

PROBLEMS OF MATURITY

WHOEVER coined the expression, "feeling-tone," added considerably to the language of psychological analysis. It is a bit depressing, at first, to realize how much of human decision depends upon the "feeling-tones" which have become associated with certain words, or phrases. Years ago, George Hartmann, now psychologist at Roosevelt College in Chicago, conducted an experiment in political psychology, investigating the influence of feeling-tones on the opinions of voters. A questionnaire was issued to several hundred people in Pennsylvania, inviting them to signify their preference in relation to twenty statements of national policy, ten radical and ten conservative in implication. The results of the poll showed that "feeling-tone" won the day, hands down. While 55 per cent of those replying favored collectivism, in either its communistic or socialistic form, the most pleasing party designation was found to be "Republican," with "Communist" at the bottom of the list! This is explained by the fact that, in some of the statements submitted, political theories were described but not named. Dr. Hartmann commented:

An analysis of the tables of beliefs is a revelation of human inconsistency. Ninety per cent of the radically minded thought well of a protective tariff. Of those who would refuse teaching licenses to believers in socialism, 65 per cent endorsed socialistic proposals. Stranger still, the extreme anti-Socialists were more liberal or socialistic than the professed Socialists in responding to such propositions as "the reward of manual labor as compared with the share taken by employers has been in just proportion to the services rendered" or "the power of huge fortunes in this country endangers democracy."

What chance, you may say, has democracy, under such conditions? Even if the confusion is a bit overdrawn, and voters more likely to know what they are about in actual elections, there is still plenty of evidence that feeling-tone plays a decisive part in the formation of public opinion.

There are some subjects which you cannot even discuss with calm in a heterogeneous gathering. If some thoughtful individual tries to get a hearing, not for Communism, but for some of the criticisms of capitalist society which have been used extensively in Communist propaganda, you can usually see the glint in the eye of others who are getting ready to shout him down.

So, it is natural to ask, has feeling-tone any constructive role in human relations? The best example of its use, perhaps, is in the nursery. Small children respond almost entirely to feeling-tones, long before they are able to understand rational communications. Indications of warning, reproof, encouragement, and love are given by intonation rather than words. Later on, the child comes to read whole phrases as representing a kind of "code" of his parents' feeling-tones. Then, in adult life, slogans and cant phrases, and all the clichés of controversy become part of the feeling-tone vocabulary. More subtly, certain words come to enjoy a special prestige, and are sometimes almost enough to win an argument, simply because they have the ring of "advanced thinking." Here, the feeling-tone is effective in shaping intellectual fashions. Popular journalists, too, are adepts in the use of feeling-tones. Almost without thinking about it, they are able to "slant" a story with words charged with feeling-tone in a way that gains approval for the view they wish to spread.

This is all pretty elementary, from the outlook of the modern psychologist or even the advertising man. The one is a student of the non-rational responses of human beings, the other a practitioner of the art of playing feeling-tones for a profit. The educator, however, and the sociologist concerned with social betterment, have to pursue the study further. There is the question of *institutions* as the means by which feeling-tones achieve formidable power through

stereotypes of mass opinion. A familiar illustration would be the institutional type of explanation of the great differences between human beings. In India, for centuries, if not thousands of years, the socially and psychologically oppressive caste system has given the sanction of religion to practices which would be completely repugnant to people with no knowledge of the Hindu tradition of caste. For example, if a Brahman passes in the shadow of a pariah, he suffers a polluting experience. The term "untouchable," applied to those who were born into the families of the outcast groups, is sufficiently graphic to convey the vast weight of social rejection applied to generation after generation of these unhappy people. The recovery of the Harijans (as Gandhi renamed the Untouchables, meaning "beloved of God") from this cloud of theological condemnation will probably occupy many generations more. While the abolition of untouchability by the Constitution of the Indian Republic was a great stride in legal reform, the psychological changes in tradition that must follow are bound to lag far behind. Not only must the proud believers in caste distinction submit to entirely new concepts of human relations and basic human value, but the Harijans themselves must learn to think of themselves as capable of the same high accomplishments as those of other men.

Conceivably, the conquest of India by the British, who brought their own notions of racial superiority, applying them to the Indians with indifferent impartiality, was one means by which the cruel injustice of the caste system was made evident to those who were eventually to work for its abolition. What else save prolonged humiliation and the deep sense of wrong which must have been felt by the refined members of the oldest civilization on earth could have disturbed beliefs which were hallowed by many centuries and had become so ingrained as to seem an immutable part of the natural order of things? Similar processes of history accomplished the breakup of the feudal system in Europe, reaching a climax of shuddering violence in the French

Revolution; and, in the United States, the Civil War brought the sudden downfall of the social order erected upon human slavery by the Southern aristocracy.

Feeling-tones, then, may be regarded as operating in two ways. First, in relation to infants and small children, they serve to communicate values by non-rational means. It is difficult to see how this use of feeling-tones can be abandoned, since every home is an organic matrix of feeling-tones, laying the foundation for the educational processes which ought to follow. In adult society, however, feeling-tones come into prominence as the emotional means of communicating *non-rational* values—values, that is, which, by any impartial standard, may be seen to contribute to prejudice and support partisan ends. The use of feeling-tones among adults tends to prolong the psychological attitudes of childhood and the susceptibility to non-rational suggestion. But there is this qualification in regard to adults: In order to be acceptable, the feeling-tones imposed upon them must be shrewdly interlaced with ideological rationalizations which make them *seem* to have the support of reason. The Nazis, for example, took off from the sensitive feelings of injustice evoked among millions of Germans by the Versailles Treaty; they allowed self-righteousness full scope by fixing the blame for the plight of Germany on Jews, Liberals, and Pacifists, and then, with these assumptions, developed a "logical" program which promised to restore to Germans what had been "taken away" from them. The logic may have been weak, but the emotional foundations were strong, and by the time otherwise normal people began to suspect that they had become involved in an almost maniacal enterprise, they were committed beyond the point of return.

The same sort of analysis might be applied to the Communists, to the fanatical racism of the dominant party in South Africa, and to, in fact, any extreme movement which shocks the rest of the world by its extremes of emotional hostility and aggression. Instead of condemning them as

"insane" or peculiarly satanic men, what is needed is an analysis of the way in which primitive feeling-tones have been linked with the similitude of reasoned conclusions, to produce a ruthless drive to power.

But can we draw so sharp a dividing line between children and adults? Manifestly, this hides the most complex aspects of the problem. While adults are *capable* of rational behavior, in large numbers—the millions involved in the mass societies of modern times—adults, we see, are easily gulped into accepting the non-rational judgments by feeling-tones so long as they can be made to *think* they are being rational. Here, undoubtedly, is the central problem of maturity. How can people protect themselves from this sort of self-deception? What can educators do to establish sentinels of the mind against partisan forms of rationalization? How can you tell a rationalization when you see one?

The problem narrows down to the question of whether or not there are feeling-tones which invite the development of impartial reason. If there are, then the program of the educator should be exceedingly clear. It becomes his job to surround the young with environmental influences which place the highest value upon loyalty to impartial decision. This leads directly, we soon see, to a study of the implications of religious ideas. Religious ideas are at the root of all feeling and thinking about the nature of man. If the estimate of man in a particular religious system is low, the feeling-tones of primary value communicated to the young by that religion will erect barrier after barrier to the free development of critical intelligence. Fear and reliance on institutional authority will rank high in the scale of feeling-tone conditioning, since what man cannot do for himself, someone else must do for him, and this "someone" always turns out to be either "God" or his priests and interpreters, or the State and its hierarchy of rulers and petty officials. No term is ever left out of this equation, unless the society is permitted to fall into complete collapse.

Sooner or later, we shall have to make our peace with the reality and effect of feeling-tones in human life recognize that their role in human relations is precisely what makes us all our brothers' keepers, the keepers of the freedom of mind of coming generations. We shall never be able to work out a constitutional formula which will allow us to evade attention to this infinitely delicate and infinitely important moral relationship of man to man. There is no formula that will safeguard the growth of the human individual to the freedom which lies beyond all formulas. Surely, the first duty of education is to make this clear.

Letter from **CENTRAL EUROPE**

INNSBRUCK.—For twenty years, Austria's political status has been marked by extraordinary confusion. The Social-Democrats still claim that the regimes of both Dollfuss and Schuschnigg were "illegal," in so far as they established a system of "Bourgeois-Fascism" and ruled as civil dictators. Some politicians and historians are of the opinion that Austria never ceased to remain an independent country, since, when Hitler in 1938 declared it to be a part of Germany, Austrians had no part in the decision, while others point to the fact that, in course of a plebiscite, the great majority legalized his step afterward and that most of the Powers acknowledged the fact. The Government set up by Allied occupation authorities in 1945 created the (second) Austrian Republic, as it is called today, but the independence of this State has up to the present remained quite questionable. The territory is still in possession of the four Military Powers; four High Commissioners reserve the last word for themselves in all state affairs of importance and a Peace Treaty (in this case called "State Treaty") is not yet even in sight. And should the State Treaty agreed upon a few years ago by American, British, French and Russian delegates be finally signed, it would by no means re-establish Austria's sovereignty.

Hoping to attract attention to the pathetic fate of their country, Austrians have produced a movie comedy, "April 1, 2000," featuring the High Commissioners, two generations from now, with long grey beards, finally leaving the country. They realized at last that they had been completely forgotten by their several governments!

Of course, there are other ways for the world to learn of Austria's unhappy position. Brazil has made resolute attempts to get the Austrian calamity before the UNO, and, more recently, genuine documents, notes and other original materials have found their way into print in the

memoirs of trustworthy men who played a part on one or the other side in those fateful years. The Austrian authorities, from time to time, make use of these papers and publications, and a series of articles just printed is supposed to show how Austria passed into German hands due mostly to the fact that in 1938 Powers like Great Britain, U.S.A., and France not only maintained diplomatic relations with the Nazi Government in Berlin, but did nothing to prevent the Nazis from taking Vienna.

However, Baron Ernst von Weizsäcker, the former State Secretary of the Foreign Office in Berlin, spoke in 1947 of the publication of documents of the Foreign Office as doubtful with regard to determining "absolute history." He emphasized that the researchers might uncover facts, but that neither the motives nor the real and original intentions of the Nazis would be found by this means. (Weizsäcker was an opponent of Hitler.)

What the former German State Secretary said is true. Nor is what he said limited to the Austrian-German episode or to the machinations of the National Socialists. Official communications between the nations of the world are almost universally expressed in a kind of diplomatic code.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

DEFINITION OF MAN IN DRAMA

WHILE this Department boasts no special background concerning dramatic art, either past or contemporary, the prospect of reading Joseph Wood Krutch's *"Modernism" in Modern Drama* was nonetheless an interesting one. We admire Mr. Krutch because we admire philosophers, and he has, we think, a gift for dealing with any subject—even the smallest events of nature—in philosophically educative terms.

In *"Modernism" in Modern Drama* Krutch is a specialist at home in his own field. Until 1953 he served as professor of dramatic literature at Columbia University, and for nearly thirty years has functioned professionally as a drama critic, so that here, naturally enough, his philosophizing capacities seem to focus with great precision on significant trends of opinion. Those who have a special interest in drama will doubtless value the author's review of tendencies in modern plays, while others, like ourselves, can be grateful for the opportunity provided to examine ideas continually discussed in MANAS as found in the art of the theater.

In his foreword, Mr. Krutch indicates that since dramatists often attempt a deliberate "break with tradition," playwrights may supply excellent evidence of the directions taken by the contemporary mind—what it has gravitated away from and where it seems to be going. Krutch explains his purpose in the following words:

The thesis I have tried to develop is that the modern drama of Europe and America, like modern literature in general, affords much material from the examination of which may be obtained a clear idea of what some of the radically new, or at least supposedly new, ideas were. The conclusion drawn is that at least certain of these ideas are such that they inevitably lead, not to a bright future, but to something like intellectual and moral paralysis.

No one, I hope, will accuse me of being biased or unfair. Or rather I hope that no one will fail to understand that in order to make a point which I believe to be worth making I have permitted myself to be both biased and unfair—at least in so far as any

presentation of only one side of a case is inevitably "unfair." In the essays that follow, more than once I disclaim any attempt to discuss the drama as such or to pass a literary judgment upon it. I speak as a moralist, not as a critic. Perhaps, however, it is well to go even further and to admit that my purpose is frankly polemic. I had and I have an ax to grind. I seek to persuade my readers that much of what others have presented to them as the convictions necessary to anyone who wished to believe himself "modern" is actually incompatible with any good life as the good life has generally been conceived of during many centuries before the nineteenth. In defense of my method I might cite the opinion of a good modernist, Bernard Shaw, who once maintained that the best way to get at the truth of a matter is not to try to be impartial but to have it debated with reckless partiality from both sides. It is something like this which I from my side attempt to do.

Beginning with Ibsen's first plays, Krutch shows that the controversial Scandinavian declared with tremendous impact, that "all truth and all morality are relative—to a situation or to an epoch in history"—that there are "no truths which can be found and held to." Krutch continues:

Here we have reached something that, for the first time, might actually justify talk about a chasm separating the past from the future. A new world which had come to accept an all-inclusive relativity actually would be not merely different from, it would be genuinely discontinuous with an old one in which, on the whole, it was assumed that some unchanging principles were eternally established.

What are some of the implications of the "ethical relativity" theme in drama? First of all, life in a complex society seems to be relieved of certain elements of responsibility; one can relinquish the notion that he must try to discover truth, goodness and beauty in the welter of confusion. But there is more to the matter. An ethical relativist *can* be lighthearted. Both Ibsen and O'Neill are far from happy-go-lucky, which suggests that their advocacy of ethical relativism was not caused by their discovery of what they considered to be an attractive fact, but stemmed rather from the feeling that, as Krutch puts it, "to face reality may be to face more than one can bear." It takes a capacity for perceiving delicate distinctions, Krutch indicates, though, to

differentiate between the radically pessimistic conclusion of O'Neill "that only in a world of things-as-they-are-not can a human being live," and the qualified pessimism of an Ibsen.

Both Ibsen and O'Neill tell horror stories, but Ibsen is saying, not that "truth" is impossible to discover, but only that finding it is much more difficult than is implied in traditional drama. Even in Ibsen, then, Krutch finds elements of the Greek conception of tragedy, but Ibsen also articulated much of the morbid despair which characterizes so much of introspection in modern times.

In a later chapter, while discussing Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Krutch seeks the hairline distinction between an unrelieved pessimist and the playwright who shakes his head and says: "anything except pessimism is *almost* impossible to justify." Miller apparently believes in "social determinism," but is not quite content to leave the matter there (as, incidentally, is the case with a number of present-day sociologists). Krutch remarks:

Death of a Salesman could be interpreted, not as a demonstration of the workings of social determinism, but as a study of the effects of moral weakness and irresponsibility. Willy Loman is a victim of society, but he is also a victim of himself. He accepted an essentially vulgar and debased as well as a false system of values. He himself says, and the audience seems to be expected to believe him, that he might have led a happy life if he had followed his own bent and become, for example, a carpenter, instead of submitting to the prejudice which makes a salesman more respectable than a man who works with his hands. His tragic guilt—and it is his, not society's—was, in this view, a very old-fashioned one. He was not true to himself. Thus the moral of the play becomes a classical moral and must necessarily presume both the existence of the classical ego and the power to make a choice.

Seen in this light, Miller becomes a moralist, at least in the sense and in much the same fashion that Ibsen was still a moralist. He has found his way back along the road which leads to determinism and the disappearance of the ego at least to the point where the dramatic disciplines of Ibsen first entered upon it, and *Death of a Salesman* thus becomes a qualified

reaffirmation of the individual's privilege of being, within certain limits, what he chooses to be.

Evidently there are modern dramatists who have long been riding the same teeter-totter that so many contemporary educators and intellectuals are trying to bring to precarious balance. The playwright, perhaps, is more pessimistic than the academic intellectuals, partly because it is his task to exhibit the emotional state of his subjects' lives. The educator and the essayist, on the other hand, are free to weave their idealisms imaginatively, without having to incarnate these qualities in *people*. The novelist, too, has an advantage in this regard, if he wants to use it, for he is permitted lengthy asides which would kill a play.

These distinctions, however, are not fundamental. The modern drama, as Krutch says, is "open to the same charge that may be made against modern literature as a whole. Its tendency has been to undermine the foundations of post-Renaissance civilization." The trend is toward discouragement and apathy, since, as our aesthetes sense, we live in a time of such multiplying psychological complexities that it is harder each year to formulate authentic ideals—and only the man with authentic ideals can have the capacity for exchanging pessimism for determined optimism.

Krutch concludes "*Modernism*" in *Modern Drama* with paragraphs indicating why "capitulation to meaninglessness" sometimes seems as attractive as it is catastrophic:

Post-Renaissance civilization rests upon many premises, among which the following are crucial. First, man is a creature capable of dignity. Second, life as led in this world, not merely life as it might be led either in the Christian's City of God or the Marxist's Socialist State, is worth living. Third, the realm of human rationality is the realm in which man may most fruitfully live.

An astonishing proportion of all serious modern works of literature imply the rejection of one or more of these premises. When determinism, psychological or economic, has deprived man of even a limited power of self-determination and at the same time denied the validity of any of the ethical beliefs to which he may be

attached, then man has ceased to have dignity. When either the radical pessimist or the Utopian reformer has represented life "under the present social system" as inevitably frustrated or defeated, then the Renaissance thesis that life in this world is worth living is denied. When the subject of fiction becomes, as it so often does become, the obsessions, fixations, neuroses, and perversions to which the human psyche sometimes falls victim, then the premise which states that human rationality is the most important human realm is also denied. A break with the past as radical as that which modern thought and much modern drama seems to advocate unintentionally prepares the way for the apes to take over. A civilized man is likely to find it increasingly difficult to live in either the physical or the spiritual world which has gradually been evolving. It offers him neither the physical nor the spiritual peace without which he cannot exist. But the apes, like the gangster in *Winterset*, find it not uncongenial. They can survive the physical chaos, and they are not aware of the spiritual one.

COMMENTARY ON LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

ONE advantage the world of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table had over the modern world was the tradition of looking for trouble. The modern world fears trouble, will do almost anything to avoid it, while the Knights went out to look for it, on the hypothesis that, as Dinadan told the young Tristram (see "Children"), "Part of having a great destiny is having great troubles."

One may argue, of course, that looking for trouble in the modern world is carrying coals to Newcastle. We already have more than we can handle. But the answer to this seems easy. We have the kind of trouble which always comes from running away from it. We are *overtaken* by trouble precisely because our most important ideal has been a smoothly operating, trouble-free world.

Our quarrel, here, is really with the nineteenth-century conception of progress, which maintained that, with the advance of science, all human difficulties would eventually be ironed out, and all men would have sufficient leisure to pursue their heart's desire. This theory of progress is blatantly ignorant of the true character of human experience. The Knights of the Round Table knew better. They thought of life as a quest. They recognized that, sooner or later, a man who is worth his salt will have to face some great crisis by which he will be tested almost beyond his endurance. Actually, it was the Knight's readiness to meet this trial which made him worthy to be a knight. The idea of trouble did not frighten him-or make him feel "insecure." Trouble was his career. His knightly oath committed him to finding troubles and straightening them out.

Not everybody feels this way about troubles, but then, not everybody wanted to be a knight. The point is that King Arthur's time, whenever it was, was a time when a noble ideal was available for anyone who wanted to live up to it. You could take it or leave it, but you couldn't pretend

there was no such ideal. It was an ideal which everyone held in reverence because of the nobility it involved.

The idea that an individual man can and ought to have an individual destiny is almost non-existent, today. This is the precious element once supplied to the world by the aristocracy, but which was ultimately perverted as "aristocracy" came to mean an hereditary group accorded special privileges by the *status quo*. The cycle of revolutions which wiped out the aristocracy and the prerogatives of blood and title was inevitable and necessary, but there was no need to abolish the aristocratic ideal of human excellence attained by ordeal and struggle. The fact is that every form of human excellence we recognize and acknowledge is born, even today, from ordeal and struggle, yet we neglect this tremendously important fact in our theories of progress and our theories of education. It is as though we no longer understand the high pulsings of the human heart.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

HAVING just finished reading a modern version of one of knighthood's famous tales—*The Enchanted Cup*, the story of Tristram and Isolde, by Dorothy James Roberts—we are prepared to join for a time the company of those who deplore most children's lack of familiarity with legend. In the first place, a knowledge of the tales and legends of the past enriches present cultural experience; in *Tristram and Isolde*, for instance, we encounter the inspiration for the opera of that name, and share some of the feelings which its performance has evoked for music lovers in all lands. Then, since most authors find they cannot do without, or, rather, would not like to do without, the freedom of symbolic and figurative expression, one who knows the legends is better able to understand the books he reads. Each leading character of legend has become a familiar symbol, part of the language and resources of imaginative literature. On this basis, too, we can see a reason for knowing something of the fairy tales set down by Grimm and Andersen.

There are, however, other reasons for supporting the continuity of folklore as cultural background. Folklore and legend involve heroes, and, as we have maintained before, we are quite short of heroes these days. The Buck Rogers boys do not count, not because there is anything intrinsically wrong with them, but because they derive their glamour in large part from the amazing mechanical beasts they ride and the weapons they use. A real hero carries his glamour inside, as did *Tristram and Lancelot*. True, these doughty knights did well on the field of honor, but even here they did so with only a tipped spire of wood or a sword in their hands and a horse to ride. To be a man in those days began with having greatness of heart rather than an aptitude for mechanics, and since many modern educators fear we have fallen for belief that the latter requisite is all-sufficient, we record our preference for heroes like *Tristram*. He should be encouraged to ride more often, in his antiquated manner, for he has more human significance than a space-ship.

One passage in particular in the Roberts book took our fancy. Plagued by contradictory vows which circumstances had obliged him to make, *Tristram* is comforted by his good friend, Knight of the Round

Table Dinadan. "Part of having a great destiny, my son," said Dinadan, "is having great troubles." Here, perhaps, is a clue to the impressiveness of tragedy. The Greeks told tales of disaster, but they were always man-sized disasters, and the heroes were cut to fit the size of their troubles. They sunived against incredible odds, or sometimes they perished, but the reader knows in either case that the man was worthy of the situation and the situation worthy of the man. Ordinary mortals are thus encouraged to treat their own tribulations, seldom as arduous, with a measure of lightness.

Some children have great troubles, which is different from having a psychological sickness of which one is unaware. To have a great trouble, and to be aware of it, and, moreover, to sense that the great trouble is somehow part of one's natural destiny, can be a spur to effort. To be very traditional in respect to America for a moment, we recall that both Lincoln and Washington had very great troubles. So did Thomas Paine. The tradition of sainthood is similarly endowed. The Buddha had far from an easy time of it, Socrates found no bed of roses for his night's repose, Christ had the better—or rather worse part of a world against him, and Gandhi knew his tortured moments. Perhaps if our children could be led to have great troubles instead of petty difficulties, they would turn out shaped more closely to the mold of heroes. It is from petty difficulties, from small jealousies and selfishnesses that the famous neuroses are born—not from times and situations which truly try the soul.

But how shall we go about leading our insulated children from small troubles to great ones, even if we can bear to do so apparently heartless a thing? Is the time of great troubles over, and nothing left by way of exchange except the neuroses and twisted psyches compounded out of pettiness?

One must, it is true, have a remarkable capacity to take on a great trouble. For there are no troubles, no tragedies, unless we are aware of them, unless our own intensity of feeling carries them out of the classification of mere discomfiture. A trouble is a problem to be solved, an anguish of the spirit doubled by the force of our own will as we see the difference between what is and what might be. One who reads *The Enchanted Cup* will discover that it was precisely this capacity to see, with exquisite clarity, the difference between what was and what might be, in both *Tristram and Isolde*, which allowed them to fit a

heroic mold, and which gives their story its poignancy.

So this must be the first requisite a capacity to see, feel, hear, think, taste, touch and know the difference between what is and what might be. We need not seek "great troubles" for our children. If we help them to see this difference, see it vividly and live with knowledge of it, the great troubles will come. But that is not all that comes, for, if it were, the whole of the idea we are trying to express would be but the sheerest nonsense. What comes along with the capacity to have great troubles is the capacity to have great happiness. Tristram and Isolde counted themselves the most favored of humans, for, though living on a perilous brink where each moment of meaning had to be attained through prodigious effort, the moments of reward were appreciated far beyond the joys of commonplace experience. Is this, then, simply a matter of tantalizing ourselves with difficult-to-reach goals, to make the flavor the keener? Not at all. The point is that Tristram and Isolde, because they knew sharp contrasts so well, knew how to persevere in spite of great obstacles.

On what quest may a young knight ride today? He is not, of course, usually allowed to choose his causes as were King Arthur's knights, and this is regrettable. Arthur did not always conscript his men, and when he did they served for love of England, love of Arthur, and because of a feeling for the matter of justice involved. Therefore even the air corps, though still reputed to be the most glamorous of armed services, leaves less latitude for the development of manhood. Growth into the full stature of a man, clearly, requires room for the making of momentous choices, and the routinized, mechanized character of our civilization provides next to nothing of such decisions in its wars.

A young knight may still ride out on a mission to succour the needy. But civic and state agencies claim to have these matters well in hand. There is less room, now, for personal exertion, even in respect to charity. He may decide to ride a horse without armor to the various halls of learning, in emulation of Merlin, wisest of Arthur's counsellors. But the higher learning is pretty well routinized, too, and when it comes to finding a possible place for developing religious devotion, he will be greeted by so much brash advertising in behalf of different sects that little

opportunity is afforded for calm reflection in determining his spiritual allegiance.

No, there is no other way of helping a son to become a man than by aiding him to build a vision of Utopia—according to his own best lights. For upon the discovery of the discrepancy between what is and what might be, all else appears to hinge. The search for Utopia, it must be admitted, is a quest most difficult, even though we first strive only to create its towers in our minds. And after it has been discovered in the mind, Utopia must then be made the work of our hands. Further, it is easy, once the critical faculty has been stimulated, to be content with criticism of what is, falling into cynicism and pessimism. These are dragons along the way which must be slain, for if we bed in their lairs, we become sour and disillusioned. We must accept what we find and make the most of it, in order to mold it to the Utopian shape. So with our children. Let us, therefore, give them some legends, a few heroes, and many dreams of Utopia.

FRONTIERS Rediscovery in Religion

WHEN it comes to making a simple statement of the differences between Eastern and Western religion—which means, in practical terms, the differences between Hinduism and Buddhism, and Christianity—we know of no one who is more successful than Floyd Ross, professor of world religions in the School of Religion, University of Southern California. We suspect that this special talent derives from a careful study of Christian thought and history, in the light of what the author has learned of Eastern religions. As a critic of Christianity, a sympathetic but uncompromising critic, Dr. Ross proved his capacity for clear analysis in *Addressed to Christians* (Harper, 1950), which was reviewed in these pages (MANAS, NOV. 14, 1951). He now addresses himself to two great religions of the East, in *The Meaning of Life in Hinduism and Buddhism* (Beacon Press, 1953), and while he displays considerable scholarship in reviewing these faiths, the essential merit of the book, as we see it, again lies in the author's effective criticism of conventional Christian attitudes and thinking.

Dr. Ross gives his reason for writing this book in his Preface. Speaking of the Christian notion, taken over from the Hebrews, "of being the 'chosen people,'" the author speaks of how many Christians have been led to "engage in practices and to inculcate attitudes which have emphasized exclusiveness." It was natural for "exclusiveness" to produce an indifference toward the other great faiths of the world:

No sustained attempts have been made by Christian leaders to arrive at sympathetic understanding of the great religious traditions of the Orient. Christendom by and large has locked itself up in its own household and has sought to live by the Graeco-Roman tradition alone. The Very Reverend W. R. Inge has well said: "It is a reproach to us that with our unique opportunities of entering into sympathetic relations with Indian thought, we have made few attempts to do so. . . . I am not suggesting that we should become Buddhists or Hindus, but I believe that we have almost as much to learn from them as they from us."

Concerning Christian missions to the Far East, Dr. Ross remarks:

The Christian churches have sent out missionaries to many distant lands and peoples. The

"Far East" has undoubtedly gained in many ways through this contact, but not always in the ways suspected by the missionary groups. In many cases the Eastern peoples contacted were quickened to look deeper into their own heritages. Only a few actually changed their basic religious loyalties. But the patience of the Orient in receiving the emissaries from Christendom has not helped the peoples of the West to come to a realization of their own smugness, parochialism and spiritual shallowness.

It is plain that the discovery of essential differences between Christian and Eastern conceptions in religion has meant a great deal to Dr. Ross, and could easily bear similar significance to those who will read his book. Naturally enough, the principal difference lies in the interpretation of what is usually termed the "God idea." Save for a few mystics who belonged to the Neoplatonic tradition, Christians have thought of "God" as a being separate and distinct from themselves. Not so in Hinduism and Buddhism. "God" and "Self," for the Eastern religious philosopher, are but different approaches to the same transcendental Reality. God, it might be said, is the "All-Self," while the "self" of an individual man is a single facet of the same primordial essence. There is of course plenty of anthropomorphism in popular Eastern religion, but the identity of the many with the One, in their highest aspect, is unmistakably the foundation of serious religious thought in both Hinduism and Buddhism. It is hardly possible to say this of Christianity.

Since, for the Easterner, there is, as the Quakers say, "that of God in man," the quest for religious truth may become much more of a personal search than an adherence to doctrinal forms. The mystic, Josiah Royce once observed, is the only pure empiricist, and this sort of empiricism is natural to one schooled in Hindu or Buddhist tradition. A man may read the scriptures for guidance; he may have a teacher to inspire him; but he must see and know for himself. The liberated man, one who has attained to Self-knowledge, finds his secret incommunicable by words. As Ross says:

Whenever such insight was achieved, it was described as "a flash of lightning" or "a wink of the eye." He who reached it might be able to help others in the preliminary stages, but he left no path. As one commentator puts it: "The knower of *Brahman* leaves behind no footprint by which he can be traced. 'As a bird flies in the air, as a fish moves in the water, without leaving any trace, so likewise the illuminated

soul leaves behind no footprint.'" The man who learns how to swim may be able to assist another, but he cannot swim for him.

Deity being within, and self-realization being a process which must be individually undergone, the role of religious teaching or doctrine takes on a meaning entirely different from—one might say, radically opposed to—the function of revelation in traditional Christianity. While "belief" is virtually all-important in Christianity, it is merely a first step in the East, and of negligible value unless followed by self-discovery.

The problem of good and evil is another important area of difference. The Eastern religious thinker conceives evil more or less impersonally. Evil is what stands between him and enlightenment. It is ignorance and the tendencies in human nature which make ignorance difficult to overcome. Practical religion, from this viewpoint, becomes a project in moral psychology: the aspirant seeks to understand, to get out into the open for examination and criticism his hidden motivations, his subconscious inclinations and affinities. He recognizes even that the "doctrines" which form his particular approach to the meaning of life are in some measure limitations expressive of his own difficulties in self-discovery. Doctrines are many, not because truth is many, but because men are many and require diverse avenues of access to the portal of final illumination. The Easterner, therefore, is disinclined to quarrel about texts and the meaning of texts. He knows that the *Bhagavad-Gita* speaks of a time when he will attain to high indifference toward all doctrines, whether of past, present, or future, because he will enjoy first-hand experience of the reality of which doctrines can be no more than descriptions at second-hand.

As we reflect upon these ideas, the similarity of the Platonic psychology insistently suggests itself. Plato, in his seventh Epistle, speaks of the flash of inspiration through which knowledge of ultimate questions comes to the meditating philosopher. Plato avoids doctrinal rigidity, making Socrates lapse into myth whenever the dialogue reaches toward metaphysical heights where the reason cannot follow with any independent certainty. And Plato's notion of evil is very like the ancient Eastern conception of *avidya*—lack of awareness, or ignorance. And Plato, too, following the Orphic mysteries, hinted at the stream of life which carries men from birth to death, and to birth again—as the Myth of Er in the Tenth

Book of the *Republic* indicates—just as the ancient Hindus held that the soul of man is involved in the stream or sea of *samsara*, from which it can be liberated only by gaining the equilibrium of a sage with self-knowledge.

Evil, in the West, is almost inextricably connected with the idea of a personal Devil, just as good is made to depend upon the benevolence of a personal God. Even though these personifications of good and evil are taken literally by fewer and fewer Christians, the psychological habits engendered by this belief are with us still. Traditionally, the principal virtue of the good Christian is obedience to God's will. The most unforgivable crime, for Lucifer or man, is defiance or rebellion against God. And since proper or "obedient" behavior is to be found described in Christian Scripture, the interpretation of that Scripture becomes a matter of immeasurable importance. Hence religious wars over the meaning of certain passages in the Bible; hence the furious hunt for heretics, and their cruel punishment when caught and convicted. Hence the extraordinary emphasis found throughout Christian history on "correct" belief. It is notable that a man's personal behavior was never enough to save him from persecution, if he had the misfortune to propose a belief or doctrine which did not at the moment conform with the deliveries of orthodoxy. A man might be forgiven for crimes against his fellows, but never for the crime of differing with the majority on the proper path to salvation.

The psychological heritage growing out of this tradition has been the source of endless oppressions and injustices. It has also led to neurotic fears of any sort of unconventional opinion. That this heritage is no longer the peculiar attribute of Western religious thinking is plain from the aggressive heresy hunts which proceed in Soviet Russia, the land of anti-religious materialism. The Communists may have abandoned Western religion, but they retained its method for the determination of truth. For the orthodox Communist, truth is found in the writings of Karl Marx, Lenin, and Stalin—or Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, if the "Communist" belongs to one of the radical factions which have been excommunicated by the Soviet Communists. Truth is a matter of what the leaders say it is; a gathering of party leaders has the same function as a medieval church council.

The lot of the unbeliever, or the believer in erroneous doctrine, has always been a painful one in the West. And, more often than not, when a group of dissenters gains power, they see nothing wrong in treating other minorities with the same ferocity that was accorded to them in their days of trial. The Puritans of New England and even the Pilgrim Fathers may have been a pious lot, but they shared with their English persecutors the view that a heretic must be persuaded to change his opinions, even if he dies in the process.

Dr. Ross is at his best, it seems to us, when describing the essential attitudes of Eastern religious philosophy. It is here that the West has the most to learn from the East, and publication of his book by the Unitarian Beacon Press (it was previously published in England by Kegan Paul) is a notable contribution to the progress of religious thinking in the United States. When it comes to doctrinal analysis, we find that he leans rather heavily on Ananda Coomaraswamy and one or two other authorities—sometimes, we think, without full justification. His almost casual rejection of the idea of the continuity of the individual soul seems a bit inconsistent with the crucial importance of this idea in both Hinduism and Buddhism (it occurs, for example, in the sixth discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and is certainly necessary to the development of the *Bodhisattva*, or ideal man of Buddhist teaching). While it is true that Southern Buddhism proposes that all that is left of a man after death is the "influences" or *skandhas* he has generated during life, the ethical idea of Karma assumes much greater meaning when allied with the cycle of individual rebirth. But these questions, perhaps, may be left unsettled, since the final discovery of transcendental meanings and processes will come, as Dr. Ross suggests, only from personal experience of them in full consciousness.

One thing more: It is surely clear that no attempt is made in this book to show how *Eastern* orthodoxies have fallen short of the high promise of the philosophies which they imperfectly represent. Dr. Ross is not concerned with criticism of defects in the practice of Eastern religion, but with what may be learned by the West from the best the East has to offer. Doubtless many volumes could be written to indict the priests of Hinduism for exploitation of simple believers, and to show that certain Buddhists have made Gautama into a sort of personal God on whom they depend for their salvation. For the purposes of this study, however, such matters are

irrelevant. Here we are concerned with the profound inspiration which may be found in the religious philosophies of the East—both as a possible corrective to our own rather narrow religious tradition, and as a source of better understanding of the cultural background of what may be very nearly half the population of the entire world.