* All three of these attitudes toward life are fundamentally compatible with the rationalist foundations of eighteenth-century philosophy, yet they afford a development of metaphysical ideas which Deism lacks. Unlike Deism, they take account of an impersonal spiritual reality—supra-rational, rather than irrational—from which strength of mind and stability of purpose may be derived. Neither the Socratic, the Stoic nor the Buddhist characteristically fears death. Nor does he lust after physical possessions. These systems afford both personal and impersonal conceptions of immortality; they are founded on an impersonal natural order, and while the natural order, in this case, comprehends metaphysical reality as well as physical existence, there are no supernatural intrusions by an anthropomorphic God—the individual, the community, the State and the race having to make their peace with the principles of things.

Today, the judgment of history is that Rationalism is not enough. This presents a choice between reversion to emotional anti-rationalism, in the name of either God or the Fatherland, or the reinforcement of rationalism by transcendental conceptions which serve no partisan interests of this world or any other, yet lend intuitive support to the judgments of reason. Honest criticism, we think, brings us to some such crossroads as this. But the affirmative side of a philosophy of life—the positive inspiration which we seek—is the product of private, individual intensity in the search for truth. Criticism can only indicate where to look.

Letter from SWITZERLAND

GENEVA.—In these days of conflicting ideologies, and when, as in India, newly freed peoples face the problem of framing a democratic constitution, the government of Switzerland is often cited, not without reason, as an example of successful democracy. It is no exaggeration to say that the President, Councilors and Representatives, local and federal, regard themselves as trustees of the welfare of those who elected them. The obligation imposed on those who enjoy the franchise is one of the fundamental ideas inculcated into the youth of the land. As expressed by Marcel Pilet-Golaz, formerly President of the Confédération Helvétique, Switzerland is putting to use the lessons learnt before she was free, when, as a subject people, the Swiss suffered. The freedom of the nation depends on the freedom of the individual, and the reverse is also true: the civil liberties of the citizen depend on the maintenance of the country's independence. But Switzerland has yet to waken to the ever growing need for woman-suffrage.

The powers enjoyed by the individual voter make him feel himself as important to the state's welfare as any State or Federal Councilor. The resultant dependability and innate sense of honesty are proverbial characteristics of the Swiss. Farmers at work in their fields, far removed from any town, participate in every phase of the country's government, and discuss such questions as finance and foreign policy with those who pass. Our milkman, who owns the village grocery shop and who is Adjoint-au-Maire of the Commune, was able to explain to me in the most minute detail the entire intricate voting procedure of the country. By a system of Referendum, the Swiss people maintain close touch with every question that comes before their Government.

The top posts in the Swiss Government are filled by the choice of circles of tried men who themselves have been selected and sifted by popular vote. This group, called the *Chambre Fédérale,* is a combination of the popularly elected Conseil des Etats and the Conseil National. From the membership of this *Chambre* are elected seven Cabinet Ministers, one of whom becomes President, another Vice-President. They serve for one year, after which the Vice-President, save in exceptional cases, automatically becomes President. The members of the *Chambre Fédérale* are free to vote according to their own judgment. It is possible, however, for the people to question an election if sufficiently grave causes are presented by the required number of voters.

The system of Referendum practiced by the Swiss gives every citizen the opportunity to be heard. Some Cantons make the Referendum obligatory for all laws affecting finance, taxes, etc. Throughout Switzerland, all proposed legislation is given wide publicity on billboards, in the press and through circulars. For instance, when, two years ago, the Conseil Communal of Lausanne proposed to build an airdrome, this proposition, involving vast expenditure of money, was vetoed by the citizens. A large business concern from one Canton, desiring to operate in the Canton de Vaud, was refused permission by popular Referendum because it would jeopardize the smaller existing businesses. Again, for years, the Grisons, famous for its natural beauty of scenery and for its abundance of water supply, has refused by Referendum to allow vested interests to canalize her waters into another canton for the establishment of a great hydroelectric plant.

A date is set for polling the popular will. The proposed legislation having been advertised, the people express their disapproval if it is not acceptable to them. Silence is taken as assent, and the laws are passed. If, however, enough signatures of protest can be obtained (the number differs in the various Cantons) a referendum is called for and a popular vote is taken. The result is that every voter is in personal touch with affairs.

Every Swiss is encouraged to possess landed property, for it is felt that when the land belongs

to the people, popular well-being makes difficult the infiltration of disruptive propaganda. Men take a vital interest in that country whose soil is their own. There is freedom of association and of meeting in Switzerland; neither the press nor speech is censored, nor is there any control of religious practice. The radio is the mouthpiece of the Government in that its ideal is to serve and instruct the people as well as to entertain them. The Confédération Helvétique is a federation of free men and women, of free Communes and Cantons, where freedom, prosperity and neutrality are maintained through respect for the dignity of the individual as an integral part of the whole.

SWITZERLAND CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

SHAKESPEARE

WHILE Mr. Laurence Olivier's achievement of a minor cycle of popularity for Shakespearean drama is in progress, it seems worth while to consider what seems a neglected reason for the greatness of William Shakespeare. It is that the Shakespearean vocabulary of ideas grows from a profoundly metaphysical view of man and of nature. Always, behind the scene, and sometimes upon it, is the movement of ordered mysteries. The bounded life of man has facets tangent with invisible realities; good and evil are principles which seem to operate as decisive forces in the choices and fortunes of human beings. While no animated statues, Shakespeare's characters are nevertheless archetypes of human nature. If an official entrusted with the affairs of state is mean and ignoble, Shakespeare will have the angels weep that they must share the universe with such a man. When a mother succumbs to a gross passion, the State, the political order, and Nature, the cosmic order, all waste and sicken with the common infection. Even the half-world of the dead is disturbed—as in the shade of Hamlet's father, which appears in the trappings of kingship to show the society-linked consequences of a personal evil. And Hamlet, made half mad, is cruel to Ophelia. Thus the vileness spreads from vessel to vessel, until only the surgery of death, invasion and usurpation can restore the balance of the world.

The modern play-goer—or movie-goer, now that Mr. Olivier is among us—will hardly respond directly to the metaphysical scheme in which Shakespearean dramas are set. He anticipates and usually gets, at the theater, the unfolding of a complex of human relationships in which the importance is either personal or "social." The values are all obvious "this world" values. Art and literature, love and Freud, the liberal impulse and social hypocrisy—are there any more themes in the modern drama than these? Yet Shakespeare, who saw the world very differently, can arrest and hold modern audiences. "Culture," of course, will sell a few tickets to Shakespearean drama, and *Henry V* done as Laurence Olivier did it was bound to please Americans who always enjoy a good western; but there is, we think, another and better reason for the vitality of Shakespeare's plays—the evocative power of his language.

It is not necessary to know the Pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres to be affected by Lorenzo's lines, spoken to Jessica, in the *Merchant of Venice:*

> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Let the world be what it is—and it is bad enough there are still promised lands hidden all about. Shakespeare does not moralize, but feeds the subtler hungers of the mind in that region where it unites with the yearnings of the heart. For the great Elizabethan, the world was not a clod of matter, worked upon from without by blind physical laws, but a habitation of souls, made up of souls, all living and playing "parts" in the orderly array of Nature. Scholars may tell us that Shakespeare had his system from the pseudo-Dionysius, a Christian Neoplatonist of the fifth century, but there is more than scholarship and tradition in Shakespeare, and much more than the "art" of a playwright. That Ptolemy's geocentric scheme of the heavenly bodies was in error cannot alter his genius, for it is nourished by the secret that no man is an island unto himself, and whatever the technical arrangements of astronomers, that secret is known to every man in his heart.

There are many "Shakespeare" books but Theodore *Spencer's Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* is, to our way of thinking, a work of literature in its own right. (Macmillan, 1943.) Never prosy or pedantic, Mr. Spencer recreates for the reader the sphere of Shakespeare's moral world, and what was only an intuitive appreciation becomes a rational one as well. Take this passage about Iago as an example:

> . . . we may think of Iago as being compounded of three concepts of human nature—not merely literary concepts—that were at this time familiar to both Shakespeare and his age: the concept of the difference between the outer show and the inner fact,

> the concept of the evil man as an individualist, and, connected with this, the concept of the evil man as the *incomplete* man, the man who does not contain all the psychological levels that should make up a human being. Shakespeare's vision of evil probed very deep when he conceived Iago, for the frightening thing about Iago, as I have said, is that from one point of view he represents the Renaissance ideal of the man whose reason controls his passions, and yet he is wholly bad.

The moral argument in Shakespeare is from the great Order of Being; it is not taken from a book, but is found implicit in the firmament, the winds and the seas. Hamlet is distraught, not merely because he discovers wickedness in his mother, but because, as queen, this weakness could not have overtaken her except through a general decay which had made all Denmark rotten and unclean. Conversely, the betrayal of a noble office is a sin of endless fertility. It is the shaking of degree, the challenge of the very principle of righteousness. Here is a theory that explains ominous times and portents of disaster. The scheme of things has been violated and expiation must follow. The scheme may change, the offices may be elective instead of hereditary, but unless high trust is served with high dignity and fitness, the age turns in upon itself.

Shakespeare, then, is great because he appeals to the constant moral emotions of mankind. He is neither a preacher nor a skeptic, but one who clothes the commonest of human feelings with revelatory speech, so that each man can find something of himself, woven like a living thread, into the tapestry of the play. And it is not Shakespeare, nor the Bible, nor any mortal thing which judges him, but the order innate in life itself, which the play reflects.

An early scene in *Measure for Measure* conveys the mood and miracle of Shakespeare's words. Isabella has come before Angelo, who rules as deputy for the absent Duke of Vienna, to plead for the life of her brother, condemned to death for an illicit love. Angelo conceives an unworthy passion for Isabella. In this scene, Isabella exclaims against the resolve of Angelo to hang her brother. Although Jove, with his mighty power, she says, may split the gnarled oak with a thunderbolt, he spares the soft myrtle;—

> . . . but man, proud man!
> Dress'd in a little brief authority,—
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
> His glassy essence,—like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As make the angels weep. . . .
>
> *Angelo.* Why do you put these sayings upon me?
>
> *Isabel.* Because authority, though it err like others,
> Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself
> That skins the vice o' the top. Go to your bosom;
> Knock there; and ask your heart what it doth know
> That's like my brother's fault; if it confess
> A natural guiltiness such as is his,
> Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
> Against my brother's life.
>
> *Angelo.* She speaks, and 'tis
> Such sense that my sense breeds with it.
> Fare you well. . . .
>
> *Isabel.* Hark how I'll bribe you. Good, my lord, turn back.
>
> *Angelo.* How! Bribe me?
>
> *Isabel.* Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall share with you.
> . . .with true prayers,
> That shall be up at heaven, and enter there,
> Ere sunrise: prayers from preserved souls,
> From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
> To nothing temporal.
>
> *Angelo.* Well; come to me tomorrow. . . .
>
> *Isabel.* Heaven keep your honour safe!
>
> *Angelo,* Amen: for I
> Am that way going to temptation, . . .
> Where prayers cross.

In *Measure for Measure,* the theme of evil in fine apparel dominates the story, and a mechanical and artificial good triumphs in the last act. Yet lines such as these are virtual incantations which draw up and fix in the imagination a living familiarity with the moral universe. From the mire of human failings arises a ladder to the height of aspirations; and even Angelo must feel his wrong and muse upon it. This, perhaps, is Shakespeare's hold upon the mind—his faithful representation of the moral struggle. Men must choose, and the playwright knew it. There is always, in life, this inner dialogue, the essential

drama, of which all other human movements are only reflections. In a given play, some men have chosen aright, and others wrongly, but the protagonist must choose *within* the play, and we must understand some, but not all, of the reasons for his choice. The told reasons are for the memory to ponder, the untold ones, food for the imagination.

Great literature, then, to make a definition, is literature which fittingly unites the known and the unknown in human behavior, and displays the movement of this unity through a given set of circumstances, which are also known and unknown. The greatness arises from the translation, in fitting degree, of some of the unknown into the known.

COMMENTARY
APPEAL TO UNREASON

RADIO QUITO is no more. On the night of February 12, maddened residents of the capital city of Ecuador set fire to the newspaper building in which the broadcasting station was housed. Of the hundred occupants of the building, six were killed while trying to escape from the flames and fifteen more were injured. The rioting mob also attacked the building with stones and allowed fire extinguishing equipment to approach only after a way had been cleared by tanks and tear gas.

This was the Ecuadorean response to another radio "invasion from Mars," like that imposed upon the people of the United States by the Orson Welles Halloween broadcast in 1938. The Quito "invasion" began as an interrupting newsflash, followed by a local adaptation of H. G. Wells' *The War of Worlds.* The climax was reached when an announcer, claiming to speak from the tallest building in Quito, said that he could see a monster approaching from the north, engulfed in fire and smoke. At this point hysteria drove most of the Quito population into the streets. When the frightened people learned from the now equally frightened broadcasters that the invasion was "fictional," they swept to the radio station and burned it down.

The nationwide reaction to the Orson Welles broadcast to America was not less hysterical, although it resulted in no violence. Shortly after the event, a professional psychologist observed (in 1938):

> The War Department couldn't have devised a cheaper, broader experiment. The panic can't help but reveal to the department the extent to which emotion can be lifted by false, terrifying reports. People have been conditioned to the idea of catastrophes. The war scare has done it. They naturally are quick to misconstrue anything in the nature of a threat. It shows how near the surface are the basic, terrifying emotions.

Another commentator noted that all that the thousands of panicked people had to do was to turn the dial to another station—to check up; but they didn't do this; they just believed what they heard.

Recently, psychologists have been speculating about the possibility of psycho-emotional force corresponding to atomic energy. There is no need to look further; it already exists. And its use is even more difficult to control than the application of atomic fission in war. Some day, perhaps, we shall learn that control of some people by other people is not the problem of the modern world, but that the idea of "control" is itself a species of the evil we abhor and fear. That day may mark the beginning of a genuine civilization.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

WHAT are the qualifications of a good children's book? It seems to us that the primary value to be secured in reading for children will be derived from whatever the book may afford of inspiration for individual effort. It is obviously not enough to enlighten the child as to the faults of our present society, though this feature of education deserves much attention. The basic fact is that most of what is wrong with society must be corrected by the renewed inspiration of the young. What, then, are the factors which encourage valuable inspiration? In what sort of stories do we find them?

One ideal children's book is a simple story by Armstrong Sperry, entitled *Call It Courage* (Mafatu, the Boy who was Afraid). This book has two principal values, each of them supremely important to a child of the modern world. First, the story presents a successful struggle against fear. This boy of the islands had an overpowering dread of the sea, a feeling which dominated his life, leading him to consider himself an outcast, and other fears were born from the Great Fear. The boy struggles against this psychological nemesis, and having won an initial skirmish, proceeds to the development of complete self-reliance. The story also gives convincing illustration of the many lessons which children may learn from direct contact with the forces of nature. Mafatu does not emerge in the end of the volume as a formal philosopher, but a philosopher he has become nonetheless. He has balanced all of life's values, fought the difficult internal fight against fearfulness, and has gained the confidence that life, whatever its conditions, is worth living.

It is likely that this book will appeal to those who find truth in the judgment that ours, unfortunately, is a society which is "afraid." Our hates, angers, greeds and brutalities have, as the modern psychiatrists tell us, their origin in anxiety. The pressure of adults' anxiety-neuroses surround the child, and anything which suggests a means of dispelling this fog of fear is of considerable benefit.

A word about the story itself. It is, as most good books are, symbolical. The boy, Mafatu, sails through a raging storm to an unknown island, and is thrown, naked and starving, upon an alien shore. He knows that if he can sustain himself by making his own fire, finding or hunting and fishing his own food, without the help of older people, he can return home to become a worth-while member of the community. And so his stay on the island shows his gradual mastery of techniques of hunting and fishing, making and preserving fire and, as a final triumph, fashioning the tools necessary to build a craft for the voyage home. All the things he does *must* be done for self-preservation, yet because he accomplishes them with an eager, questing spirit, he deepens his character with each triumph. Finally, he transcends the self-preservation motive when his faithful dog, knocked from Mafatu's raft, is threatened by a shark. Mafatu kills the shark, though he barely escapes death in this apparently "unnecessary" underwater struggle.

Aside from being well told, the story is rich with overtones well within the comprehension of children. At some time in his life, every man is thrust, as naked and alone as Mafatu, into a new and difficult situation. It makes a great deal of difference whether such battles of life are fought defensively and desperately against a background of paralyzing fear, or with joy in the struggle and with an eye to the psychological and moral evolution which may take place. The romantic tradition of literature, it seems, has its place. We are now living in an intellectual climate which encourages cynicism and "realistic" despair, and the exaggerations of romantic success stories do not attract us. Yet Sperry's plot is so simple, the psychological goals of the boy-character so evidently appropriate for any man or boy, that we here have romance in a setting that will evoke no derison from even the hardened pessimist.

This book, incidentally, fulfills another "first requirement" for literature: it can be read with equal pleasure by grownups as well as by children of all ages. There are few volumes both pleasing and inspiring to the child and also a delight to parents and teachers. After considerable experimenting with *Call It Courage,* we are convinced that this book manages to do all of these things. We shall welcome recommendations from any subscribers who, after reading this particular volume, feel that they know another book or two with similar qualities. Our own catalog of such books includes Grace and Carl Moon's *Lost Indian Magic,* Herbert Best's *Garram the Hunter,* and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim.*

FRONTIERS
Psychiatry and Social Reform

THE psychiatrists are in trouble again, this time with the economic reformers. Two weeks ago we took note, here, of the conflict between certain outspoken psychiatrists and the exponents of orthodox Christianity. Now we find that a writer in the *Nation* for Jan. 15, Miss Helen Merrell Lynd, although maintaining a high opinion of the importance of psychiatric investigations, has stringent criticisms to make of the attitude of psychiatrists toward social and economic reform. While Dr. Harry Stack Sullivan, for one, is thoroughly aware of "the extent to which the individual and his problems are determined by our contemporary system of social relationships," according to Miss Lynd, he joins "with those psychologists and psychiatrists who label attempts to effect fundamental change in contemporary institution 'neurotic'." Miss Lynd's observations are based on Dr Sullivan's *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (see MANAS July 7, 1948), in which she finds what seems a serious contradiction:

> After pointing out the destructive effect of the present social order on human beings "not merely as it sets the limits within which the patient's interpersonal relations may succeed" but "as the . . . source from which spring his problems, which are themselves signs of difficulties in the social order" (p. 87), he, nevertheless, goes on nine pages later to discuss the apparently psychopathic character of individuals and of groups who work for any radical change in this social order. "Radical views" he regards as a sign of personal insecurity which should be cured.

Anyone who reads the pages of Dr. Sullivan's work here cited will freely admit the difficulty of summarizing what he says, but Miss Lynd ought to have made some attempt, at least, to convey the sense of his diagnosis. By this omission, her criticism is reduced to the somewhat sentimental level of charging Dr. Sullivan with having said bad things about good people. It is possible, perhaps, to read into his book the idea, as she puts it, "that only neurotics develop radical views, or that radical programs are necessarily evil or undesirable but we are certain that this is a distortion of Dr. Sullivan's intent. What he said about radicals and radical groups, we think, was a faithful report of his clinical experience and observation, and he wrote as a doctor, not as a reformer.

The real difficulty, it seems to us, lies with the meaning of the term "radical." What is a radical, anyway? Miss Lynd speaks of "left-wing economists and political scientists" and Dr. Sullivan leaves the term to define makes the term to define itself. But the behavior-pattern of those to whom he makes the term apply is clear enough. Writing of the individual who accepts a credo commonly identified as radical," Sullivan says:

> The new movement has given him group support for the expression of ancient personal hostilities that are now directed against the group from which he has come. The new ideology rationalizes destructive activity to such effect that it seems almost, if not quite, constructive. The new ideology is especially palliative of conflict in its promise of a better world that is to rise from the debris t6 which the present order must first be reduced. In this Utopia, he and his fellows will be good and kind—for there will be no more injustice, and so forth. If his is one of the more radical groups. . . . except for his dealings with his fellow radicals, the man may act as if he had acquired the psychopathic type of personality. . . He shows no durable grasp of his own reality or that of others, and his actions are controlled by the most immediate opportunism, without consideration of the probable future.

This is a clinical picture. For it to become useful in connection with the social scene, there is need for a similar ideological picture of various "radical" views. Some "radicals" may qualify under Sullivan's behavioristic definition, while others may not. To draw this comparison, the analysis offered in the first section of Dwight Macdonald's *The Root Is Man* is a necessary supplement to the discussion thus far. Macdonald makes it plain that both Miss Lynd and Dr. Sullivan are using the term "radical" in a sense

which prevailed from 1789 to about 1928, but which no longer has any clear meaning. Since the development of Nazism and Stalinism, he points out, "both the old Right and the old Left [with which radicals have been identified] have almost ceased to exist as historical realities, and their elements have been recombined in the dominant modern tendency: an inegalitarian and organic society in which the citizen is a means, not an end, and whose rulers are anti-traditional and scientifically minded." Urging we need a new political vocabulary, Macdonald suggests that "Right" should be reserved for old-fashioned conservatives, and that "Left" be dropped entirely, with two other terms, "Progressive" and "Radical," to take its place. Following is his explanation of the need for the distinction which these two new terms provide—a distinction which is ignored by both Dr. Sullivan and Miss Lynd:

> By "Progressive" would be understood those who see the Present as an episode on the road to a better Future; those who think more in terms of historical process than of moral values; those who believe that the main trouble with the world is partly lack of scientific knowledge and partly the failure to apply to human affairs such knowledge as we do have; those who, above all, regard the increase of man's mastery over nature as good in itself and see its use for bad ends, as atomic bombs, as a perversion. This definition, I think, covers fairly well the great bulk of what is still called the Left, from the Communists ("Stalinists") through reformist groups like our own New Dealers, the British Laborites, and the European Socialists, to small revolutionary groups like the Trotskyists. [Fn. It is not intended to suggest that there are not important differences between these tendencies. The Stalinists, in particular, should be most definitely set off from the rest. Their Progressivism is a complete abandonment to the historical process, so that absolutely anything goes, so long as it is in the interests of Russia, a "higher" form of society. The other groups, although they put more emphasis on the historical process than is compatible with the values they profess, do stand for certain general principles and do recognize certain ethical boundaries.]
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> "Radical" would apply to the as yet few individuals—mostly anarchists, conscientious objectors, and renegade Marxists like myself—who reject the concept of Progress, who judge things by their present meaning and effect, who think the ability of science to guide us in human affairs has been overrated and who therefore redress the balance by emphasizing the ethical aspect of politics. They, or rather we, think it is an open question whether the increase of man's mastery over nature is good or bad in its actual effects on human life to date, and favor adjusting technology to man, even if it means—as may be the case—a technological regression, rather than adjusting man to technology. We do not, of course, "reject" scientific method, as is often charged, but rather think the scope within which it can yield fruitful results is narrower than is generally assumed today. And we feel that the firmest ground from which to struggle for that human liberation which was the goal of the old Left is the ground not of History but of those non-historical Absolute Values (truth, justice, love, etc.) which Marx has made unfashionable among socialists.
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> The Progressive makes History the center of his ideology. The Radical puts Man there. . . .

While Sullivan and Macdonald present their views—the one a clinical conclusion, the other a political analysis—at a high level of abstraction, the common terms in both, we think, are sufficiently clear. Sullivan's neurotic radical is Macdonald's extreme Progressive. Miss Lynd, on the other hand, along with many other *Nation* writers, is still using the 1789-1928 vocabulary of political criticism, and, so far as we can see, misses the point. She just wants Dr. Sullivan to be a good soldier. But before seeking the psychiatrists as allies, people interested in radical solutions for human problems need first to explain what they mean by "radical," and in terms which at least approach the clarity of Macdonald's definitions.

(The Nation for Feb. I2 contains a number of letters commenting adversely on Miss Lynd's article and quoting directly from the passages by Dr. Sullivan which she had cited. The *Nation* also reported in an editorial note the death of Dr. Sullivan in Paris on Jan. 15.)