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SELF-DECEPTION'S STRANGE FRUIT

THE honors for bringing the possibilities of self-deception home to modern man are about evenly divided between Dr. Freud and the mechanistic scientific philosophers. While Freud did not think exactly in the way that the mechanists think—he examined the processes of self-deception in order to construct a therapy for overcoming their effects—a by-product of the psychoanalytical movement has been to encourage people to think that self-delusion is an inevitable part of human life. The influence of the mechanists, however, has been direct. A recent expression of this view, put forward with great simplicity, and an almost nonchalant charm, comes at the end of a book (*Science and Human Behavior*) by B. F. Skinner, Harvard psychologist:

> The hypothesis that man is not free is essential to the application of scientific method to the study of human behavior. The free inner man who is held responsible for the behavior of the external biological organism is only a prescientific substitute for the kinds of causes which are discovered in the course of scientific analysis. All these causes lie *outside* the individual. . . . It has always been the unfortunate task of science to dispossess cherished beliefs regarding the place of man in the universe. . . .

Not very many people, of course, really believe that they are without any freedom of choice, operating as mere *automata* governed entirely by outside forces, but a great many people intellectualize along these lines, finding in the idea of inevitable self-deception an excuse for personal passivity, a sterile *ignorabimus* outlook in philosophy, and basic indifference to all ultimate questions. On the other hand, a constructive effect of the practical revelations of psychoanalysis concerning self-deception has come in the honest self-examination it presses upon impartial minds. Meanwhile, the vitality of criticism based upon a relativist view of "truth" is evident in the work of dozens of men of the past fifty years. (See for example the writings of Carl Becker, relativist historian.) It is probably a mistake to say that we can attribute the all-pervasive influence of modern relativism specifically to Freud and the mechanists, since other sources of this point of view—the Logical Positivists, for one—keep on occurring when you examine this aspect of the modern mind, but the iconoclast role of Freud and the mechanists is at least unmistakable and a more generalized accuracy will be accomplished by suggestion that a new and critical self-consciousness has become practically the *zeitgeist* of the twentieth century, from causes too numerous to trace.

One clear effect of the rise of the critical spirit has been the discount of metaphysical systems and theories of truth. Hegel, the last great metaphysician of the Western world, can hardly be mentioned, today, without either attack or apology. Hegel was an intellectual system-builder, a man who believed that truth could be discovered by the correct use of the rational process. It has long been customary to condemn Hegel not only for his metaphysical presumptions, but also for German military aggressions, the excesses of the Nazis, and, through Marx, for Communist dogmatism, delusions of grandeur, and dreams of world conquest. Other metaphysicians of the past are held in similar contempt, in proportion to their influence.

It would be possible, we think, to explain the moral lethargy of Western civilization as at least in part a result of the rejection of metaphysical inspiration, but this would require considerable development of an unpopular thesis. However, there should be no great opposition to the claim that the profound moral ardor of the Founding Fathers of the United States arose from Deist assumptions about the nature of things, leading to the doctrine of Natural Right, on which the

Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are founded. Modern man—or, at any rate, his intellectual leaders—no longer believes in the doctrine of Natural Right, which is plainly metaphysical, nor does he have much hope of arriving at some similar view of the world which might supply a like inspiration. You could say that, instead, modern liberals, when not seriously infected by the Marxist metaphysic (which they identify as "empirical science," or anything to avoid the metaphysical taint), have little more than intuitive good intentions, a civil rights credo (with its metaphysical implications carefully suppressed), and a kind of benevolent Machiavellianism in practical politics to carry them along.

No wonder, we may say, that this modern man is philosophically disenchanted, morally passive, and politically impotent. He has no real positive convictions born from the thrill of individual discovery, but subsists on the slight moral virtue carried forward by tired institutions originally established by the philosophic revolutionaries of the eighteenth century.

Something new, however, arose from the tortured womb of the second world war—the Existentialist philosophy. Existentialism is the naked trunk of a metaphysical position, without limbs—a wingless victory for man's intuition of his own greatness and inherent possibility. With Existentialism came the promise of rebirth of moral ardor for Western civilization. Once more the West encountered the spirit of *no compromise.* The simple proposition of the Existentialists is that the humanity of man must come *first.* There is more to it than this, but that is the essential insistence. It is a reaffirmation of Pico's declaration of freedom, but without Pico's theosophic mysticism and conception of destiny. Politically, Existentialism is hardly to be distinguished from Anarchism, although the Existentialists are bound by no dogmas save that of the immediacy of human good. Existentialism, you could say, is an inchoate, undeveloped metaphysical postulate concerning the absolute worth of the human individual. It is as though they say, "That is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." What the Existentialist is after is the moral inspiration of a metaphysical outlook without the involvements in theories and doctrines of progress which nearly all metaphysical systems of the past seem to have included, leading, in time, to tyrannical religious and political absolutisms.

This brings us to a letter received by MANAS from a teacher of philosophy in a West Coast university. The writer asks for some extra copies of MANAS for Oct. 12, containing the article, "The Human Frame of Reference." "I intend," he writes, "to pass them out to a small class I am teaching this term in which we are meandering slowly through Aristotle's ethics, some aspects of Christian ethics, and then on to the problem of freedom." Our correspondent goes on to speak of the issues confronting this class:

> The first principle—the reality of choice—I am inclined to regard as a necessary presupposition of all human inquiry and any human value. The "smuggling operations" to which you refer (in "The Human Frame of Reference") are indirect testimony to this. Resistance to this principle seems to me to spring more from commitment to a mode of thought that more or less consciously suppresses the intellectual dredging operations which seek to expose presuppositions than from any successful arguments against the principle.
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> The problem for me lies in the elucidation of this presupposition. Kant has made a good try at this, but his view is finally wrecked by his water-tight distinction between phenomena and noumena. Still, Kant is highly suggestive. Who else? I come finally to the existentialists, say Sartre, whose notion of man as project seems to be a real contribution,—actually, very close to Pico himself. The old idealist category of *transcendence* is coming alive again. The trouble with the idealists was that they used this concept formally and landed logically but unproductively in the arms of the Absolute. Sartre develops the concept empirically, phenomenologically if you prefer, leaves out the dialectic that leads to the absolute, and thus stays in close touch with human experience. He lets transcendence be a cutting edge of reality rather than a well-worn path home. Transcendence begins with the simplest perception of an object. There is no

telling where it ends; but it surely is a key to the success or failure of a variety of human relations. Different values can be interpreted, perhaps, in terms of the kind or level of transcendence they require.

The second principle, I would say, is derivative from the first. We hear nowadays that the bees and the ants are very social. But they aren't social in a human sense. Thus when Vico says that the social world is certainly the work of men, I think he has to mean "social" in a special human sense that involves the first principle. This special idea of what is humanly social is developed and discussed in a book that you may know—Warner Fite's *Moral Philosophy,* now issued by Midland Press under the title of *The Examined Life.*

The key word in this communication is *transcendence.* Transcendence is indeed the implicit mood of existentialist writings. Camus' *The Rebel* is bursting with the enthusiasm of a transcendence which is never spelled out. The book is like a woman pregnant with a holy secret, straining in mighty labor, yet who cannot quite give birth.

But what does transcendence *mean.;* From time spent with an unabridged *Webster's* and a *Britannica* volume, we conclude that the word and its inflections have various meanings, but that in all cases it indicates a reality beyond the perceptions of the senses, if not enduring beyond the categories of time and space. A theory of immortality, therefore, is a theory of transcendent human life. Socrates, when he spoke of the expectation of a life after death, was declaring a transcendental view. You might argue—and it is argued—that the moral rigor in the life of Socrates was a natural consequence of his transcendental convictions, which upheld him in every crisis and trial. He was so convinced of the transcendental reality of his being that he could not falter under stress. Turning to a modern Transcendentalist, John Haynes Holmes, we find this question:

> What are we to think, for example, when a great and potent personality is suddenly cut off by an automobile accident, a disease germ, or a bit of poisoned food? Must it not be what George Herbert Palmer thought as he looked upon the dead body of his wife, one of the outstanding women of her time—"Though no regrets are proper for the manner of her death, who can contemplate the fact of it, and not call the world irrational if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter, it excludes so fair a spirit?"

In the context of this quotation, which is a chapter in Dr. Holmes' book, *The Affirmation of Immortality,* the writer goes on to protest the manner of newspaper reports of funerals. Speaking of the New York *Times* account of Wendell Willkie's obsequies, Dr. Holmes says:

> May I respectfully contend that Mr. Willkie played no such part as described in these quotations. . . . Mr. Willkie was not taken to the church from the undertaking establishment, nor to the Pennsylvania station after the service. Mr. Willkie did not lie in state, nor rest "in an open bronze coffin," nor did he speed west "toward the final resting place." It was Mr. Willkie's body that did all these things. . . .
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> This apparently trivial matter of newspaper style and usage is, in its ultimate implications, momentous. It opens up vast metaphysical questions of personal reality, and touches the whole substance of religious faith. To him who believes in immortality and is convinced that, while we *have* a body, we are a *soul,* there can be no compromise on this issue. It is the body that is laved, and laid in state, and borne to the grave, and at last buried. The man lives on untouched, unharmed, untended.

Now the interesting thing about Dr. Holmes' faith in immortality is that it has served him, throughout his life—a life of extraordinary and consistent devotion to principle—as "a cutting edge of reality rather than a well-worn path home." Perhaps we presume in saying this, but we think that Dr. Holmes might agree. How do you get a faith like this? How did George Herbert Palmer find irrefutable evidence of the immortality of the human spirit, in contemplating the dead body of his wife?

There is not much consistency in the human response to such experiences. Physicians see much of death, yet they make no uniform testimony as to a life beyond. The sense of the transcendent is plainly an inner sense, something men seem to bring to rather than obtain from life.

The doctrines and dogmas of religion are doubtless often no more than devices to shore up the weak convictions of men. This, at any rate, was Thomas Hobbes' opinion concerning religion, and he had much historical evidence to support his view.

"Sartre," says our correspondent, "develops the concept [of transcendence] empirically." What does this mean? Well, you might say that Sartre takes the quality of life that is consistent with a transcendental metaphysic—not as a doctrinal tradition, but as a living faith—and makes *that quality* into evidence for the reality of transcendence. Courage in the face of hideous cruelty, defiance of brutal power, contempt for hypocrisy, compassion for the sufferings of the helpless, allegiance to the integrity of impersonal thinking—these values are easily related to a philosophy of transcendence, and they are often found in men who make no pretensions to metaphysical thought. Yet their lives, it might be contended, are a declaration of transcendence. Or, in simple things, the transcendence is revealed by the endless decisions all human beings must make—"the notion of man as project." If you look at the human situation in this way, you may say, perhaps, that transcendence appears empirically.

Actually, existential transcendence involves a heroic faith, and existentialist writers have been hard put to it to qualify the common man for participation in its mandates. This may explain the curious "ordinariness" of the protagonist (who is not a protagonist) in Camus' *The Stranger*, whose great distinction is that he cannot pretend to feel other than he does feel, and so suffers death at the hands of a society which values conformity above the simplest sort of human understanding. This man is made a victim of the legal process, yet he is not defeated. His integrity at the end *transcends* his death. Camus is of course not preaching immortality, but he is saying that to be faithful to one's feelings is more important than to escape death—which is precisely what Socrates maintained.

The cry of the Existentialists in behalf of Man is not unlike the more serene affirmations of the Stoic philosophers, who at least soft-pedalled, if they did not reject, a metaphysical ground for their convictions. But then, the Stoics, although they were witnesses to Roman triumphs, circuses, and saturnalias, did not stare across the bloody soil of all Europe to the smoking ovens of Auschwitz.

From this obscene spectacle to the full vision of a life transcendent may be a leap not possible for men whose childhood and youth belonged to the first half of the twentieth century. (But see the writings of Simone Weil.) That any sort of transcendent philosophy could be born from this agony is of itself a sufficient wonder for us to contemplate.

What lies beyond the "empirical" transcendence of the Existentialists? A frightening no-man's-land of shattered, unbelieved and unbelievable "metaphysical" beliefs. The heavens and hells of countless cults and sects, the painted faces of all the True Believers of history, the people who are persuaded that their "spiritual" disclosures acquire an added verity by being printed in all capital letters, the séance-mongers with their dull messages from dead men who were manifestly wiser when they were still alive, and the whole category of dispensers of miracle, mystery and authority. Who will dare to invade this dreadful territory, and to what end?

But far on the other side of this religious junk-pile of the ages there stand some majestic figures whose thought can no more be touched by all this caricature of metaphysics than the lotus can be soiled by the muddy waters from which it rises to greet the noonday sun. It is to these men, strangely enough, that we owe a great deal of primary scientific discovery, as well as the ancestral systems of metaphysics on which the dream of progress and the vision of the dignity of man are directly or indirectly based. For evidence of this we have the authoritative word of Friedrich

Lange, author of the *History of Materialism* (republished by Harcourt Brace in 1925, with an introduction by Bertrand Russell). After summarizing the achievements of ancient science—the mathematics of Pythagoras and Euclid, the astronomy of Aristarchus, the biological researches of Aristotle, the experiments of Ptolemy, the medicine of Galen—Lange writes:

> When we behold knowledge thus accumulating from all sides—knowledge which strikes deep into the heart of nature, and already presupposes the axiom of the uniformity of events—we must ask the question, How far did ancient Materialism contribute to the attainment of this knowledge and these views?
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> And the answer to this question will at first sight appear very curious. For not only does scarcely a single one of the great discoverers—with the solitary exception of Demokritos—distinctly belong to the Materialistic school, but we find among the most honorable names a long series of men belonging to an utterly opposite, idealistic, formalistic, and even enthusiastic tendency.

This refers to ancient science. In his *Reason and Nature*, Morris Cohen shows a similar dependence of the beginnings, at least, of modern physics upon transcendentalist thinking. Formulation of the law of gravitation, he points out, would have been impossible without prior knowledge of:

> (1) Galileo's law of falling bodies and Kepler's laws of planetary motion.
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> (2) The analysis of circular motion into centrifugal and centripetal components—according to the principles of the parallelogram.
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> (3) The daring and unorthodox speculative idea (which Newton derived from Boehme and Kepler) of parallelism between the celestial and the terrestrial realm.

Dr. Cohen adds:

> Similarly we know that it was the Pythagorean conception of the book of nature as written in simple mathematical terms that led Galileo to look for and ultimately see the simple law connecting the increased velocity of a falling body with the time of the fall. Tycho Brahe's astronomic tables did not in themselves show Kepler's laws; indeed, they suggested quite different laws to Brahe himself. Kepler could see these laws only after he brought to his vision certain speculative ideas of Apollonius (on conic sections) and of Plotinus. To be sure, all these cases (as well as Darwin's discovery of natural selection) show a most painstaking checking up of preconceived ideas by accurately determined or measured facts. But without the well-reasoned ideas, the inquiries could not have been initiated, for there would have been nothing to verify.

Where did these "well-reasoned ideas" come from? They came, as Lange says, from the idealists—men with transcendental concepts of meaning.

A further confirmation of this analysis comes from Dr. Einstein, in an article he wrote for the April, 1950 *Scientific American,* in which he said:

> There exists a passion for comprehension, just as there exists a passion for music. That passion is rather common in children, but gets lost in most people later on. Without this passion, there would be neither mathematics nor natural science. Time and time again the passion for understanding has led to the illusion that man is able to comprehend the objective world rationally, by pure thought, without any empirical foundations—in short, by metaphysics. I believe that every true theorist is a kind of tamed metaphysicist, no matter how pure a "positivist" he may fancy himself. The metaphysicist believes that the logically simple is also the real. The tamed metaphysicist believes that not all that is logically simple is embodied in experienced reality, but that the totality of all sensory experience can be "comprehended" on the basis of a conceptual system built on premises of great simplicity. The skeptic will say that this is a "miracle creed." Admittedly so, but it is a miracle creed which has been borne out to an amazing extent by the development of science.

Enough, it is hoped, has been said to show that the pioneers of science obtained their great successes by borrowing from the metaphysical methods of the transcendental idealists, and using them for the non-transcendent purposes of physics. But why take their methods and reject their ideals? With our immeasurable debt to these men for *our* kind of progress, why not, in our intellectual and moral insolvency, give some attention to theirs.? The tenth book of the *Republic* would be one place to begin.

REVIEW
A TESTIMONIAL FOR UNITY

OKAKURA KAKUZO began his book *Ideals of the East* with what probably strikes most Western readers as an astonishing, even incredible assertion: "Asia is one." How, they may well ask, can anyone short of the most abstruse mystic maintain that Asia with its immense diversity of races, religions, social *mores* and political upsets forms a unity? What is there in common, say, between Ceylon and Thailand? Persia and Laos? Burma and Japan? How can any unity be asserted when India, especially, still differs so markedly from other countries and is herself so sundered by religious differences, economic "stop-gap measures," and xenophobia against the West? On the face of it, any claim of Asian unity seems fantastic.

In one sense at least Kakuzo was right, though. Asia *is* one, in that aspect his book explored and which the West has yet to master: a shared heritage of cultural ideals. These ideals, variously interpreted from nation to nation and generation to generation, have shaped a vital unity in Asian art which the Space Age shows little likelihood of weakening. Nowhere, perhaps, has a recent book shown this unity so clearly and discussed its elements so knowingly as Faubion Bowers' *Theatre in the East: A Survey of Asian Dance and Drama* (Grove Press: Evergreen Books). Here, Mr. Bowers has done more than write a stimulating successor to his *Japanese Theatre* (1952) and *Dance in India* (1953). He has provided us with a testimonial for Asian unity.

That this was one of Mr. Bowers' aims in *Theatre in the East* seems clear from the first page. "In terms of theatre," he tells us, "Asia defines itself clearly as that area which starts with India and extends eastward as far as Indonesia and the Philippine Islands, and northward through China and Japan as far as Siberia." He excludes the vast Mohammedan world lying north and west of India, since "on the whole, it condemns theatre." This is the only major exclusion. His survey covers Asian countries—India, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaya, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Okinawa, and Japan. Each of these he discusses in detail, treating its dance forms, leading dancers and actors, opera, puppet theatres, regional drama, popular and classical theatres, influential playwrights and critics. What results is a demonstration-by-example of his thesis:

> You can scarcely help being astonished by the widespread, wide-scale popularity of the theatre arts available almost everywhere in all these countries. No other geographical area of the world I know compares in extent or volume at all levels of appreciation. While differences between one Asiatic country and another are enormous and the arts of each express unique and exclusive qualities, certain aspects and even themes course through them all and unify them on a broad and specific basis.

What are these unifying aspects and themes? As I mentioned, Mr. Bowers does not state these; he is intent on giving examples of them. They can be stated, however, contrary to the still prevalent belief that all Eastern thought must be obscurantist and, *a fortiori*, all Western interpretations of Eastern thought. Some of the more important principles underlying the practice and enjoyment of Asian dance and drama are:

1. The audience wants, usually, "a poetic, rather than a logical, action-packed story-play." Mr. Bowers claims that of "the three root-elements characterizing Asian drama" (poetry, music, dance), "the poetic element is the most determining . . . the poetry of words takes artistic priority over all action and narrative."

2. Because "poetry retards the normal speed of action," it tends to make both action and character evocative. Illusions of the stage-world can be created, maintained, and appreciated leisurely. Poetry forces on an actor "surplus time—time to pose, to enlarge and expand a gesture, to draw out a movement, to fill in with 'business'." Thus it provides a springboard for the

actor to invoke the stage-world symbolically, "to enrich his action and to entice from the spectator a series of emotions which extend and change the quality of what straight enactment produces."

3. Because poetry shapes action and characterization to this extent, Asian dramas usually require a special device: the reciter, who sings or declaims the most poetic passages, gives background information, and in general keeps the audience aware of the plot. In Indonesia he is called the *dalang* or narrator. In Sanskrit drama he is called the *sutradhara* or "string holder": he literally holds the threads of the story together.

4. Leading characters in both popular and classical Asian drama still tend to be gods, kings or nobles. Thus their speech can be plausibly elegant and typical Asian in its poetic indirection, allusiveness, and subtlety. This indirection does not annoy the audiences, however. They expect it. They delight in the poetry as what R. P. Blackmur calls it: Language as Gesture.

5. Because music and dance tend to reinforce, rather than compete with the poetry, the audiences genuinely prefer plays with old, familiar plots—Kalidasa's *Sakuntala,* for example, or the early Kabuki thriller *Kumagai's Camp.* Any innovations (such as Cambodia's Theatre Moderne and Japan's New History Plays) tend to be incorporations. Audiences enjoy new allusions, episodes, and secondary roles, but they want them in the framework of the old plots.

Mr. Bowers came to write *Theatre in the East* after nearly fifteen years of first-hand observation. With his wife, Santha Rama Rau, he traveled throughout Asia on a study tour in 1954-55. That tour resulted in this book: a marvel of historical scholarship and on-the-spot reporting. Written with insight, sensitivity, and a real gift for explanation, it may well become the standard history of its subject.

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COMMENTARY
WHAT IS DEMONSTRABLE?

A TYPICAL example of the attitude of a modern thinker towards "transcendental" thinking is found in a paragraph by Friedrich Lange, the historian of materialism quoted in this week's lead article. Lange wrote:

> One thing is certain, that man needs to supplement reality by an ideal world of his own creation, and that the highest and noblest functions of his mind cooperate in such creations. But must this act of intellectual freedom always keep on assuming the deceptive form of a demonstrative science? In that case materialism, too, will always reappear, and will destroy the bolder speculations with an attempt to satisfy the instinct of the reason towards unity by a minimum of exaltation above the real and demonstrable.

Now this sort of common sense has a wide appeal, since it seems to pay sufficient tribute to the "higher things," yet does not retreat from what is acknowledged to be a "common sense" view. It is also valuable as criticism, since nearly all the religions of history have foundered on the mistake of "assuming the deceptive form of a demonstrative science," calling forth a stubborn rationalist reaction and materialistic renaissance.

But there are nevertheless difficulties in Lange's counsel. *He* assumes, for example, that exaltation is a departure from "the real," and, apparently, that this "real" is demonstrable, presumably by science.

There is at least an equal possibility that the real is precisely what is not demonstrable in scientific terms.

This is not of course a popular view. It is unpopular for the reason that the admission that the real is not subject to scientific or "public" demonstration may be turned into a license for unlimited theological invention. It was this license which Spinoza reproved when he said, "The will of God is the asylum of ignorance."

The problem, however, consists in the fact that very nearly the whole world hungers after a reality which is not publicly or scientifically demonstrable. The subtle movement of a man's longings finds no natural play in the fixed theatre of material objects. What we can measure, what we can be demonstrably sure of, we find, is what we finally do not care about. There is something in human beings that insists upon breaking out of the confines of time and space—which would make speech with the Infinite and call up visions of Eternal Duration.

But if any one man should succeed in these high projects, how would the rest of us know? We would know only what he said, and too much of our trouble has come from listening to what others have "said."

This is the essential difficulty. We want so much to believe that it is only by denying our hearts that we become unbelievers. Yet our unbelief is really faint-hearted. And so, across the centuries we know, and in those, no doubt, we don't know, the makers of religious beliefs have thrived on men's longings for a certainty they feel unable to obtain for themselves.

It is easy, of course, to say that this dream of transcendent knowledge is a chimera of the enthusiastic imagination. There are always those who tell us this with unbounded certainty, as though they had personally travelled to the end of time and found nothing at all. More than likely, these great deniers are filled with a disgust with the pretensions of religion, rather than with any true sense of knowledge, and are carried away by their reforming zeal.

For the most part, history confronts us with an uneasy choice between the True Believers and the Great Iconoclasts, both camps claiming to be the purveyors of different brands of Salvation.

So Lange proposes a pleasant conceptualist compromise—the ideal world of the individual thinker which is "high" and "noble," but a private creation existing only in his own mind. This

solution is all right for the sophisticated intellectual, and for a Peter Abelard who was able thereby to rejoice in a logical victory over all the medieval contestants for certainty, but it does not satisfy ordinary men, nor serious philosophers.

It seems likely that ardent seekers will go on until the end of time, trying to make their subjective feelings of truth into some kind of objective demonstrations. Certainly, this is the drive which animates the arts, and there is probably a sense in which we could say that Buddha spent his lifetime wandering from village to village in India by reason of his overwhelming conviction that what he had seen and understood could be seen and understood by others—he would disclose by words something of its image, if not its ineffable reality.

And it is for similar reasons also likely that we shall continue to have with us, indefinitely, institutions which give the substance of common belief to such great enterprises. Even Abelard disclosed on occasion that he was at heart of the Platonic company—actually, he oscillated between the extremes of Nominalism and Platonic Realism. The well-nigh irresistible demand for certainty sometimes makes champions change sides in this controversy.

The practical men have their hard-headed certainty that matter and its measurements are all; the dithyrambic poets declare their mysteries with full hearts and glad voices, and then, down the line, come all the vulgar echoes and the churches, clubs and sects embodying the entire spectrum of sloganized beliefs.

If we knew more about ourselves—about the tropisms of the human mind and feelings which make the great cycles of alternating belief—we might be better able to control the swing to extremes.

It is at least fair to say that the waving tendril of a vine which slowly circles until it finds a twig or branch, is right in seeking a support which is really *there.* And if the lemmings go in hordes to a watery grave, there was a time when their migrations found more hospitable haven. The argument is not that there are no deceptions in nature or self-deceptions in man, but that the longing and the seeking and the hungering are not without a substantial object which is *real.*

It is a question, then, of learning how to look. This is what the great epochs of too-easily embraced beliefs, and too-facilely declaimed denials, have taught us.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM READERS

THE good teacher, it seems to us, will always be a good learner. An article in the California *Parent-Teacher* for September, sent by a reader, indicates how much benefit for both teacher and pupils may come from even a simple cooking experiment. Teacher Mary C. Dobbs describes a "learning by doing" project:

> "Can I have some more cereal?" asked Sam as he held up his bowl for the third serving. He and his little classmates were eating a hot breakfast which they had prepared themselves. First, the boys had put into a coffee mill equal amounts of whole grain wheat, oats, barley, and brown, unpolished rice, which they ground into meal. Then in pots of boiling water they cooked the meal into cereal. With the addition of brown sugar and milk, the youngsters had a very delicious breakfast.
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> In conjunction with this cooking activity, the matter of thrifty buying was brought to the attention of the children. When they went to the grocery store and compared prices, they were surprised to see that a one-pound box of processed cereal cost as much as any of the two-pound bags of wheat, oats, barley, and brown rice which they had been using. In figuring the cost per breakfast for the entire class, the pupils were further surprised to learn that it was less than the price of one school lunch. But what pleased them the most, was that they felt contentedly filled and satisfied for some time after such a meal.
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> Whereupon, some of these cereal grains were put into a shallow amount of water. In a very brief time they sprouted. "Why they are alive!" exclaimed the children. One cannot guess how aged the processed foods are that one sees upon market shelves. Fresh foods, uncooked and unprocessed, contain the greatest amounts of vitamins and minerals. They are like a freshly-cut bouquet of flowers—alive and in their full strength.

This is the way Gandhi encouraged teachers trained at Sevagram to proceed in "basic education." There is a certain magic in learning the ingredients of what, for want of a better name, we call "natural foods." Every child is able to respect the American Indian, who wasted no form of food because of his gratitude for its contribution to his physical well-being—its sacrifice, so to speak, in fulfilling its role in the great chain of living being.

The experiment reported by Mary Dobbs, incidentally, revealed some curious facts:

> This cooking project had been undertaken primarily to acquaint the class with a few kinds of grains, and to show in a simple way how they are processed into various foods. However, an unexpected situation was revealed by the great hunger of the children. It was ten o'clock, just two hours presumably from their home breakfast time. Yet nearly all of them had requested two servings of this cereal, and some had eaten even more.
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> A casual conversation among the children brought forth these kinds of remarks: "Everyone was asleep at my house. I left without eating." "I have to make my own breakfast—toast and a glass of milk." "I eat no breakfast. My mamma don't get up."
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> Through inquiries in this elementary school and in many others, the astonishing fact was revealed that a heavy percentage of the children came to school either without breakfast, or else they had a poor one. This is by no means a localized problem. According to well-informed doctors, large numbers of children all over the country, from all kinds of homes are sent to school under similar circumstances.
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> This imposes a handicap both upon the teachers and the children. Teachers are often puzzled over the inattentiveness and irritability of their pupils, especially during the hour before lunch time. But how can the youngsters help it when their minds are disturbed by the hunger growls of their stomachs? Assuming that the children have their dinner at six o'clock in the evening, and eat no breakfast the following morning, it will be noon before they have their next meal. This is a span of 18 hours. Lack of nourishment is often evident even early in the mornings, for it is not an uncommon sight to see boys and girls sitting at their desks listless and weary. Worse yet, the morning hunger may be so keen as to cause severe emotional eruptions.
>
> This was vividly revealed in another classroom located in a very poor neighborhood. The youngsters were continuously quarrelsome, highly irritable, and tempers flared up too quickly. In the course of the year's activities, breakfasts similar to the one described above, were prepared and served. A1though no comments were made by any of the

children about their home meals, the facts were self-evident. On those days that the youngsters had the hearty cereal, there was a marked change in their personalities. The turbulent attitudes were replaced by a surprising calmness, and lessons were done with willingness.

These findings again illustrate the all too common parental propensity to assume that our great American culture will automatically "look after" the young. But bread made from a highly-advertised flour mix, or a bowl of even more-highly advertised—and nearly worthless—rice cereal, cannot be wholly compensated for by thoughtfully prepared meals in the school cafeteria, nor can the average TV dinner teach children something they very badly need to know: the appreciation of good, fresh, properly-prepared food stuffs. We of MANAS are generally all for the "health food" people, because of their genuinely educative influence upon the parents and children in increasing numbers of more enlightened families.

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Another MANAS reader has sent us a quotation on education from D. H. Lawrence's *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (paper-bound, $1.45, Compass Books). While there are paradoxical elements in what Lawrence says, one derives the feeling that each child should be treated with a respect for the potential strength and integrity of every human being. To train children as though it were only a scientific matter of breeding and raising, or to treat children according to some set of "religious" rules is, in Lawrence's opinion, a travesty:

> If we are going to teach children we must teach them first to move. And not by rule or mental dictation. Horror! But by playing and teasing and anger, and amusement. A child must learn to move blithe and free and proud. It must learn the fullness of spontaneous motion. And this it can only learn by continuous reaction from all the centres, through all the emotions. A child must learn to contain itself. It must learn to sit still if need be. Part of the first phase of education is the learning to stay still and be physically self-contained. Then a child must learn to be alone, and to adventure alone, and to play alone. Any peevish clinging should be quite roughly rebuffed. From the very first day, throw a child back on its own resources—even a little cruelly sometimes. But don't neglect it, don't have a negative attitude to it. Play with it, tease it and roll it over as a dog her puppy, mock it when it is too timorous, laugh at it, scold it when it really bothers you—for a child must learn not to bother another person—and when it makes you genuinely angry spank it. But always remember that it is a single little soul by itself and that the responsibility for the wise, warm relationship is yours, the adult.

* * *

A Phoenix (Arizona) school district *Newsletter* contains some paragraphs which relate to the foregoing. Writing on "The Arts," Warren Gentry remarks:

> Psychologically it is necessary to man to have a sense of his own worth if any concept of the dignity of man is to prevail. It is only by appreciation of and participation in artistic activity that man can be assured of total self-development.
>
> The gratifying experience of many vocations of the past has been replaced with a monotonous production line existence in the grayness of our technological achievements. The resultant toll of stress in our culture is appalling. If the desire for self-expression a cooper used to find in making casks is not fulfilled in some socially acceptable manner then that desire must be repressed or disguised, to appear eventually in some undesirable form.
>
> It is sure that man will release his anxieties, fears and emotions. But this raises questions. Will man achieve his release within a rational framework? What kind of world does man want? What is the ultimate goal of his technological abilities? Is interplanetary rocketry the fulfillment of man's dream of beauty and abundance? Or is it simply an evidence of overemphasized scientific and technological effort?
>
> With these questions staring us in the face, education must more than ever be inseparable from art and human values.

FRONTIERS

Critical Notes on Religion

WITH signs of deepening liberalism appearing in various Christian denominations, with the de-sectarian progress achieved by the united Universalists and Unitarians, and with the Beacon Press and the *Christian Century* performing richly educative functions, one still has to note less pleasant reminders of the *status quo* in religious attitudes. Gordon Allport, of Harvard, in *The Nature of Prejudice*, shows why criticism of many brands of Christianity is still in order:

> What is particularly striking is the ease with which spiritually minded people seem to slip from piety into prejudice. Other studies reveal that individuals having no religious affiliation show on the average less prejudice than do church members.

Commenting on Allport's book in the Goleta *Gazette* for Feb. 11, a columnist, B. Blake, remarks:

> Pretty devastating conclusions and yet not surprising when you stop to think about it. For on what does popular Christianity have its sights set? It has them set on the next world, on life after death, on a person's fate.
>
> Top priorities for the next world seem to be earned through what a person believes, not by the way he lives. More particularly, they have to do with beliefs about Jesus. A few days ago, Billy Graham wrote in a newspaper column that people "either receive Christ as Saviour and Lord or they are without a Saviour."
>
> The fatal sin is the sin of disbelief, of disobedience. It is that simple. The upright conduct of a man, the purity of his life, and his disinterested loyalty to all that is good in this world are of no use "if he has not received Christ."
>
> Reinhold Niebuhr is the greatest living American theologian. He put it brutally but clearly when he wrote that in the eyes of God "the differences between the good man and the bad man are insignificant" and that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."
>
> To return to Billy Graham for a moment. "Nothing happens," he says, "without the knowledge of God or without his permission." Think that one over! Nothing, just simply nothing happens without God's permission!
>
> Well, then, why should the Christian bother about what goes on in the world around him?

Now Mr. Blake, whom we don't know, may possibly be an aggressive opponent of *all* religion, but these points must be considered as well taken. And when Adlai Stevenson summed up his feeling about Norman Vincent Peale's homogenized religion by saying, "I find Paul appealing and Peale appalling," he was lightly touching a nerve, for if there is a residual inspiration in modern Christianity, carried forward from its earliest days, it is certainly not found on a "get rich with God" platform. Mystical Christianity, the ideal of self-sacrifice in service of all "God's children," today risks being buried by commercialism.

In the *Manchester Guardian* for Feb. 4, Michael Frayn describes one of the more harmless methods of drumming up Christian business. It seems that a promoter named Nat Winecoff figures to rescue young souls from materialism by imitating Walt Disney. Frayn sums up the plans for "Heaven, Calif.":

> I don't know whether my old Sunday school teacher is still in business. If he is, he will be interested to hear that his principles are going to be applied on a more massive scale than he ever dreamed of to the children of California. A promoter called Nat Winecoff intends to open a fifteen-million-dollar amusement park there called Bible Storyland, which will not only save all those young Californian souls from the materialism around them, but should also make a dime or two for Mr. Winecoff on the side.
>
> In Bible Storyland children with enough filthy lucre will be able to ride on a donkey from Nazareth to Jerusalem, take a trip through the stomach of Jonah's whale (ending up by sliding down its tongue) and seeing the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah beneath the Dead Sea.
>
> The amusement park will include sections representing the Garden of Eden, Rome, Babylon, Israel, Egypt, and Ur. In Rome the children will be able to see the Circus Maximus where the well-known lions did their stuff, and refresh themselves with lionburgers (a euphemistic inaccuracy there: if they

> sold any sort of burgers outside the Circus Maximus in the good old days it would much more likely have been Christianburgers). From Heaven, when their golden litter gets there, they will see that the funfair forms the shape of a heart ("symbolic of God's love") and that the Shrine of Faith Plaza, Ur, and the caravan route to the pyramids are laid out in a cross.
>
> "I guess the Lord just took me by the hand," Mr. Winecoff is reported as saying. I guess that's what must have happened. One day, perhaps, he will take my old Sunday school teacher by the hand, too, and lead him to Heaven, California. I like to think that Mr. Winecoff. . . will start selling his young customers toy helmets of Salvation and Swords of the Spirit. Even if the Garden of Eden fails to rouse them, that ought to stir the little devils into action.

There are obviously a thousand and more different ways of interpreting Christianity, but as we read the New Testament it seems clear that Jesus of Nazareth set himself one of the most difficult tasks of the ages—that of making peace popular. Peace of mind, by eliminating those attitudes that set one tribe against another; peace of soul, by eschewing the fervor of merely worldly ambition. The humanitarian psychiatrist will tell us that Christ was right in this respect, since the key to most human problems lies in a failure to develop mature motivations. The psychiatrist will also say that any form of prejudice is the antithesis of peace, that self-righteousness is the enemy of enlightenment.

To popularize peace—or rather, "things that make for peace"—we might begin by acknowledging that every great religious teacher was a man addressed to this task. And in this light one can easily recognize, say, Gautama Buddha and the "Prince of Peace" of Galilee as members of the same fraternal order.