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THE MIDDLE PATH

ON the one hand, you have the counsels of perfection—the injunction of what Arnold Toynbee calls the "high religions" to live in the light of Eternity; and on the other are the experience tables of the statistical sociologists, the people who base their recommendations on the "facts" of human behavior. And then, somewhere between the two, you have the proposals of judicious compromise, arguing for balance and the avoidance of extremes.

The great religions of antiquity are all united in the idea that supreme effort is needed for human beings to attain to their highest destiny. The symbolism of achievement may vary, but the underlying meaning, it seems reasonable to assume, is essentially the same. Further, the higher the ideal, the more abstract or bodiless are the terms of its description. There is the absorption into the One of Neoplatonism, the "liberation" and union with Parabrahm of the Hindus, the Nirvana of the Buddhists, and the anthropomorphic Heaven of the Christians.

Westerners and, no doubt, Asians who have assimilated Western education and cultural attitudes, nearly all have difficulty in appreciating such conceptions of the finality of human development. This reluctance is not simply a rejection of other-worldliness. There is also a lack of substance in the idea of complete absorption in undifferentiated universal being. The "substance" may be there, but we have not found terms for communicating its reality. Westerners admit quite candidly that they have not yet exhausted the challenge and the wonder of this world. Most of them willingly accept the charge that they are "unspiritual" and unable to feel the supernal attractions held forth by the great religions.

Yet for many Europeans and Americans there is some hidden truth in the high religions—some kernel of meaning which either gets lost or becomes unreasonable when rendered into the theological idiom. It is as though the West had not yet developed a proper conceptual—not to say verbal—vocabulary to deal with the region and levels of transcendental experience, a circumstance which requires that *feelings* concerned with this sort of experience be restrained to a purely intuitive level. Possibly, the almost sectarian emotions which sometimes manifest in connection with the arts are the result of an effort to articulate religious feelings which can find no other outlet. When people of the West—and probably of the East as well—use the conventional religious vocabulary to speak of such things, it almost appears that they are over-simplifying, that certain vital essences of human life are left out of account, with the result that more percipient individuals respond with vigorous agnostic denial, which voices their objection, but misses the point in another way.

This dilemma sharpens in the area of mental disturbance and neurotic behavior, where therapists find it necessary to deal with exaggerated guilt feelings and the compulsions of mechanical systems of morality. In this case, the problem of "norms" becomes acute, since the disturbance is manifestly the result of a violation of what is natural to man, yet it may be as great a mistake to abandon all ideas of restraint. It seems likely that this equation will not be balanced, even in the abstract, until some workable philosophy of human ends proves its functional value for a wide range of individuals and situations.

The pressure of the *status quo* in decisions of this sort is very great. By reason of its numerous excesses and offenses against reason, religion—Western religion in particular—long ago lost claim to the intelligent man's attention when it comes to matters of man's nature and what is good for him.

Meanwhile, the body of scientific data concerned with the actual behavior of man and the higher animals has grown to such proportions that it is popularly believed that science may easily tell us with finality what is "normal" and "good."

The extreme of taking the *status quo* as a guide is the well-known philosophy of "adjustment." If you say something critical about the low level of popular morality, you are told by the philosopher of adjustment that people, on the average, behave in a certain way and that it is foolish to expect anything different. If you object to the paternalism in personnel psychology and the clumsy construction of an environment for workers in industry calculated to feed their self-esteem and sense of personal importance, it is said that these needs are just as organic to human personality as the need for food.

The larger problems of national morale are dealt with by propagandists according to the same assumptions, and even humanitarian thinking is guided by theories of human behavior taken from past and current patterns of behavior. This happens with the best of intentions, since even if it be admitted that a few individuals may be capable of exceptional behavior, departing widely from the norms which are set up, you can't, the advocates of adjustment say, plan for entire populations on the basis of the distinguished few; *and*, they say, we now *have* to plan for entire populations because technology has turned the world into a social unity and the future cannot be left to chance.

The argument has great plausibility and the apparent virtue of an honest concern for the common good. So they go on, talking about the way people are now, as though it were written in the stars that people will always be that way, and as though it were visionary and even dangerous to imagine that men might be different.

But this argument is *anti-human* if the ancient religions—not their modern conventional and compromised versions—actually possessed authentic insights which are unknown to the man of scientific mind, or at least unconsidered by his theory of knowledge and his working conceptions of human nature.

The obvious issue is this: The adjustment philosophy, which seems to propose the only practicable means of coping with the problems of a mass society, is essentially and unalterably opposed to the highest ideals of philosophical religion. The adjustment philosophy opposes these ideals on two counts: first, it opposes them because its conception of "reality" is empirical in terms of what men now give their allegiance to as real, thus ruling out the conceptions of mystical and transcendental philosophy; second, it opposes them by its neglect of the unusual individual who, unless he has extraordinary stamina, is likely to be smothered and frustrated by the course laid out for him in terms of what "most" people are expected to want to do. In short, the adjustment philosophy denigrates the region of transcendental experience and alienates the human beings who are naturally drawn to this region of experience.

For obvious reasons, the adjustment philosophers enjoy a complacent certainty that they are right, to which is added a vanity springing from engagement in philanthropic service to the utilitarian ideal of the greatest good to the greatest number.

It is not necessary, of course, to be a devotee of mystical religion to look upon the philosophy of adjustment with great dissatisfaction. Every original thinker, every artist, every intelligent critic of the mass society, will find plenty of reasons to dislike the psychological pressures introduced by the adjustment philosophy. He objects on sound pragmatic grounds. Here, we are attempting to show the philosophic grounds, which may be of even greater importance, for resisting any sort of "mass" account of the nature of man.

What about the "facts" on which the philosophy of adjustment is based?

The facts are true enough—the facts of behavior, that is, and the structure of motives

which the psychologist of adjustment describes is by no means fictitious. The high religions acknowledged all these things, but tended to characterize them as either "sins" or "vanities" of earthly existence. The high religions met the fact of mass behavior in various terms: Hinduism evolved the caste system to allow for graded cycles of engagement on different levels of action and motivation, the climax of the grand tour being the state of the *sannyasi*—the man beyond all caste function and limitation—the universal man. Buddhism related the pain proceeding from human life to the various forms of attachment and desire to which man is subject, proposing that release from pain will come only from non-attachment and the cessation of desire. Two characteristics of Buddha's teachings set them off from Christianity. One is its scientific spirit in the analysis of human suffering, finding its cause in attachment to objects of desire; the other is in the non-miraculous means of assurance to men that it lies within their capacity to outgrow their weaknesses and limitations—the example of Buddha himself, who began as an ordinary man, like other men. Caste has no place in Buddhism, although Buddha takes cognizance of the ideal of human behavior theoretically represented by the Brahman. The adjustment of Christianity to the wide abyss which separates the "saint" from the ordinary man is made by the claim that humans are prone to sinful behavior, vulnerable to temptation and unable without divine intervention to save themselves from the penalties of their innate imperfection.

In brief, the historic religions of the world take full account of all the facets of human nature which form the basis of the philosophy of adjustment, but contrast them with another set of attributes regarded as ideal, urging that these latter be strenuously sought after. What we might term the *evolutionary* religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, proposed definite processes by which a man might acquire the qualities of a fully developed human being—a state of virtual divinity—while Christianity speaks of achieving a state of *grace* through various means.

How, then, has the world—in particular the Western world and Western culture—come to abandon the transcendent ideals of high religion and to replace them by various versions of the philosophy of adjustment? The process of the transition is not obscure. From the time of Constantine, on, Christianity increasingly lost its character as a truly "high" religion, becoming, instead, a dogmatic form of religious materialism and a political institution in competition with other political institutions, a source of emoluments to its officials and of psychological power to its priests. It presided in full control over the Dark Ages, during which time it lost—except for an occasional mystic—all sense of inward religion and elevated to authority blindly ignorant and bigoted doctrines in explanation of how the world was made, in connection with a mechanistic teaching of the means to salvation. The few philosophers who tried to maintain for European civilization some slight philosophical conception of the role of man in the life of the world usually found their punishment at the stake. With the rebirth, therefore, of humane culture in the Renaissance, and with the dawn of the experimental spirit following the Revival of Learning, a resentful and determined reaction set in against religion of any sort. The fact that the organized forms of the Christian religion resisted scientific inquiry from its first beginnings, and in the backwaters of the Faith still resist it today, is sufficient explanation for the declassé intellectual status of modern Christianity, and it throws some light, also, on the failure of almost the entire educated community to show an interest in even philosophical religion, although it can hardly excuse this neglect.

Today, there are the vague beginnings of a renewed interest in the counsels of perfection of ancient religious philosophy. There is as yet no hint of open inquiry as to the transcendental metaphysics on the basis of which the counsels of perfection may be shown to make sense, but the concept of individual striving is beginning to get attention, along with some changes in vocabulary.

The reasons for this interest are of course many, but one clear occasion for it is the moral bankruptcy of the adjustment philosophy in situations where *average* behavior has fallen below the level of common tolerance. Books are beginning to be written on the value of "maladjustment," and there is one called *Be Glad You're Neurotic!*

How, then, is the logical dilemma of "counsels of perfection" versus the "facts of life" to be resolved? It is to be met, so far as we can see, by individuals, with the sort of philosophic evaluation of the *status quo* that is made possible by the evolutionary religions of antiquity. In the case of those who represent contemporary disciplines, and who are feeling for some kind of synthesis which does not violate the canons of science, another solution seems to have been adopted, also "evolutionary" in its way.

We find psychologists and psychotherapists of a certain stamp and sympathy showing little interest in either extreme—neither the low floor of the statistical *status quo* nor the generalized images of human perfection attract their attention—but, instead, they obtain their inspiration, which they transmit to others, in the idea of *growth.* The focus for the individual becomes, "Where do I want to go from here, and what are the means to get there?" What this amounts to, or can amount to, is the same process of deliberation and inner development which the ancient religions taught, with functional canons of achievement instead of mystical and overtly transcendental ideals to lead the individual on. We have words like "creative" and "self-actualizing" to take the place of words like "Brahman" and "saint." The canons are sometimes borrowed from the arts and literature, since these are fields of large, impersonal achievement, and since in them are found impressive examples of *comprehending* lives.

Eventually, thoughtful men are going to get around to the rational necessity of filling in the metaphysic which gives philosophic validity to this dynamic psychology of growth. In the meantime, intuitively-held values are supplying the moral strength and the insight that are needed to encourage the development of an articulate leadership for the future.

REVIEW
"RELIGION WITHOUT REVELATION"

IT is difficult, from the standpoint of MANAS, to think of a better title for a philosophical examination of religion than that chosen twenty-eight years ago by Julian Huxley to name an excellent collection of essays. An attempt was made by Watts in 1941 to keep *Religion Without Revelation* in print, in the form of an abridgement, but this edition was long ago exhausted. We now welcome the New American Library's fifty-cent Mentor edition, complete with the author's own revisions and alterations, and two entirely new chapters.

In his preface to this volume, Dr. Huxley explains why the subject-matter which he dealt with so long ago is now of even greater public interest. Psychologists, religionists and scientists alike have been made aware of the fact that opposition between the scientific and religious traditions of the Western world has weakened democratic concepts. After all, conventional religion is authoritarian rather than humanitarian, while on the other hand men of scientific mind who have been bitterly critical of religious disdain for the scientific method have themselves been indifferent to the idea that human existence has profound spiritual implications. But some sort of synthesis between conviction of spiritual reality and the methods of honest science seems to have taken place. "Religion," as Huxley puts it, "is one of the latest fields to which the method of science has been extended. The resultant sciences of comparative religion and religious psychology are already yielding deeply interesting results, which will certainly be of value in leading humanity out of the religious impasse in which it now finds itself."

Dr. Huxley, apparently, was in 1928 so thoroughly and honest a scientist that he forbade himself overt attack on religious formulations. The view then offered by science did not allow him, he felt, to disregard all religious claims—even though he would have preferred to do so. Therefore, his conclusions of the present date breathe more than a partisan spirit, even when he writes that "God is now proving to be an inadequate hypothesis" as an account of the motor of human destiny. He continues: "To a great many people, including myself, this realisation is a great relief, both intellectually and morally. It frees us to explore the real phenomena for which the God hypothesis seeks to account, to define them more accurately, and to work for a more satisfying set of concepts and symbols to represent them in our mental organisation." As Huxley once pointed out in a lecture before the William Alanson White Foundation, the intelligent philosopher, whether he be scientist or Christian, now has the opportunity to achieve a reincarnation of spiritual values in those areas where they have been deleted along with the personal God conception.

One of the new chapters in *Religion Without Revelation* is entitled "Science and God: The Naturalistic Approach." In this essay, Dr. Huxley considers all religions to be "organs of man in society for dealing with the problem of destiny on the one hand and the sense of the sacred on the other. If you like to combine the two, you can say that religion attempts to deal with the problem of destiny considered in the light of our sense of its essential sacredness and inevitable mystery." This sense of mystery and sacredness, Huxley feels, needs to be reborn. Communism, he shows, has called upon us to search the internal sources of our faith in man to see whether the use we make of the word "spiritual" has any vital meaning. He writes:

> Marxist Communism is much better organized and more competent [than religion], but its purely materialist basis has limited its efficacy. It has tried to deny the reality of spiritual values. But they exist, and the Communists have had to accept the consequences of their ideological error, and grudgingly throw the churches open to the multitudes seeking the spiritual values which had been excluded from the system.

Before an adequate naturalistic belief-system can develop scientific method must have been applied in all the fields contributing to human destiny: otherwise the system will be incomplete and will merely provide one of the premature syntheses that Gardner Murphy rightly stigmatises as standing in the way of fuller comprehension. To be adequate, it must include scientific knowledge about cultural as well as cosmic and biological evolution, about human nature and social nature as well as about physical and organic nature, about values and gods, rituals and techniques, practical moralities and religious ideals as well as about atoms and cells, moons and suns, weather and disease-germs.

Only when scientific knowledge is organised in a way relevant to our ideas about destiny can we speak of a naturalistic belief-system; and only when the scientific knowledge concerns all aspects of destiny will the belief-system begin to be adequate.

In his concluding chapter on "Evolutionary Humanism," Dr. Huxley shows us why his life-long exploration of biological evolution has provided him with a sense of human destiny beyond material achievements. In the interpenetration of various forms of intelligent life, he writes, "evolutionary biology shows us the destiny of man on earth as a partnership between man and nature, with man in the leading position—a common enterprise involving the participation of the entire human species for its most fruitful execution." Huxley concludes with the following paragraphs:

It has inevitably been a source of satisfaction that my almost life-long interest in evolution has led me to a better understanding of the relations between human life and the apparently hostile universe in which it exists. Man, both as individual and as species, turns out to be profoundly significant in the cosmic process.

When Hamlet pronounced man 'the paragon of animals,' 'the quintessence of dust,' he anticipated Darwin and all the implications of Darwin's work for our ideas about man's origin and destiny. But, he also said, 'man delights me not, no, nor women either,' thereby voicing some of the disillusion and horror which we all sometimes feel at human frustration, stupidity and cruelty. That disillusion and horror have been sharpened for us moderns by the events of the last few decades—though, if we had been willing to cast our eyes backward into history, we should have found abundance of stupidities and cruelties to rival those of our own times.

However, in the light of our knowledge and psychology and history, the moral of those failures and horrors is not that human nature is unchangeable, or incurably evil. Human nature always contains the possibilities of evil, waste and frustration; but it also contains those of good, of achievement and of fruition. The lesson of evolution is that we must think in the limited but positive terms of fulfilment—the decree to which we, individually and collectively, manage to realise our inherent possibilities.

Finally, the concept of evolutionary humanism has helped me to see how, in principle at least, science and religion can be reconciled. It has shown me outlets for ideas and sentiments which I think can legitimately be called religious, but which otherwise would have remained frustrated or untapped. And it has indicated how vital a contribution science can make to religious progress.

My grandfather, in the famous essay in which he defined agnosticism, stated as self-evident that "every man should be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him."

COMMENTARY
MR. SEGOVIA'S GUITAR

THERE is so much wrong with the present that one can easily forget what is right with it—or take it too much for granted. Not long ago we listened to Andrés Segovia play on his guitar a sonata by Domenico Scarlatti. To such music—it was a recording, of course—one listens with still wonder and growing awe, that a human being can make such sounds with an odd-shaped box and some gut and maybe some wire; and that, when they are made, those sounds are preserved by technology so often complained about in these pages, and made widely available.

Then, on another night, there was a collection of songs sung by Paul Robeson. To this you listen with mingled emotions—with a sense of the magnificence of his voice, the kind of a voice that seems to belong to the profound resonances and lyrical passages of Nature herself, rather than to a "person" who "sings"; and then, there is the chagrin that Robeson has been neglected and ignored—that our children are served up Mickey Mouse serenades when there is this inwardly lighted *sound* that might have been brought to them to marvel at, through childhood and, therefore, for the rest of their lives. The contemptible lack of generosity in the political self-righteousness of Americans—this blue-nosed sectarianism which denies appreciation of greatness in the arts—it is enough to make the spirits of the Founding Fathers turn away their faces from our time.

But the beauty of Robeson's song drowns these mournful reflections, for he still sings, and anyone who chooses can seek out his voice and listen to it for as long and as frequently as he wants.

It is not that we need be vain of our age and its achievements, or suppose that the present is some climax of history in which we may take pride. Every age, no doubt, has its moments of this sort, since every age has its men, its artists, its singers, as well as its fools. It is just that in any present there are these wonders of the human spirit, and our present is indeed lavish in its distribution of them. This is no snobbery of the few. Statistics report that every other home (this *must* be an exaggeration!) in Southern California is equipped with an FM radio receiver, which means that the best in music is available, at almost any time, just across the room, for those who want to listen. This is not one of the natural blessings of Southern California, but bespeaks an inclination of the people to listen to such sound.

There is so much froth in America—so much show-case wrath and small-boy belligerence, and so much professional petulance and peddling of prejudice—you would think that nothing friendly and decent ever happens here. Why the people put up with it is a puzzle; it may be their greatest weakness that they do; yet a vast inheritance of strength and, perhaps, courage, sleeps in America.

The thing that too many Americans have forgotten is that this country really belongs to the world. We do not "possess" this land; we have it in trust, for it was made by the people from all over the world. The Germans, the Irish, the English, the Scandinavians, the Italians, the Africans, the Japanese, the Chinese—these peoples and a hemisphere of prairies, mountains, lakes and rivers have made America. Nearly two centuries of Old World and New World dreaming made America. The dream can be blighted and shadowed, but it cannot be obliterated. Too many hearts have been filled with it for the dream to die.

These are some of the echoes of Mr. Segovia's guitar. The technology which makes horror and ugliness on one page of history on the next makes an architectonic bow to eternity, with quivering sound of such melodic rainbows that time, for the moment, dissolves into an altar of perception, while, inwardly, the listener is raised to a peak of participation in the greatness of man.

The wordless glory of tonal composition has something of the final mysteries revealed in its progressions. *What does it say*? You could ask

the ceaseless motions of the sea, the afternoon sun on a flowered hillside, with as much success. What are these things but the testament, man's and nature's, to the serene fulfillment of the moment unto itself—the agony passing into the calm, the high rage of the storm, paroxysmic, like passion risen and spent, into the somnolent desert silences and the spread of forgotten seas. A man's art is the microcosm of all this, contained, unfolded, and played upon as in years and centuries, moving without haste, cycle upon cycle, age upon age. It is now Narcissus, gazing at his image, now Ain-Soph talking to Ain-Soph, in audible measures and visible designs. And, in a thousand ways, this genius has been multiplied, made almost common, even wasted with the profligacy of an endlessly fecund production line.

So Mr. Segovia's guitar unleashes delicate little universes of sound and harmony, reaching like floating islands of ordered feeling around the world, announcing the devotion of many hands that have made these records of his, of man's, genius. Here, too, is the hallmark and sign manual of our time. These works exist, too, along with those other things of which we are so ashamed.

The meaning of these good things must have many dimensions, but of one thing we are sure—they preach a sounding sermon: Man and the true works of man are ends in themselves; this must be so, since the best of men bear the meaning of the whole great totality of life in their hearts and minds and the skills of their hands.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NEWS AND NOTES

UNDER the head, "New Kind of College Proposed," the New York *Times* (Jan. 4) reports plans for a new college that will use the seminar method of instruction. Four neighboring New England institutions—the University of Massachusetts, and Amherst, Smith and Mount Holyoke Colleges—have joined forces to plan for a thousand-student coeducational college in which orthodox courses in instruction would be discarded. Many American universities now make available "readings" courses for upper-division students and honor seminars, in which long classroom hours are replaced by plenty of opportunity for each student to converse personally with his professor regarding work which the student himself has initiated. But the "New College" proposed in Massachusetts would begin this method in the Freshman year. Details of the plan are provided by the *Times* summary:

> Operating a "first-class" liberal arts college with a student-faculty ratio of 20:1 would depend on wiping out the conventional structure of courses and of departments to experiment with deploying the fewer teachers across three main academic divisions: humanities, social sciences and physical sciences.
>
> It would also depend on the success of the committee's central thesis: that the average student is capable of far more independence than he does or can demonstrate now. The first steps in independence would begin the first semester, when freshmen would get no lectures. In seminars of a dozen or fewer students, each would have to jump into the middle of a subject, exploring a limited topic, with much help and guidance. He would take three courses, none of which would attempt to "cover" certain subject matter, but all might cross into other fields.
>
> Instead of laying a broad early foundation of general knowledge and working up to a point of specialized research, the New College would invert the pyramid. Working outward to understand his special topic, the student would get general knowledge. Four years of reading and study, with occasional lectures and increasing independence, it is expected, will achieve the same ends as the best colleges.

* * *

The *Manchester Guardian* for Dec. 18 reviews a report on a four-year research project by the Nuffield Foundation on the effect of television watching upon school children (*Television and the Child,* Oxford University Press). According to the results of this inquiry, most of the specific objections to TV in relation to children are shown to be falsely formulated, yet, in the final analysis, as the *Guardian* puts it, "its conclusions all bear out what any sensible person would broadly expect to be true."

Apparently, at least in England, children stay up later with each generation anyway, and late bed-times cannot be said to be the result of TV addiction. Next, though introduction to TV in the home decreases the interest of the most precocious children in reading and their general creative endeavors, this seems to be only a temporary phenomenon; clever children with many interests tend to resume their former reading habits after an initial spell of TV watching. On the average, the most confirmed addicts among children are those who are somewhat mentally retarded, and who, before the days of TV, were devoted comic readers. The *Guardian's* summary of the Nuffield report, while mild enough, provides a good basis for those who choose to restrict or eliminate television in the home:

> In the end what is left is very interesting and not at all surprising, and it may be summed up in the statement that the more intelligent the child the less use it has for television and the less intelligent the more satisfaction it gets from television. But even here there is a limit, and only the child with definite "problems," unhappiness, or backwardness is liable to become an "addict." This finding which runs throughout the report and is confirmed by every possible test, is not perhaps so much a gloomy discovery about the quality of television as a confirmation of the fact that active and independent minds have other occupations and better sources of furnishing themselves. It is noticeable how little good the clever grammar school children get from television, most of which is already below their own attainment.

* * *

A bi-monthly publication, *Children,* published by a subsidiary of the United States Department of

Public Health and Welfare, provides material useful to the various "professions now serving children." An article in the January-February issue indicates that something beyond conventional professional complaisance finds hospitality in this Federally sponsored periodical. Writing on "Family Life in a Changing World," Gunnar Dybwad, J. D., Executive Director of the National Association for Retarded Children, points out that the tendency of parents and instructors to indoctrinate instead of educate can be observed in a democracy as well as in authoritarian lands. It has become evident that the results of industrialization and urbanization—tending toward the standardization of both parental and child opinion—cannot be counteracted by the recent tendency towards decentralization of housing. The tract homes to which many former urban dwellers have moved are, if anything, more "standardized" than the houses they used to live in before the advent of freeways and improved public transportation. As Mr. Dybwad remarks, "authoritarianism still manifests itself in patterns of family life in most countries of the world, including the United States. This fact should force persons in child-welfare work to move beyond their own particular functions into the market place of public opinion to share their knowledge and insights with others."

Mr. Dybwad quotes from Brock Chisholm, former head of the World Health Organization, on the need of parents to revise the attitudes and opinions they held during their own youth. According to Dr. Chisholm:

> It is quite clear that we must learn to live in peace with each other throughout the world. If we do not do so, there is little prospect that our children will finish their lives according to the statistical probabilities on which the life insurance companies depend. . . .
>
> It is well worth our while to look at the way we were brought up, the way we were developed, and hope to find out what is wrong with us so that we may prevent our children from assuming those same patterns. . . .
>
> There are enormous numbers of adults in the world who lack security, who have lacked security from infancy, and because of that lack of security are available as followers specifically of those people who have excessive needs for power. . . It becomes clear that the first necessity is to produce a degree of security in small children that will make it unnecessary for them to search for security in peculiar and unworkable ways when they become adults. (From Dr. Chisholm's "A New Look at Child Health," *The Child*, May, 1948.)

Mr. Dybwad also quotes from a paper prepared for *Social Welfare* by Manu Meta Desai, professor of social work at the Tata Institute in Bombay. Although fully aware of the Indian argument that traditional ways of life need to be strengthened by current social practice, Mr. Desai points out that children need most of all the means which will "help them evolve a new synthesis between the old and the new, with a minimum of strain and a maximum of ease, as well as to impart in them a sense of loyalty and responsibility to groups and peoples far beyond the limits of their narrow family caste and community life."

This, it seems to us, is the American and English problem as well as the problem of India. Particularly in the United States is there a need for an increased comprehension, on the part of parents and teachers, of the ideative traditions underlying the foundation of the United States as an independent republic. And the routinized man of technological society will not, as a recent MANAS lead article pointed out, find dignity in his work unless he finds a dignity in his individual human stature.

The liberal education proposed by the New England institutions mentioned earlier seems to be another step in the right direction—toward the realization that only the man of independent *mind*, whose æsthetic standards are chosen after philosophic evaluation, can participate in industry without loss of identity. And only such parents, in turn, will be able to provide their children with the "sense of security" spoken of by Dr. Chisholm. We have rebels in plenty among our younger generation, but when they are "rebels without a cause" they can hardly make a creative or challenging approach to "peace with honor" in contemporary society.

FRONTIERS
A Fond Farewell

WHAT follows is not an attack on any one or anything. It is neither eulogy nor polemic: scarcely more than a sigh, as though to say, *Il pleure dans mon coeur.* Never, as we pass the Museum of Modern Art, can we shake off the thoughts that never lose us, and never have, in the ten years since we crossed the street to view a showing of "Twentieth Century Italian Art." For the benefit of newcomers, the Museum staff had prepared a wall-high Introduction by way of explanation, and it read:

> This is the largest exhibit of modern Italian painting and sculpture ever held in America. Its purpose is to illustrate and explore the notable contribution that contemporary artists in Italy have made to the art of our time—a contribution unfairly obscured by the shadow of the great Italian past. The development of modern Italian art is traced from the early years of the twentieth century up to the lively post-war present—a present already known in this country through several brilliant Italian films—Open City, Shoe Shine, Paisan. . . .

There was more, much more, . . . But that is really all one need know, isn't it? For in that simple statement, without intending or even knowing it, what the directors and the staff were saying was, "See you later, dear friends, downstairs in the *moving picture* gallery below, where 'the shadow of the great Italian past' will not obtrude 'unfairly.'" The lively post-war present of Twentieth Century Art, in Italy or elsewhere, is not on canvas at all.

We should, of course, have been prepared for this, or something of the sort. It must have long been apparent to any but the professional involute, that painting and sculpture were being preserved, like laboratory specimens, in the vacuum under a Bell jar. Osmosis has long since ceased to carry nourishment in, and waste matter away.

That Art, more *mobile* than any *donna*, should have fled the impaled canvas, eluded the studied look, the well-thumbed phrase, the sickroom tread, was only to be expected. Unaccountable is the failure of "experts" to see that the unique phenomenon in art is never the work, but themselves. They and the galleries. Art has never designed to keep office hours, nor, as now, late-evening department-store hours.

What that staff-written Introduction cleared up is actuarial status. Present-day art is not "modern." The West was young when draped and undraped figures drifted across Grecian urns. The Greeks were the children of the Western world; we its octogenarians.

Art never is, was, or can be "Modern." The most that can be said of Art at any time is that it is contemporary or contemporaneous. If Art is inevitably "in-time-with" something, then with what has it been in time this long, long while?

With mathematical number.

The difference in Cultures is the difference in Number. That of the Classical was finite; that of ours is infinite. Greek creative expression was rooted in rocky, sun-warmed earth; ours is rooted in gelid air.

The first "modern" to be intoxicated by the prospect of space was Ucello (Paolo diDono, 1397-1475). Mad about perspective, Vasari says; up half the night with his calipers. Famous even in his day for experiments in what he called "light-dark," *chiaroscuro.* Perspective, the third dimension, is a mathematical problem the Renaissance painters solved; and the preoccupation with light was soon to become scientific.

In 1632, with his unforgettable canvas, *The Anatomy Lesson*, Rembrandt achieved with chiaroscuro a *tour de force* which many have copied but none surpassed. That flood of lambent light on the circle of faces in shadow was ancestor to the "floodlights" bequeathed the world by Thomas Edison.

From Rembrandt on, light and the manipulation of light became a primary concern of

painting. In the identical years of the seventeenth century, far off in France, Descartes, Pascal, and Fermat were patiently developing new number theories, sublimely indifferent to the "fine arts."

Centuries and generations away from Existentialism, Einstein, and "modern" space theories, Pascal discoursed in letters to a Jesuit on *la lumière et le vide*—Light and Space, or Light and the Void. On Pascal's two infinities our lives are founded: "There is no number so large that a larger cannot be imagined, and no number so small that a smaller cannot be conceived."

Art, at the very same moment, reached the same fork in the road. Off in one direction lay infinite largeness and space; off in the other, infinite smallness and life experience.

Along the high road, Art passed through Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, in which light was so all-pervading that Whistler as the painter of a nocturnal Thames was almost ostracized. Objects and people were made to appear suspended in luminosity, adrift in painted light. The end of the road was reached with the severance from any earthly actuality at all: the dropping out of the object in the Symbolists, the Surrealists, Cubists, Dadaists, and the Non-Objectivists' purely spatial canvases.

The drive, part conscious, part unconscious, toward broken, eccentric, asymmetric, geometrical, fourth-dimensional forms affords as close a parallel as history ever will, to the drive toward the abstract in mathematics, the shattering of form in physics, and the trend toward formlessness in the novel, play, poem, dance, and musical "composition."

But what was it that Ucello sought and Rembrandt managed so magnificently to capture by the use of chiaroscuro and perspective's third dimension? *A lifelike naturalness.* For Rembrandt and for generations of painters after him, it was portraiture. For every artist who chose the road of infinite smallness, it was reporting of some kind, if only the wart on a nose. Where it ended is with Pictorial Journalism, courses in which are taught at institutions of higher learning.

That low road has perhaps been the more destructive of art and the artist. For if it was frustrating to find a symbolic semblance of substance to paint in the abstract, in space at least a possibility exists for release. In the other direction, it became hopelessly defeating to discover some element novel enough to lift the commonplace above the level of passing interest. Van Gogh symbolizes the ultimate in tortured frustration on this "Slice of Life" level. Worse, infinite smallness is thrown back upon itself, so that at one extreme we have the microscopic droppings from the Unconscious of an early Dali, and at the other Picasso's distorted double exposure of the self, inverted.

The second way produced such a consummate feast of reporting that in the ringing manifestos of "The Five," *"Les Fauves,"* "The Six," or "The Eight," one fancies one can hear the off-stage firing of revolutions, revolts, reforms, and two world wars. The dynamism of the machine, "blond beast" in golden bronze; the cyclops eye of the locomotive ploughing the dark, and Honegger's symphonic "Pacific No. 231"; the stroboscopic motion of dog feet and leash, of human feet and flying.birds; the frenzied ennui of the between-wars world: *le jazz, les cocottes, les boîtes de nuit.* A phallic Christ completed the Twentieth Century Italian tableau ten years ago.

What reduced the myopic sector to innocuous desuetude is that, save for a rare commissioned piece, the big stuff, the meaty subjects, slipped right through and out of the artist's hands . . . into the *picture* pages, the *picture* magazines, the *picture* books.

The object of Ucello's search for the third dimension was to give depth to the painted figure. Where the search ended was with the geometers, who announced that a line drawn through one point need not parallel a line drawn through another point—*if the second point lay in a*

different plane: as, straight up or down, or at an oblique angle. What emerged was the revolutionary concept of *the point in space.* To this unsettling notion, we are abysmally indebted.

The point in space first made its appearance on canvas in the mincing works of Vuillard and the painted *tapisseries* of Seurat. With *le pointillisme* it became "the thing" for the eye to blend mathematically calculated points of color to produce the pigmentation called for by the subject on the canvas. Very, very clever indeed!

All that happened, alas, was that men as clever learned to do the self-same thing without the painter as intermediary. Photographers and photo-engravers, between them, found new uses for light, for a pin-hole camera, and for a series of points called a "screen" which registered light in infinitely minute dots on a film and accomplished the same optical trick in a photographic reproduction that could be turned out by the thousand.

Long before painting knew it had been struck a mortal blow, the dilettanti, the cognoscenti, the litterati, and crusaders, too, were succumbing to the *art of the camera,* with social commentary by Bourke-White and Cartier Bresson, and the sartorial vignette by Cecil Beaton.

Easel painting, never after the 1600's to any purpose beyond a satisfying, elucidating, or titillating reproduction—the head, room, child, mirror, tree, dog, street, factory, dresser, woman, mountain, sea, fish, flowers, river, harbor, old saloon, new bridge, and the inevitable family portrait—all this the camera caught, *more* realistically, rapidly and reliably and, if it chose, more imaginatively and artistically. The job begun in stills turned now to art in motion: *cinémart.*

French films in the hands of painters, poets and composers have ventured farthest into the abstract. Theirs may be the final word, but one suspects these *nerveuses* essays in morbidity do no more than reflect the intellectual climate in France. For abstract anonymity in sculpture, it would be hard to choose between someone like Arp and Henry Moore, whose wood-carving, apart from its obsession with the apertures in the human body, is—or so it seems to us—essentially sculptured geometry.

For the rest, as our twentieth-century heritage from the mathematicians' infinities and the geometers' point in space, we have, *enfin:* points of light so rapidly spaced that the eye picks them up as a moving image; a succession of points of sound moving faster than the ear can single them out; dot-and-dash recordings of light and sound in megacycles as yet far from perfectly synchronized; but, in cinema, radio, and television, new art forms *in motion.* The only replica-in-form in the plastic arts is the mobile of Alexander Calder, the one true artistic realization of the movable point in space.

Unquestionably, a new art is in the making, one that will reassemble and reabsorb light, color, movement, music, into a single unified whole. Meanwhile, weep gently for an art so old it scarcely casts a shadow. Like "a painted ship upon a painted ocean," the third floor canvas is passing.

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