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A MATTER OF INTELLIGENCE

PERHAPS the most mischievous of all the delusions which the people of the United States cherish is that "Intelligence" is something that can be bought, and that it is best obtained from those who move about most, and fastest. This, we are prepared to suggest, is the very opposite of the fact. The best way to understand the world at any given time is to find a vantage point of observation, to remain there as still as possible, and to listen, to look, and to think. The vantage point is absolutely essential.

We were brought to so unorthodox a conclusion by reading Miss Dorothy Thompson's blurb on the back of a copy of Kenneth de Courcy's privately circulated *Intelligence Digest.* The news, Miss Thompson claims, is in the"plans" and "stratagems" great states strive to conceal. The real value of *Intelligence Digest,* this famous journalist thinks, derives from the fact that its correspondents are "kept constantly on the move."

This claim, for its reflection on the nature of Intelligence, presents a challenge which we shall now take up.

It has been the writer's privilege to lend a hand, when necessary, to a small and valiant organization that serves the needs of homebound, handicapped children in metropolitan New York's five boroughs. The boys and girls, of assorted ages and nationalities, are ward and clinic patients whom social service departments in a dozen hospitals refer to this "Service" for home visits. Because its interest is exclusively in the happiness and well-being of these shutaway children, and because it accepts them, with the physicians' approval, no matter what the crippling illness was, the Service occupies a kind of No Man's Land in a highly specialized field, and had it not been accepted for participation by the Greater New York Fund, it is doubtful whether the volunteers' work with the children could have gone on.

Though social welfare, as a profession, has amputated the word from its vocabulary, "poor" is the word for most of these children. In fact, so poor are some of them, that on the very evening on which we read Miss Thompson's endorsement, we learned that one small boy who requires a protein-heavy diet scarcely ever sees meat except in a can of soup. On such a child, all "stratagems" divorced from food are wasted.

The parents of the Service children are always remembered at Christmas with some gift, usually the generous contribution of a handbag, belt, or glove manufacturer. The letters the recipients write stun the givers. One mother said: "This is the first Christmas my husband and I ever received a present. And they are so *beautiful.* Real leather!" These are not exceptional families. All that distinguishes them from other self-respecting Americans is the misfortune of seeing a potential breadwinner rendered suddenly helpless for life, or condemned to slowly die before their eyes. In every one of these tenement houses there are scores of families as poor. There are not hundreds but thousands like them. Most of these parents never see a movie, and more than one child has never seen a flower.

This much our vantage point has taught us; and much more. Knowing these families, we know more than any reporter "kept constantly on the move." It is better to sit very quietly and close to Poverty than to move very fast in any direction today. For when one is close to Poverty, one is close to nine-tenths of the population of the world.

Why are the men who keep other men incessantly "on the move" so laggard in understanding? Can it be because Americans

confuse Information with Intelligence? Facts add up to Information, and no one can say that facts have been wanting to Americans in the past ten years. During the last war we had, in the armed services, an unofficial Intelligence Corps with a potential beyond anything we have today, if only because our soldiers were not hired as paid "agents." They brought in the facts, those boys. They sent them home in letters, carried them home on leave.

Poverty was everywhere they went, and Americans in uniform did not like it. We could never quite forget the stalwart young officer who, to a party of gay diners out, was explaining above the dinner music why so many Americans in the Far East preferred the Japanese. They were "cleaner." A very unsanitary people, the Chinese. They left dead bodies of babies in the streets. No one picked them up because to do so would oblige that person to bury the baby, and since no one could afford to, there it lay until some passerby placed a basket over the body to keep the dogs away. Absolutely without regard for sanitary measures, the Chinese.

Information of that kind, countless persons must have had. *Intelligence* would have sifted it to find out what the situation was, the context, so to speak, the frame of reference in which such unsanitary conditions were allowed to remain for so long uncorrected. But we never heard of any attempt to "process" Information like that. A pity, too, as it later turned out.

Anyone well schooled in the needs and conditions of the children of the poor in a great city must have known with virtual certainty by 1947 that Asia would be a plum ready to anyone's outstretched hand. Thorstein Veblen explained why, long ago, in *The Theory of the Leisure Class.* Poverty and malnutrition are so dispiriting that they rob men even of the energy needed to revolt. Desperation will, on occasion, supply emergency power, but the desperation must be very great indeed. One must suppose it was, in China, but no section of the press was looking Asiaward in 1947.

It does not require elaborate Intelligence networks to know the abominably wretched lot of the masses of the world's population, nor for what they will, and will not, take up arms. Everywhere it is the same: before, behind, around, and under the Iron Curtain, men fight for their children and for a future for those children. Is that so hard to understand? One of the enigmas of the century surely is that Soviet Intelligence seems to find this out so much faster and more unerringly than American Intelligence—and fails, in the end, to make any better use of what it finds. Whoever has read *The Twenty-fifth Hour*, an indisputably "devastating" Roumanian novel now available in English, will have no doubt about the outcome of human events in Soviet labor camps, where women and their children are treated like unwanted dogs in a public pound, and their men like cattle. The best Intelligence under Russian czars came out concealed in Russian novels.

Everything may change, but not the way men feel about their children. The way they feel, we suspect, accounts largely for the inflammable nature of the world we live in. This seems not to be generally understood, and may even not be so, if Miss Thompson is right in her opinion. It is, at any rate, only an idea, an idea inspired by knowing a handful of handicapped children, because Poverty sits alongside us at our window on the world. She is a good teacher. Having her, we find little added to our knowledge by "informed sources," "high-level spokesmen," "responsible authorities," and similarly well-fed anonymities. Nor should we, in their place, give too much credence to Information coming in from airborne diplomats, retired generals, or civil intelligence sleuths in Spain or in North Africa.

It is not Information that we lack, but a proper understanding of what to do with the Information that we have. *Life* magazine, though officially unrecognized, is a most indefatigable dispenser of Information, from and to the United

States. The pity is, that its brilliant reportorial efforts are so little valued as to be mistaken for "entertainment." There doubtless are still in *Life's* files some half-dozen eye-stabbing photographs of Europe's war-crazed children, taken last year by a genius with a camera. If duplicates of these photographs are not in the files of Army, Air Force, and Civil Intelligence agencies, those files are dangerously incomplete.

Actually, in the United Nations world organization for emergency aid to children, in the several foster parent services for war orphans, in the world food organization, and in UNESCO, the United States has four of the most strategic sources of Intelligence in the world. But who would think of using any one of them, since "Intelligence" has come to be a synonym for what U.S. Congressmen are pleased to call "spying"?

It is barely possible that if, even now, the security of children were put first instead of last on international security agenda, the shift might be more productive of results which would enable Americans to lift their heads again, than the proposals set forth last December by *Intelligence Digest's* well-informed editor. He found it his "imperative duty" to report, as fact, that among the highest military and other authorities in the United States the opinion had been formed, and was strongly held, that the sole alternative to a long-drawn-out war with China, enabling Russia to gather overwhelming strength, was to use the most powerful weapons in America's arsenal to strike at leading oil production centers and other "suitable" targets in the Soviet Union.

One can hardly presume to stand out against such overwhelming authority, especially when the Intelligence is copyrighted in full capital letters. Yet we shall not lose faith in the strategic position our vantage point affords. That position is, to us, impregnable and has, besides, the support of the very highest authority. From sources considered unimpeachable, word has come down through the centuries that the Man of Distinction for his time is reported to have said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not . . . For as ye do unto the least of these, so do ye unto me."

Intelligence has no need of motion: it is free. Thought needs only a vantage point. Intelligence is man's one inalienable endowment, not merchandise that can be bought, and, unless warmed by the fire of the heart, is worthless. What normal Intelligence ought to tell anyone, and especially Miss Thompson, is that the real "news" is always most apt to be where no one in authority is looking.

New York City CARY DESBOROUGH

Letter from ENGLAND

LONDON.—It was Cicero who said: "Time destroys the speculations of man, but it confirms the judgment of nature." Even a superficial knowledge of today's world shows that mankind still resists the judgment of nature, preferring to indulge in idle speculations, chiefly on how one can sow evil, and, in due course, harvest the good. Men still cling to the belief that there are no laws other than those which may be abrogated by ingenuity or interest. Indeed, it appears to be solace to the modern mind to emphasize the uncertainty of most of our knowledge. Truth is to be arrived at by argument or *diktat*. Empiricism is deemed to be the only philosophy affording a theoretical justification of what is known as democracy. Admirers of Plato are scathingly dismissed as examples of literary snobbery.

Nowhere today is the absence of any stable principle or moral consideration more evident than in official discussion of the Korean war. Juridical and political arguments there are in plenty, and of these we can take our choice. "War has its origin in the mind of man," said Mr. Atlee in one of his more enlightened moments; but little enquiry has been made into the state of mind that has found its fruition in the misery and distress that have arisen over a little-known country in Asia. There have been a few qualms and afterthoughts, it is true, but no one has made application of an idea expressed by George Bernard Shaw in the *Report of the Prison Enquiry Commission* (1922): "The effect of revenge or retribution from without is to destroy the conscience of the aggressor instantly."

From the beginning, however, there has been interesting correspondence in the newspapers here on certain aspects of the Korean affair. The letters really commenced with one sent jointly to *The Times* last summer, from Dr. Joseph Needham, noted Cambridge biochemist, and his wife, Mrs. D. M. Needham, who is also a biochemist, in which they expressed their distress at the news of an early American 500-ton bombing raid on industrial targets in North Korea. They referred to it as a case not of one highly industrialized country bombing another, but of the most highly industrialized country in the world bombing one of the least industrialized! From their own experience over a number of years in the field of technology and science in Asia, the Needhams felt that Americans (or the United Nations) had taken "a position in which they must seem, to the eyes of the masses of Asian peoples, implacably opposed to the relief of their poverty and the advance of their science and technology." Dr. and Mrs. Needham went on to say that they were in Chungking when the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, and they realized that the general feeling even amongst the Chinese was "that such a mass murder would never have been inflicted upon a European population, and it had been done to the Japanese only because, as a people of Mongoloid race, they were considered as something sub-human."

A later communication from Sir John Pratt, C.M.G., one-time British Consul-General in China, and, from 1939-41, Head of the Far Eastern Section of our Ministry of Information, protested continued recognition by the United States of Chiang Kai-shek, and reminded us that for some eighteen months, the Chinese "Nationalists" had been blockading the coast of China and bombing Shanghai, a city of six million inhabitants: "They have been supplied with arms and money by America. Therefore the United Nations have kept silent. But when the North Koreans invade South Korea, we are told that it is our duty under the Charter to line up with America to resist aggression."

The Bishop of Sheffield, with considerable daring, suggested that as the people of India and Pakistan constitute the majority of the British Commonwealth's populations, "in the long run, therefore, and particularly if these two peoples are to remain within the Commonwealth, it is more important that the [British] Government in all they say and do in Asia should keep in step as far as they can, and always in close touch, with the leaders of India and Pakistan." Viscount Hinchingbrooke, Conservative M.P., with an astonishing lapse of Tory tradition, maintained "that a drastic rearmament programme . . . will foster rather than prevent the growth of Communism at home. British policy should be based not on fear but on fact, and, in the absence of proof that Russia intends to conquer foreign countries by military force, it is best to keep the social and economic side of our revival uppermost."

These early comments from distinguished persons in this country give voice to a point of view that has grown stronger with the passage of time and each new "crisis."

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
UNPOPULAR CAUSES

MAYBE, in terms of percentages, the 2,200 draft delinquents a month that the FBI is having to look after are not a serious threat to the nation's security. After all, Mr. Hoover reports that a third of these young men who try to avoid military service are being persuaded to comply with the law. A lot of the violations are said to be "technical," and the object of the FBI's activities is to obtain compliance, not prosecution. In Germany, however, where General Dwight Eisenhower went in January to make an inspection of West Europe's defenses, the situation as to available fighting men is already ominous and growing more so. While there are plenty of ex-generals in Germany eager to get back into uniform, the vast majority of potential privates and corporals are insistently anti-war and anti-conscription. This is not something overheard in a pacifist rally, but based on facts assembled for General Eisenhower by the U.S. High Commission in West Germany. Actually, the poll studies made by the Commission are so disturbing that the detailed results are not going to be published at all. According to the *Wall Street Journal,* the following may be taken as a reliable account of West German attitudes toward war:

> No more than 5% of West Germany's fighting-age men would volunteer for service in a Western defense army. Less than 10% would serve even if drafted.
>
> Nearly half of all West Germans—including the women, the crippled and the men too old to draft—oppose participation in such an army, even if the Germans were granted full equality in it and full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

German newspapers outside the Soviet zone are showing practically no enthusiasm for military preparations, and the slanting of their stories illustrates how far German editors have departed from the staunch national solidarity and patriotism of other days. The *Wall Street Journal* correspondent continues:

> West German newspapers refer to proposed army units almost unanimously as "cannon-fodder" and "Himmelfahrt-kommandos—legions headed for heaven." Thousands of Germans gather around a "non-partisan" group in Hamburg which is distributing "neutrality cards" pledging the holder to fight neither for West nor for East.
>
> The prevailing anti-military sentiment in this nation today throws an eerie light on the important discussions of remilitarization now taking place in the capital.

So far as we know, General Eisenhower made no public statement with regard to West German reluctance to prepare for more fighting, but if a recent report by Drew Pearson can be relied upon, the popular North-Atlantic-Pact commander must feel considerable sympathy for the war-weariness of the common folk of Germany. Eisenhower once told a graduating class at West Point:

> War is mankind's most tragic and stupid folly. To seek or devise its deliberate provocation is a b1ack crime against all men. Though you follow the trade of the warrior you do so in the spirit of Washington—not of Genghis Khan.
>
> As a professional soldier you do not inherit a greater share than your citizen brothers of courage, endurance, and fortitude. Neither does your commission confer upon you distinctive right or privilege.... The arts and sciences, as well as the profession of arms, are bulwarks of society. And the greatest of all is the spirit—the will—for peace and justice.

On the question of "provoking" a war, the people of the United States are hearing less and less of what the people of other countries—including our former allies—think about our foreign policy. For example, there is very little quotation of what Prime Minister Nehru is actually saying, these days. The American press does not take kindly to his efforts for peace in Asia. As a writer of a letter to the New York *Times* has pointed out, Nehru's London speech at the Conference of Commonwealth Prime

Ministers in January was hardly mentioned in the metropolitan papers of either New York or Boston. The *Times* correspondent concludes:

> . . . Mr. Nehru for probably the last time beseeches the United Nations to admit the Peiping Government to full membership and participation. For his unceasing efforts on behalf of world peace I propose that the United Nations grant his great country a permanent seat on the Security Council.

America remains unresponsive to such appeals, but in England this feeling is widespread. As a Lieutenant-Colonel who identifies himself as "a Conservative in politics and a non-pacifist in outlook" said recently in the *New Statesman and Nation:*

> It appears to me, from the point of view of China, that the non-recognition by the U.S. of the Government of Mao Tse-tung, and the establishment of a base in Formosa, which can have no *raison d'être* apart from the reinstatement of Chiang Kai-shek, must have appeared to be an act of aggression, long previous to the advance by U.N. forces through Northern Korea to the frontier of Manchuria, and to the suggestion of General MacArthur that it might be necessary to rearm Japan.
>
> . . . There can be no conceivable justification for the imposition of sanctions, and it appears to me essential that His Majesty's Government should state categorically that Great Britain will vote against their imposition, and that it should insist on the discussion and if possible the settlement of all Far Eastern questions on terms of full equality with the Government of the Chinese People's Republic.
>
> We have no quarrel with that Government—the best that China has known for many years by all accounts, and it would be an act of criminal folly to compel its hostility, and to throw China, willy nilly, into Russia's arms.

As a final contribution to this somewhat miscellaneous round-up of commentary on the war situation, we present an extract from another *NS & N* article, written by a British businessman recently returned from China. He offers good evidence that the Chinese are still very far from being in "Russia's arms"—at least, so far as domestic policy is concerned. He was at once impressed by the absence of the Chinese civil servant's normal tendency to accept bribes and other forms of graft. The striking difference from Soviet methods, however, is illustrated in the following account of Chinese newspapers:

> . . . the Government requires Communist Party newspapers to publish all criticisms received and to print, within three days, replies to them. Even in the universities this trend is to be observed. No longer does the faculty rule the university with undisputed authority, nor are lectures listened to with respectful silence and accepted as absolute truth. The curriculum, the lecturer, the administration, are alike subjected to constant criticism. Faculty, students, char-women and gardeners are all now represented on the administration; and the result, I was told by a professor at Yenchin University, is that students regard the universities as "theirs," and no longer preparatory schools for education abroad....
>
> The enormous appetite for knowledge is reflected in the crowded bookshops of all the larger cities. These shops are rapidly increasing in numbers and are doing a huge business.... There seems to be no censorship of reading matter; I even saw Chiang Kai-shek's My *Destiny* for sale on the shelves of a bookshop in Pekin. . .

This article sounds like an unbiassed report. At any rate, we should be interested in other communications on the subject, from anyone psychologically able to avoid the view that a writer who says something favorable about the Chinese communists is necessarily a blind dupe of Kremlin propaganda.

COMMENTARY
IN FAVOR OF TARZAN

IF you're planning a trip to Tibet, counsels Lowell Thomas, Jr., and you want to make a hit with the teenaged Dalai Lama, take along some 16 mm. movies. But, he adds, they had better be some Tarzan pictures, as the Dalai Lama, along with the rest of the Tibetans, who are the world's most determined Isolationists, will not want to look at any film which shows the taking of either animal or human life. (Tarzan never kills wantonly, but is the ideal "natural" man in a "natural" environment.)

We have never had much sympathy for Mr. Weissmuller's creations until we found this note in the Appendix to Mr. Thomas, Jr.'s appropriately titled book, *Out of this World,* dealing with the recent expedition to Lhasa of the Thomases, father and son. As these two were only the seventh and eighth Americans to get permission to enter Tibet, the book makes a considerable point of the fact that the Tibetans still live pretty much the way they lived a thousand years ago; that they like their way and want to keep it unchanged. The only reason they let the Thomases in, it seems, is because Lowell Thomas, Sr., is an Eminent American, and the Tibetan Government, disliking the idea of a Red Chinese invasion, hoped that a friendly gesture toward America might do them some good in the international councils of the world.

The Tarzan pictures, we suppose, are about as free as movies can get from the more obvious corruptions and vices of modern times. While we confess some difficulty in sharing this interest with the Dalai Lama, it is fair to ask ourselves how much actual sense is there in the sophisticated preference of, say, *Of Mice and Men, The Kiss of Death,* and *Asphalt Jungle*—to name three films regarded as "exceptional"—to Weissmuller's or his successor's vaultings from vine to vine?

Wondering a little about Tarzan's popularity among Tibetans, we called the publicity department of the RKO studio, which makes the Tarzan pictures, and were favored with the following information: The Tarzan series is by far the most popular of any series in the international film market, and is particularly enjoyed by Asiatic peoples, who see in the muscled jungle hero a kind of folk-ideal of their own. And when Tarzan premieres in Egypt, it is an occasion for white ties and tails among the Egyptian elite. Tarzan never kills save when attacked, or to eliminate some menacing predatory beast.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

WE have come around to thinking that there are sufficient reasons for recommending parental perusal of a novelty book entitled *A Handy Guide to Grownups* by ten-year-old Jennifer Owsley (Random House, 1950). The pleasing humor which Miss Owsley dispenses can be fully appreciated by those of us older than ten if we take a few moments to inspect the machinations of the world as they must look to persons whose minds are unconcerned with the problem of having to accept all of the unnecessary complications of civilization. Dinner party conversations, bridge party gossip, the Federal Reserve banking system, modern war, political and religious anxieties and the secrecies imposed in respect to matters of sex—all these are food for humor, and it is a good thing that most ten-year-olds have an innate capacity for enjoying the quizzical and the ironic. Of course they don't do this with Noel Coward phrases, nor are their social criticisms apt to be particularly penetrating. But there is probably a half self-conscious level of wry humor mixed with "tolerance" for adults in most children. *A Handy Guide to Grownups* gives us a touch of both, especially while singling out for reference some of the most obvious differences between children and adults. Miss Owsley, for instance, informs her presumably juvenile audience that one trouble with almost all parents is that they are so "stiff." They can't enjoy very many things and therefore sit around a lot—usually doing a quantity of painful adding and subtracting about money.

Miss Owsley's most profound observations seem to be in allusions to the hypocrisy in our conventions, though of course she does not mention either "hypocrisy" or "conventions." "Guests," she says, "are always nice to children no matter how bratty they act, because grownup friends are more polite than honest, not like children who are the other way around." She continues:

Sex and religion are two subjects that no adults think what you say about is funny or not important. Some adults think you should not talk about them at all, and no adults think you should talk about them to their children. I don't understand why, but I will tell you some of the reasons about each one that people have told me.

Every child is going to grow up. Getting to be a woman or a man I should think is the most important thing that happens to children and very interesting to talk about. Some parents think so, too, and do not care how much you find out as long as what you find out is so. Others think it is bad even to think about it. Some think it is all right to talk about mothers and babies but not about fathers. One adult told me this is because it is so wonderful to be grown up you can't understand about it ahead of time, and they want to keep it for a secret surprise. I do not believe this, because if it makes them so happy to be grown up then I should think they would go on being happy as long as being grown up lasts. But I do not think adults are so very much happier than children, even though they are grown up, and are the right size for everything, and know all the secrets. They are happy and unhappy in different ways and more secret.

Religion is even worse. Religion is what adults have when they get together and agree about God. I should think they hardly ever would, but they do, because religions mostly have churches, so they can meet and take up collections and so on, and there are lots of churches and nearly everyone belongs to one of them. God is the most mysterious thought there is, and even some adults do not claim to know about Him, but they all think they know more than each other.

Some people think about God the way they do about Santa Claus. They know Santa Claus is magic, but they want their children to think he is real, and they are mad if you tell their children he is magic. Some think God is magic, too, but they think it will make their children be good if they think He is real.

Other adults think God is real, but they think it will hurt God's feelings if you think the wrong things about Him. They think God will not like their children if they make mistakes and do not understand Him.

The kind of adults that I think are the easiest to talk to are the kind that do not think it will bother God any for the children to think their own thoughts, but this kind is scarcer than the others. You had better keep your mouth shut until you know what kind

> of adult you are talking to. At least no adults think what you say about God is funny, or "cute" (thank goodness).
>
> Some adults do not talk about God themselves and think preachers and Sundayschool teachers should do this. They like it if you say you go to Sunday-school but if they ask you which one, look out. If it is very much different from the one they go to, they will think your mother is not bringing you up right. I can't explain this. You had just better not talk churches except at home where you know the ropes, until you understand more about it than I do.

It is always hard to tell how much of the style of such writing is conditioned by the desire to be cute. If so, approbation for "cuteness" is almost entirely an adult-originated conditioning and we shall have to make allowances. Were it not for this particular always-lurking blight, often affecting the formation of precocious thoughts in the young, we would feel that a national publication discussing child's-eye views of the way in which adults act would be a good antidote to the pompous theorists (most of them parents) who forget that children are people.

One thought which always intrigues us when we find ourselves adopting a partisan favoritism for children is that if all adults were to retire from the armed forces and leave the children of hostile countries to confront each other, we might conceivably be able to get a workable peace. From a psychological point of view, this idea is not as fantastic as it sounds. The "complex" of militarism, like all complexes, is constructed over a long period of time through giving deference to the hostility-systems of free enterprise or realpolitik. Children are also hostile to one another at times, we shall grant, but they have not yet invested their outbreaks of egoism with complicated rationalizations.

A child's response to some form of "battle-situation" is often a dual one. He may fear or he may be angry, or both, but he also may have an equally strong desire to talk with the potential enemy in a kindly fashion. The odds of his having a Will to Peace are often fifty-fifty or better, whereas the odds favoring the manifestation of a genuine Will to Peace among nations is considerably less.

FRONTIERS

Psychic Reflections

THERE are many things which might be said about Gina Cerminara's *Many Mansions* (William Sloane Associates, New York, $3.75), but one comment worth making is that, in the middle of the twentieth century, a modern scholar with a doctoral degree in psychology has written another chapter in the history of magic, and a responsible New York publisher has seen fit to issue it as a serious volume of both psychological and philosophical research.

The book is about the life and work—mostly the work—of Edgar Cayce (pronounced "Kaysee"), known in his later years as the Miracle Man of Virginia Beach. Cayce, who died in 1945, was a psychic healer—or, more properly, a psychic diagnoser. In the course of a busy life Cayce gave "readings" to some thirty thousand people who were sick in either body or mind. His biography, *There Is a River,* by Thomas Sugrue, appeared in 1948. Miss Cerminara's work is chiefly concerned with Cayce's clairvoyant perception of the past history of his patients—not merely their past in this life, but the past of former incarnations as well, about which Cayce seems to have felt no doubt, nor for that matter, does Miss Cerminara. In fact, the publishers, apparently deeply impressed themselves by Cayce's revelations, announce on the jacket that *Many Mansions is* "The case for the magnificent possibility that reincarnation is a truth."

Before finding fault with this book—and there are, we think, some faults to find—it is only fair to distinguish between what is Cayce in this book, and what is Cerminara. In the first place, Cayce himself wrote nothing, and shunned all "publicity." He was an exceedingly earnest and humble man. When he found that he had some sort of clairvoyant powers, he was genuinely puzzled. Later, when the communications he gave during his "trances" revealed an apparent insight into the "past incarnations" of the people who sought his help, he was not only puzzled but upset as well. Cayce was a devout believer in the Christian revelation. He didn't *want to* believe in reincarnation at all. Finally, however, after much soul-searching, he reconciled himself to the idea. Evidently, the things he said while asleep made so much sense to him later, when awake, that his own integrity made him a reincarnationist. In further credit to Mr. Cayce, it should be noted that he never turned his strange power to large-scale money-making. He regarded his psychic gift as a special sort of trust and used it for the good of others.

Unlike Cayce, Miss Cerminara is articulate and able to present Cayce's interpretation of life as a definite *thesis.* She takes Cayce's "readings" on reincarnation and other matters as a kind of "chart" for guidance in the unknown sea of psychic or soul existence, and then reasons about the conclusions which may be drawn from the chart. On the whole, the book is thoughtfully written, although its basic approach, which is through Cayce's clairvoyant perceptions, seems a somewhat second-hand approach to philosophical discovery. Further, there is something a little disturbing about Cayce's pat "character analyses," especially the ones which reach back into a million years or so of supposed "egoic" history, to come up with statements like the following:

> A marked instance of temperamental disparity is to be seen in the case of a child who was five years old when a life reading was taken on him. He was characterized as selfish, unwilling to acknowledge his error when in the wrong, and indifferent. His outlook was, in its impersonality and its dedication to purely intellectual values, essentially that of a research scientist. In the previous incarnation he had devoted himself to steam as an instrument of power. Before that he had worked with chemical explosives; before that he had been absorbed in mechanics; before that he had been an electrical engineer in Atlantis.

You have the feeling that, any moment, someone is going to interrupt your quiet session with this book, and say, "Can you give me a hand over here for a minute, Mac? The mainspring of the Cosmos needs limbering up a bit, and I can't

quite handle it by myself." This is a slightly dianetic sort of version of reincarnation, and too many of the readings fall into a few, stereotyped classes of diagnosis for the critical reader to feel much confidence in Cayce's blue-prints of "past lives."

Nevertheless, the life of Edgar Cayce and the carbon copies of his "readings" given in thirty thousand cases make pretty impressive stuff. It would be fairly easy to be bowled over by it all, if it weren't for the fact of scores of characters similar to Cayce in the history of psychic events. A person who is susceptible to such material—who really *wants* to believe in something new and wonderful—ought to take time out to do some careful reading in certain forgotten volumes published in the last century—books like Ennemoser's *History of Magic*, and Andrew Jackson Davis' *The Magic Staff*. Cayce seems to be the same sort of seer as Swedenborg, although by no means of the same stature. And his likeness to Andrew Jackson Davis, a sort of patron saint of the Spiritualists, is quite striking. Both Cayce and Davis needed to be entranced before their diagnostic vision would work for them.

The difficulty with "doctrines" or "teachings" which become available through the supernatural vision of men like Jackson or Cayce is that, true or false, reasonable or unreasonable, you have to take them or leave them—you can't really study them and then figure things out on your own. Speaking for ourselves, we'd rather have the keys to wisdom than the wisdom; we'd rather have someone give us a good set of plans—the kind of plans you can read without an expert to look over your shoulder—than a ready-built mansion in the sky.

Many Mansions is literally full of echoes of the ancient wisdom religions. *There Is a River* was full of them, too. But it is always Cayce who hears the echoes, and never the reader. A revelation, as some wit has remarked, always happens to somebody else.

Mr. Cayce may have hit upon a lot of facts, and he undoubtedly relieved a lot of people from suffering. Let us honor him for that. And let us recognize that he seems to have enjoyed certain powers or capacities of "psychic" cognition which the rest of us do not ordinarily exercise. But there is no real reason to think that he looked directly at the electric truth. Whatever he saw, he saw it in a mirror, and it was *his* seeing, not ours. There is no real common denominator of philosophic principle—the tool by which every man sees for himself—in these books about Edgar Cayce. They give evidence of something, but not of reincarnation—not unless you are willing to accept this oblique sort of reporting, are willing to take a second-hand account of what someone else saw in a mirror, and call it your own.

Has it Occurred to Us?

IN some respects, an appreciable portion of modern reading material may fairly be called a burlesque of Evil. The movie-makers' "Frankensteins" and the varieties of horrible experiences contributed by some fiction-writers are but two instances of unseemly conduct in the fact of psychological abnormalities. A kind of irresponsible levity is curiously present, as if the dreadful caricatures belonged to some pre-historic Mammoth country, and were fair game for twentieth-century literary huntsmen stalking fresh meat. That there *are* minds monstrously deformed, and families desperately trying to cope with degrees and kinds of insanity which outrank the most lurid creations of fiction—is hardly remembered. Pitiful cases like Pearl Buck's "child that never grew"—where, apparently, an innocent childhood continues virtually without change, inside an ageing body—are mild and beautiful, compared to the manias which intermittently possess fine intellects, imprisoning a sensitive (and often shuddering) consciousness within a wild and destructive brain. Yet, unconscious of or unconcerned with these realities, the fiction-writer plays upon the perverted taste for horror and vice, making a farce of tragic facts.

Has it occurred to us that this exploitation of the human mind's capacity for hideous imaginings is more than careless? What is there to choose between a mind victimized by hateful and vicious thoughts, and a mind *used* for dwelling on, expanding, and vivifying the same type of "thinking"? What, also, will be the natural outcome for a person who, while incapable of inventing such fancies, submerges himself regularly in the brutal stream-of-consciousness provided by someone else? The violence of war news, disaster reports, and the accidents so common in any city, cannot be avoided. Few lives reach their close without encountering their share of misfortune, and it may be good to try to prepare oneself for an emergency. But stories written to horrify and dismay the reader are of small value to one who desires broadening perceptions and deepening truths.

It was not a psychologist in the modern sense, but a peripatetic philosopher of the New England woods, who noted that "When we are shocked at vice we express a lingering sympathy with it. Dry rot, rust, and mildew shock no man, for none is subject to them." Thus, the dark and tangled ways of insane ideation can be made to reveal the pitfalls on the way to a balanced mind, but not unless the insanity is sanely, calmly, and penetratingly examined. The first line of research, so to say, is indicated in the aphoristic title of a recent book, *ideas have consequences.* Each one finds distinct clues for the government of his own house of thoughts when there comes to his attention a "house" in which an idea, instead of the *maker* of ideas, is master, and the best corrective for dismay at another's folly is to notice how the excess developed by exaggerating some common tendency.

Now, while the present seems a heyday for the creators of Frankensteins, the authors who distill living essences out of human conduct and character are not exactly inaccessible. J. B. Priestley, who must be familiar by at least one of his plays or books to almost everyone, dropped an interesting paragraph on "The Evil Eye" into a series of reflections contributed to a recent number of *Vogue.* Startling as the title is, standing alone in the ironic emphasis of a white space, it heads an item whose tone is far from macabre. "There is an Evil Eye and I have seen it hundreds and hundreds of times," Priestley writes. "Usually it is either a dirty grey or a very faded blue, but it has always, whatever its colour, a boiled or jellied look. It never lights up. Spread before it every treasure of your mind and heart, and still it never lights up. All that happens, if you are not careful, is that the treasures themselves begin to shrink and lose their colour and bloom in that dull gaze. Anything generous, heartening, likely to uplift the spirit of men, soon begins to look foolish and unnecessary when that Eye is turned upon it....

The idea is unsound, the plan will not work; something like your notion has been tried before and was no good; kindly close the door on your way out."

In what cauldrons of hell, Priestley asks, "fired by what demons of sterility and dullness, are those Eyes first boiled and jellied?" Fantasy? Not really. Only the mind with some spark of originality—or, what will do just as well, the determination not to be put off the practice of cogitating, no matter what the odds—can be trusted not to go sterile, even on the subject of sterility.

Lest Priestley be left "in the dark," we should attach here part of another paragraph in the same series. For the proposition that "there is more than one kind of Interplanetary Communication," Priestley has this evidence: "The son who grins across the dining table—why, you have known him from the cradle, and every look, gesture, tone, is endearingly familiar. But let him pull a poem out of his head, thus giving you a glimpse of his own world, and you might be wandering on Mars or Venus. There is some overlapping of knowledge, there is some sharing of experience, just as there might be among the folk who stare at the same sun from different planets; but this world he reveals is a long way from yours. And communication is therefore from world to world, across spaces that are all the more baffling because they belong to Time; and merely to understand, let alone arrive at sympathy, demands skill and patience, an astronomical tolerance. Indeed, although it frequently happens, it is almost a miracle."

Has it occurred to us that there must be fully as many unknown bright peaks to human life as there are yawning caverns of darkness? Neither delight nor dismay should keep us from trying to consider each extreme with *good* humor and a modest spirit, so that "interplanetary communication" may become less and less of a miracle.