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THE MISSING QUESTIONS

PROBABLY no age of man has written about itself in the productive volume with which the present age has pursued this activity; and with, one might add, so little constructive effect. Not that the effort is without fruit. Flashes of insight are apparent in every field of intellectual inquiry, but these seem to come mostly to specialists, to men who have marked off a limited area for exploration. The great questions, the ultimate questions, remain—we shall not say, "unanswered," since this would signify the prospect of far too simple a solution of human problems—the great questions rather remain unasked, as though they did not exist at all, for modern man.

What are the Great Questions about? They deal, to take the bull by the horns, with the nature of transcendental reality. There is no need, here, to spend much time in considering why this subject is neglected. Suffice it to say that for several generations, such questions have been considered to be largely meaningless, since the very ground of the idea of transcendental reality was long ago dropped out of Western thought. The story of *Eros* and *Psyche* might be taken to symbolize what happened to the Occidental quest for truth. *Eros* commanded *Psyche* never to look at his face, but the temptation was too great. As *Eros* lay sleeping, she broke faith with her loved one and examined his countenance. This destroyed the relationship between them, since there was now no hope that *Psyche* could learn to comprehend the true identity of her lover.

This was the sort of misunderstanding, we might say, that was created by the rise of scientific culture. The tragedy lay, not in the spirit of discovery and invention which pervaded the scientific movement, but in the attitude which came to accompany it—the assumption that by exposing to view the physical laws and processes of nature, the essential meanings of things would finally become plain.

Were there any warnings to the Western mind, the Western *Psyche*, comparable to the admonition given by *Eros* to the adoring maiden? One could say that the warnings have been ample, but unattended. Plato, in the *Phaedo*, makes Socrates warn against the beguilements of physical perception, indicating that too much reliance upon it might close the eye of inward vision. A little short of two thousand years later, the great ancestor of modern scientific thought, Isaac Newton, repeated the warning in other terms, when he declared that the ultimate causes of things were certainly "not mechanical,"

The enchantment of the physical world, however, was far too binding a spell, and the practical progress brought by the discoveries of science seemed to confirm the conclusion that here, at last, in the material appearances and processes of things, men had found the *true* reality.

To go against this view was to challenge the whole idea of the scientific revolution and to repudiate all those moral energies which seemed to be rooted in attentive devotion, as Galileo had put it, to "the Book of Nature." There were of course those who boldly resisted the scientific theory of knowledge, but for the most part they represented a return to some sectarian tradition of religion. Even Gandhi, whose moral genius impressed scientist and layman alike, seemed to resort to a conception of the universe brought forward from the past—a conception which had in no significant way assimilated the findings of modern physical and biological science.

This is more or less the situation at present. To break away from the context of scientific assumption is to found one's position on the

bottomless quicksands of unverified tradition. *Eros* has not returned to uphold a faith in the unseen universe. And then, on the other hand, there are the undoubted virtues of the scientific discipline. Inadequate as may be the scientific theory of knowledge, and however limited its fruits for the psychic needs and hungers of mankind, it remains a Gibraltar-like symbol of the only certainty our age has experienced. What folly to proceed on any other ground!

But, how, specifically, are the great questions ignored? They are ignored through exclusive attention to other questions. In *Encounter* for February, for example (and *Encounter* may be said to be one of the best contemporary magazines), an article by C. A. R. Crosland asks, "What Does the Worker Want?" This is no doubt a good article on the subject chosen, but why not an article on what *man* wants, and not just on man as "worker"?

A suggestion of this sort could easily be taken as an invitation to launch into some kind of depth analysis of the mass man, but that is not what is intended. Admittedly, the question involves numerous complications, but some kind of beginning to discussing it would give new life to the thought of our time. Mr. Crosland does in fact touch briefly on the periphery of the subject, but only to give the matter up as impracticable in an industrial society. Speaking of the measure of collaboration achieved between management and labor in British and American plants, he admits that success has been limited:

> We may eliminate overt resentments between labour and management. Do we, thereby, necessarily create a positive feeling of satisfaction in work? We do not (to use phrases which *do* mean something, although their glib reiteration, in Vienna [during an international seminar last September on "Workers' Participation in Management," sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom] and elsewhere, often makes one want to scream) eliminate *"alienation,"* give the worker *"a sense of belonging,"* and enable him (in some way) to *"fulfill himself."*

Mr. Crosland quotes Daniel Bell as summing up the real state of affairs in factory life:

> The most characteristic fact about the factory worker today is his loss of interest in his work. Few individuals think of "the job" as a place to seek fulfilment. There is quite often the camaraderie of the shop, the joking, gossip, and politicking of group life. But work itself, the daily tasks which the individual is called upon *to perform*, lacks any real challenge, and is seen only as an irksome chore to be shirked, or to be finished as best as possible. . . . The worker's behaviour itself becomes a judgment. First and foremost, it appears in the constant evasion about work, the obsessive reveries (often sexual) while on the job, the substitution of the glamour of leisure for the drudgeries of work. Yet the harsher aspects are present as well. . . .

Mr. Crosland comments:

> This "alienation" cannot be ascribed, as it was by Marx, to the system of property relations, nor yet to the absence of workers' management. It is, I think, rooted in technological processes of large-scale industry, and above all in the atomisation of work—the breakdown of the production process into the maximum number of repetitive, low-skilled tasks.
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> No doubt one can avoid this de-humanisation in, for example, small producer cooperatives, or in village development schemes in India, or in cooperative farms in Israel. But such examples are scarcely relevant to the industrial West. Here the issue must be faced within the framework of large-scale industry.

One can admit that full cognizance must be taken of the industrial organization of Western civilization, and acknowledge that it presents knotty problems. But the fundamental difficulty is not in the attitudes of "workers." The entire pattern of modern technological enterprise grew within the framework of certain assumptions about the "good life." It is those assumptions which created a system of production which "alienates" the worker. *But not only the worker.* It also alienates everybody else. *The Death of a Salesman* is about the sort of man our methods of marketing produce. Within the past two or three years, dozens of books have exposed the shallow, characterless existence of men engaged in merchandising, promotion, and management. The most familiar titles, at the moment, are *The Hidden Persuaders* by Vance Packard and

William Whyte's *The Organization Man.* Then, to complete the circuit, there is C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* to show the kind of people our society develops to man its top policy-making positions.

It will be natural for someone to ask, "Well, what do you want to do—junk everything we have and start all over again?"

Starting all over again will be fine, but there is no need to have any bigger junk piles than we have already. And there is no use in talking about "starting all over" unless we have some better ideas to start with. What a man wants to do with his life is the result of what he thinks he is. Men will put up with semi-skilled laboring jobs on production lines as long as they fail to develop a drive to do something more important. And the men who hire them will go on hiring them to work on the production line as long as they accept, at another level, the common objectives of our technological culture. Only the capacity to imagine a better kind of life ever releases men from the life they are living. It is not an "economic" problem nor a problem of psychological analysis of the "worker's needs." It is a problem of re-creating ideals of an entire society, so that men will *want* to do something worth-while with their lives and will be led by their longings to *invent* a new way of life. We keep talking about what we ought to do for the working man. What are we doing for ourselves? Why, that is, should anyone assume that he has a better idea of life than the working man? What more does he know about the good life? The great changes of history have come about because some men began, where they were, to live a new life. The social forms and economic relations followed after, obedient to the impulse of the creative spirit.

The use, earlier in this discussion, of the allegory of *Eros* and *Psyche* to represent the blindness of modernity to ultimate questions of human existence, has its limitations. While the antique world provided clear philosophical ideas concerning the nature and destiny of man, modern science was born amid the wreckage of ancient systems of thought, surrounded by the primitive superstition and intellectual debris of the European Middle Ages. And if we go back to the Greeks or to ancient India for philosophical conceptions, we encounter a vocabulary which seems to resist a fresh embodiment in the contemporary idiom. Yet a beginning must be made, somewhere. It is not that we must have at the outset a correct or final philosophy of human life. We need, rather, to develop forms of transcendental thinking which can be subjected to rational investigation.

We might take, for example, the Gnostic idea of the soul as a bird of passage from the past to the future arising as a differentiated unit from the Primeval One, and moving through varied experiences, as on a great pilgrimage, toward a more profound realization of the spiritual unity of all beings. The diversities of life are a course of instruction in the endless potentialities of universal being, while the field of activity for each one affords opportunity for the expression of his creative powers and capacities. This, as a simple scheme of meaning for the cycle of human experience, could be the basis for further development of explanatory investigation. A man would have to interpret for himself the meaning of pain, the role of the moral struggle in his life, the relationship between his freedom and the compulsions of circumstance as well as the psychological drives arising within his own nature. Various conceptions of human fulfillment would be considered, providing criteria for the selection of goals in human striving.

The question of where and how the basic satisfactions in life are to be found would gain deliberate attention, and out of such reflections would come a sense of purpose and the beginnings of the habit of discrimination among ends. To the degree that such questions were pursued, parents would develop an atmosphere of inquiry and wondering that would impart a

beneficent influence to family life, giving children the impulse to start an inward dialogue of their own at an early age, and this would in time create the substance of a culture of refinement and ennobling intentions.

There is hardly any danger that the conscious development of such inclinations would bring a return to the ignorant supernaturalism which characterized Western history in the centuries before the scientific revolution. It is even unlikely that much reliance will ever again be placed upon allegory and myth as the sources of religious and philosophic feeling. The development of Western man has been such that he is an expert in the use of the tools of analysis and criticism, and every philosophic conception he entertains will have to pass the inspection of his sharpened perceptions at the intellectual level. But the immediate sense of being, the intuitive expressions of the powers of the mind, range beyond the scope of the critical faculties. We see this most impressively in the arts and literature, which keep alive those feelings of dignity and spiritual reality that have no explicit counterpart in our philosophical vocabulary.

It is time that we interest ourselves in our fate directly, independent of theories and doctrines about our economic life and even our political life. Politics and economics ought to be forms of activity adopted by men as instruments of fulfillment for their philosophy of ultimate ends. When left without a philosophic foundation, economics and politics are vulgarized. They are forced to do duty for the qualities of life that are beyond and prior to economics and politics, with the result that they become vehicles of fanaticism and create issues of partisan conflict. Economics, for example, cannot settle political questions. To make politics subservient to economics produces the totalitarianism of the machine and industrial organization, while subverting freedom in the name of material equality. Politics cannot settle moral questions, since, while politics is able to formulate the conditions of political freedom, it cannot define the issues of moral responsibility nor suggest the ideal use of political freedom.

It is time to restore the sense of man having roots in transcendental being, and to explore at first hand, each man for himself, the implications of those roots for the meaning of our lives. It is time to start all over again, to ask the Great Questions.

Letter from **Galilee**

UPPER GALILEE, ISRAEL.—I live in a *kibbutz* which is a type of collective village entered into freely and working on a basis of consumer cooperation and producer cooperation. In short, complete cooperation. The idea is two-fold: (1) to eliminate exploitation and further equality based on need, and (2) to make it easier for traditionally urban, white-collar Jews to become workers and settle wasteland areas.

A logical result of our way of life is that our children are educated together and live a collective, democratic life. The difference between us and the Reds is that in Russia they talk about socialism and equality whereas in practice there is a fantastic inequality and lack of democracy. Our co-op villages are managed by popular vote of the members. While it is true that we are "Utopian" and surrounded by the capitalist society, still we believe that our way of life will survive. Our eyes are open and we have no illusions. We know exactly why similar communes have failed in history. We pin our hopes on:

1. Political action by our delegates to the Israeli parliament.

2. Impossibility of settling arid land by private farmers.

3. Strict adherence to self-labour, viz., no hired hands.

I sincerely wish I might have some of your readers as guests at our village and others like it. Especially would I like to have you meet our children. You will feel right away that they are not being pushed ahead, ruining their present for the sake of "the future." This regime of "self-regulation," one might say, begins very early.

Of course there is ambition amongst our children. If they were without ambition of any kind, it would be sad indeed. But this ambition takes the form of *group* ambition, not to *fit-in,* which is really negative, but to strike out new paths. Such ambitions lead to all kinds of study and activities which raise the child's value to the group, thus raising the entire group. A child with a purely *personal* ambition (and to our regret this sometimes happens) is usually the victim of a broken home or a frustrated life. Sooner or later he leaves the village to gratify his ambition.

The same holds true in the matter of love of nature. Together with Joseph Wood Krutch *(Grand Canyon),* our children strive to comprehend and learn from nature instead of revising and using her. You should see with what enthusiasm our children make long walking trips into the desert just to see colors in rocks, or catch certain flowers in bloom or migratory birds or a flash-flood in a *wadi.* This love of natural history has variously been described as "mystical" and as a result of the age-long separation of Jews from normal living. Whatever it is, you cannot doubt the strangeness of the fact that almost all schoolboys can tell you how many new forests were planted last year!

As far as we can see, the "collectivist psychology," when taken in its practical, day-to-day sense, is far from a curse. While it's true that an individual who joins a group to live within a co-op way *must* give up some personal freedoms, the group guarantees that no member shall accumulate wealth. Only the group may do so, as a group. Once free of the shackles of stylish living, the member of the co-op can devote himself to self-improvement (or "living"). This new freedom can be seen in the kibbutz children.

The novel *Adam Bede* by George Eliot tells of Hetty, a young girl who lived for some unreal, unobtainable future. She is unfit for real life and suffers for it. This book was highly praised by Tolstoy. We regard ourselves as Tolstoy's spiritual heirs in some degree. And so the circle closes.

ISRAELI CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
DO IT YOURSELF THERAPY

FOLK MEDICINE by Dr. D. C. Jarvis has reached the MANAS review desk by courtesy of a friend. Published by Henry Holt and Co. in 1958, the book is subtitled "A Vermont Doctor's Guide to Good Health." Dr. Jarvis is an accredited medical authority, member of the Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, who has experimented for years on the efficacy of folklore remedies and preventives derived from nature. His results indicate that the age of "wonder drugs" has by-passed some fundamental sources of knowledge regarding good health. Dr. Jarvis' Foreword tells his story:

> I am a fifth-generation Vermonter on my mother's side. My medical-college and internship days in Burlington trained me in organized medicine. When I located in Barre, to pursue my chosen specialty of eye, ear, nose and throat, I recognized another type of medicine which I had to know and understand if I was to gain the medical confidence and respect of my fellow Vermonters who lived close to the soil on back-road farms. This medicine—Vermont folk medicine—had not been part of my formal training, but it is deeply a part of Vermont living. I set about learning it and understanding its origins.
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> My studies led me to considerable readjustment of orthodox approaches. For example, it did not immediately make medical sense to me that a sore throat could be cured in one day by chewing fresh gum of the spruce tree. But I saw that I would be wise to learn the principles of this folk medicine and cultivate a willingness to prescribe its time-honored remedies where precedent indicated that they would be as, or more efficacious than the remedies which organized medicine had taught me to use.
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> When I discussed a variety of specific treatments of this indigenous medicine with my colleagues at regional and national medical-society meetings, they asked me to continue the discussion at greater length by starting a correspondence study group, basing letters on my cumulative findings. I carried on this correspondence for twenty years. Membership was limited to fifty persons. Practically all were nationally known; many were faculty members of medical schools. The letters went out Tuesdays and Fridays to a mailing list in thirty-two states.

While Dr. Jarvis reports on the value of simple food supplements, such as cider vinegar, drawing his conclusions from large-scale studies of livestock feeding, his basic views grow from a conviction that both animals and children possess remarkable instincts for knowing the foods they need. In Vermont the tradition has always been to "go to nature" for the cures of illness, and this has meant a great respect for the instinctive intelligence of creatures of the woods. Dr. Jarvis writes:

> I have come to marvel at the instinct of animals to make use of natural laws for healing themselves. They know unerringly which herbs will cure what ills. Wild creatures first seek solitude and absolute relaxation, then they rely on the complete remedies of Nature—the medicine in plants and pure air. A bear grubbing for fern roots; a wild turkey compelling her babies in a rainy spell to eat leaves of the spice bush; an animal, bitten by a poisonous snake, confidently chewing snakeroot—all these are typical examples. An animal with fever quickly hunts up an airy, shady place near water, there remaining quiet, eating nothing but drinking often until its health is recovered. On the other hand, an animal bedeviled by rheumatism finds a spot of hot sunlight and lies in it until the misery bakes out.

Similarly, Dr. Jarvis reminds his colleagues in medicine, children who live in rural areas may often teach their parents a great deal. By their propensity to chew leaves and corn stalks, by their natural liking for sour drinks containing valuable acids, they may remind a thoughtful parent that good health requires a delicate balance of many mineral elements. Jarvis observed that children with free access to a vinegar barrel, for instance, seem to be drawn to take a sip now and again during the day. Vinegar, it turns out, is rich in potassium and is a general restorer of balance between acids and alkalines in the human system. Dr. Jarvis remarks:

> There are self-protective instincts in young children which impel them to seek foods needed at the moment by their body cells.

> I made a study of children ten years of age who lived on Vermont farms, in order that I might learn the workings of these instincts. I discovered that these young farm children chewed cornstalks, ate raw potatoes, raw carrots, raw peas, raw string beans, raw rhubarb, berries, green apples, ripe apples, the grapes that grow wild throughout the state, sorrel, timothy grass heads, and the part of the timothy stem that grows underground. They ate salt from the cattle box, drank water from the cattle trough, chewed hay, ate calf food and by the handful, a dairy-ration supplement containing seaweed, they even filled their pockets with this, to eat during school.

A critical reader of *Folk Medicine* may accuse Dr. Jarvis of a fixation on the virtues of apple-cider vinegar and honey, but it is sure that his life-long experience indicates that both may be used beneficially in ways that the orthodox physician does not even suspect. Although all nutritionists know that honey is an excellent food for building stamina and for improving heart action, Dr. Jarvis has proved by laboratory experiments that it is also an effective germicide. Further, the uses of honey in alleviating fatigue and in relaxing the nervous system are illustrated dramatically by an article written by a Canadian instructor in sports. Dr. Jarvis quotes from this writer:

> *Endurance:* Athletes participating in endurance tests showed better performance levels when fed two tablespoonfuls of honey 30 minutes before the test began. Whenever honey feeding was withdrawn, there was a definite decrease in work levels accomplished. This was true in such tests as: Repeated running of 50-yard sprints, with 5-minute rest periods between such. Continuous running at a rate of 1 mile in 6 minutes. Swimming of repeated 100-yard sections, with 10 minutes rest between. *Note:* When a further feeding of honey was given at the halfway mark, work levels were increased.
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> *Fatigue recovery:* When given after a period of hard work, athletes recovered faster, and were able to continue working sooner. *Note:* Because of this reaction we have been advocating honey feeding for athletes who must study following hard practice of games. It has been our experience that honey feeding enables a student to study better, since his energy has been replenished.

This "going to school to nature" has various philosophical implications. For one thing, it discourages the treatment of the symptoms of illness with synthetic drugs and directs medical practice toward correcting fundamental imbalances in metabolism and mineral content of the body. The ideal physician, according to Dr. Jarvis, must become something of a naturalist. "It is difficult," he says, "to cooperate with Nature unless we know what her health program is. When we know that harmful micro-organisms grow on an alkaline soil, and that Nature has liberally surrounded us with acids in the form of fruits, berries, edible roots and edible leaves, we can better appreciate the need of following Nature's advice, by taking in each day enough acid to prevent body tissues from becoming alkaline soil congenial to the growth of pathogenic microorganisms." Dr. Jarvis concludes his Preface:

> I believe that the doctor of the future will be a teacher as well as physician. His real job will be to teach people how to be healthy. Doctors will be even busier than they are now because it is a lot harder to keep people well than it is to just get them over a sickness.

Folk Medicine is, as the reader can imagine, a fascinating book to read. While many of its claims are made without full explanation, indicating the need for supplemental reading, these 180 pages help to close the gap between orthodoxy in medicine and the various homeopathic and "natural remedies" schools of thought. One can believe that faith and direct action on the part of those Vermonters who have constituted themselves their own physicians have much to do with their longevity and with the success in application of their homely specifics. But then, it is likely that every State would have a healthier and happier population if people set about discovering whatever natural remedies proved most effective for *them,* and depended less upon the symptom-chasing products of pharmaceutical laboratories.

COMMENTARY
MAVERICK PHILOSOPHERS

IN his *College Art Journal* article (see Frontiers), Joseph Campbell uses the expression "maverick philosophers," to identify the Western thinkers who, along with poets, artists, and literary men, have accepted and assimilated the influence of Eastern thought and religion. He mentions Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau as Americans in this group, and elsewhere names Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as among the Europeans in whom Oriental themes found welcome embodiment.

If we were to add to this list, we would recall, first, Lafcadio Hearn, whose writings on Buddhism combine delicate perceptions with complete mastery of expression in English. Then, more recently, there is Erwin Schrödinger, the eminent physicist, for whom the Upanishads have obviously become a philosophic key.

The striking thing about these men is the free activity and decision of their minds. No "tradition" hampers their philosophic inclinations. They have no "place in the line" of modern thought which they must preserve or lose status with their fellows.

The moral, here, if there is a moral, is that schools or sects in philosophy ought to be discouraged, if not forbidden. The sects in modern philosophy have their origin, mostly, in the dependence of philosophy on science. This is a bondage which inhibits spontaneity in philosophic inspiration. Philosophy has much in common with poetry and art, and, as Campbell says: "Poetry and art that do not affect us as immediate experience simply fail of their end."

The maverick philosopher is a man who is pursuing philosophy for its own sake. He is indifferent to fashions in thought, unaffected by methodological prejudices. And he may, like Amiel or Heine, think with clarity about matters which were not similarly understood by others until a hundred years later. Or he may, like Zimmer or Schrödinger, be willing to be touched at the heart of his mind by the wisdom in ancient forms of expression.

Such men do not wait for permission. For them, the thrill of authentic discovery is enough of a direction or guide.

Only a little of this spirit would be a great help in our time. People have the idea that they don't have to make up their minds. They think that others are supposed to do the decisive thinking—experts who will let us know when important results are obtained. The maverick philosopher may be ignorant of many things, but one thing—the most important thing—he knows. He knows that the philosophic discovery made by somebody else is practically useless to those who are unable to rediscover it for themselves. He wants no second-hand truths. He knows that a truth worth believing and acting upon must have been beaten into shape in his own private forge on his own private anvil. This is the sort of thing we need to teach to our young, and if it takes maverick philosophers to do it, let us have more of them.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE GOSPEL OF NATURE

[Our writer this week is John Burroughs, one of the greatest in an illustrious line of American naturalist-philosophers. Burroughs died in 1921, after devoting the closing years of his long life to writing on the meaning of "the nature experience." Never an aggressive agnostic, Burroughs was nevertheless aware that young people often become partisans when subjected to conventional religious instruction, while they learn something of eternal values from direct contact with the natural world. Those who appreciate the writings of Thoreau—and the current essays of Joseph Wood Krutch and books like Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*—will probably wish to have something of Burroughs in their libraries. Unfortunately, his *Gospel of Nature*, from which our extracts are taken, was published in 1912 and has long been out of print. Perhaps, in due time, a sufficient number of requests would induce Houghton-Mifflin to issue the book again.]

THAT I am a saner, healthier, more contented man, with truer standards of life, for all my loiterings in the fields and woods, I am fully convinced. Emerson says that "the day does not seem wholly profane in which we have given heed to some natural object." If Emerson had stopped to qualify his remark, he would have added, if we give heed to it in the right spirit, if we give heed to it as a nature-lover and truth-seeker. Nature love as Emerson knew it, and as any of the choicer spirits of our time have known it, has distinctly a religious value. It does not come to a man or a woman who is wholly absorbed in selfish or worldly or material ends. Except ye become in a measure as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of Nature—as Audubon entered it, as Thoreau entered it, as Bryant and Amiel entered it, and as all those enter it who make it a resource in their lives and an instrument of their culture. The forms and creeds of religion change, but the sentiment of religion—the wonder and reverence and love we feel in the presence of the inscrutable universe—persists. Indeed, these seem to be renewing their life to-day in this growing love for all natural objects and in this increasing tenderness toward all forms of life. If we do not go to church so much as did our fathers, we go to the woods much more, and are much more inclined to make a temple of them than they were.

We now use the word Nature very much as our fathers used the word God, and, I suppose, back of it all we mean the power that is everywhere present and active, and in whose lap the visible universe is held and nourished. It is a power that we can see and touch and hear, and realize every moment of our lives how absolutely we are dependent upon it. There are no atheists or skeptics in regard to this power. All men see how literally we are its children, and all men learn how swift and sure is the penalty of disobedience to its commands.

I am not always in sympathy with nature-study as pursued in the schools, as if this kingdom could be carried by assault. Such study is too cold, too special, too mechanical; it is likely to rub the bloom off Nature. It lacks soul and emotion; it misses the accessories of the open air and its exhilarations, the sky, the clouds, the landscape, and the currents of life that pulse everywhere.

I myself have never made a dead set at studying Nature with note-book and field-glass in hand. I have rather visited with her. We have walked together or sat down together, and our intimacy grows with the seasons. What I have learned about her ways I have learned easily, almost unconsciously, while fishing or camping or idling about. My desultory habits have their disadvantages, no doubt, but they have their advantages also. A too strenuous pursuit defeats itself. In the fields and woods more than anywhere else all things come to those who wait, because all things are on the move, and are sure sooner or later to come your way.

To absorb a thing is better than to learn it, and we absorb what and takes a deeper hold upon us than when studiously conned. Hence I say the way of knowledge of Nature is the way of love and enjoyment, and is more surely found in the open air than in the school-room or the laboratory.

The other day I saw a lot of college girls dissecting cats and making diagrams of the circulation and muscle-attachments, and I thought it pretty poor business unless the girls were taking a

course in comparative anatomy with a view to some occupation in life. What is the moral and intellectual value of this kind of knowledge to we enjoy. We learn things at school, we absorb them in the fields and woods and on the farm. When we look upon Nature with fondness and appreciation she meets us halfway those girls? Biology is, no doubt, a great science in the hands of great men, but it is not for all. I myself have got along very well without it. I am sure I can learn more of what I want to know from a kitten on my knee than from the carcass of a cat in the laboratory. Darwin spent eight years dissecting barnacles; but he was Darwin, and did not stop at barnacles; as these college girls are pretty sure to stop at cats. He dissected and put together again in his mental laboratory the whole system of animal life, and the upshot of his work was a tremendous gain to our understanding of the universe.

I would rather see the girls in the fields and woods studying and enjoying living nature, training their eyes to see correctly and their hearts to respond intelligently. What is knowledge without enjoyment, without love? It is sympathy, appreciation, emotional experience, which refine and elevate and breathe into exact knowledge the breath of life. My own interest is in living nature as it moves and flourishes about me winter and summer.

In intercourse with Nature you are dealing with things at first hand, and you get a rule, a standard, that serves you through life. You are dealing with primal sanities, primal honesties, primal attraction; you are touching at least the hem of the garment with which the infinite is clothed, and virtue goes out from it to you. When you think you have defeated her, your triumph is hers; it is still by her laws that you reach your end.

There can be little doubt, I think, but that intercourse with Nature and a knowledge of her ways tends to simplicity of life. We come more and more to see through the follies and vanities of the world and to appreciate the real values. We load ourselves up with so many false burdens, our complex civilization breeds in us so many false or artificial wants, that we become separated from the real sources of our strength and health as by a gulf.

For my part, as I grow older I am more and more inclined to reduce by baggage, to lop off superfluities. I become more and more in love with simple things and simple folk—a small house, a hut in the woods, a tent on the shore. The show and splendor of great houses, elaborate furnishings, stately halls, oppress me, impose upon me. They fix the attention upon false values, they set up a false standard of beauty; they stand between me and the real feeders of character and thought. A man needs a good roof over his head winter and summer, and a good chimney and a big wood-pile in winter. The more open his four walls are, the more fresh air he will get, and the longer he will live.

How the contemplation of Nature as a whole does take the conceit out of us! How we dwindle to mere specks and our little lives to the span of a moment in the presence of the cosmic bodies and the inter-stellar spaces! How we hurry! How we husband our time! A year, a month, a day, an hour may mean so much to us. Behold the infinite leisure of Nature!

Familiarity with the ways of the Eternal as they are revealed in the physical universe certainly tends to keep a man sane and sober and safeguards him against the vagaries and half-truths which our creeds and indoor artificial lives tend to breed. Shut away from Nature, or only studying her through religious fears and superstitions, what a mess a large body of mankind in all ages have made of it!

I do not say that man is the end and aim of creation; it would be logical, I think, to expect a still higher form. Man has been man but a little while comparatively, less than one hour of the twenty-four of the vast geologic day; a few hours more and he will be gone; less than another geologic day like the past, and no doubt all life from the earth will be gone. What then? The game will be played over and over again in other worlds, without approaching any nearer the final end than we are now. There is no final end, as there was no absolute beginning, and can be none with the infinite.

JOHN BURROUGHS

FRONTIERS

Comparisons of East and West

OCCASIONALLY we come across an article which we wish could have appeared in MANAS entire. We now have one of this sort by Joseph Campbell, "The Cultural Setting of Asian Art," printed in the Fall (1958) number of the *College Art Journal.* Until recently it has been our impression that the few individuals who have gained mastery over the essential elements of the two great world cultures—the Eastern traditional culture, rich in philosophical resources and what we often speak of as "spiritual vision," and the culture of the aggressive, acquisitive, and dynamic West—have almost always been Easterners. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Nehru of India seem to be such men, and another is the Indonesian patriot, Soetan Sjahrir. There have been others, no doubt, but these three have written with something like a world comprehension of the tensions and conflicts which are wracking both hemispheres.

It now seems evident that we need to add some others to the list. Mr. Campbell doubtless owes something to Heinrich Zimmer, of whose great study of Indian art Campbell was the editor, after Zimmer's death. What we have read of Zimmer's work, mostly in quotation, makes it plain that here was a man to whom the thought and expression of the Orient were living realities. It is certain that Zimmer's work has inaugurated a new kind of "Orientalism," in which the challenge of philosophic conviction takes precedence over an antiquarian interest in the art-forms of people who live on the other side of the world. Mr. Campbell must have found the opportunity to finish such a man's life work a fascinating as well as an exacting task. But to readers of MANAS, however, Campbell is probably best known as the author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Meridian), so often quoted in these pages—a book of extraordinary quality and interest.

His present article on Asian art is concerned with two lines of thought, first, the difference between Eastern and Western views of religious symbolism or allegory, and second, the enormous problems confronting the East as a result of the impact of the West. Mr. Campbell does not think the East understands the West very well, and he expresses himself with such clarity on this point that Eastern readers will probably welcome his comments as throwing considerable light on their situation. (We should add that this article also discusses at length the content and relation of Oriental art in relation to the great religio-philosophic traditions of India. We recall no comparable brief treatment of this large subject, unless it be W. Norman Brown's essay on India and Humanistic studies in America, published some twenty years ago by the American Council of Learned Societies [Bulletin 28].)

The difference found between East and West by Mr. Campbell is not so much in the content of religious traditions and mythology, as in the attitude maintained toward the themes of symbolic expression. He finds that Iran is a "watershed" dividing the two points of view:

> Eastward of Iran the dominant cultural traditions are fundamentally visionary and metaphysical, whereas those westward are concrete and rational, ethical and theological. Mythological and ritual motifs that in the Orient are read as poetry, in the West are read as fact.
>
> Let us take, for example, the myths of creation: No one in the Orient believes that the universe is actually and literally a lotus growing from the navel of Vishnu, or literally the dance of Shiva; yet practically everybody in the West believed for centuries that a masculine god named Yahveh created the world, quite literally, about 4004 B.C., by saying such things as "Let there be light!" It is no great wonder, therefore, that when it began to appear, in the period of the Renaissance, that the whole system of cosmology and universal history represented in the Near Eastern mythos of the Bible was contrary to fact and represented simply one variant of an archaic mythological inheritance that had been quite differently interpreted in other provinces of our common civilization, considerable spiritual confusion

was introduced into the schools and religious councils of the Occident.

We know that Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for doubting the literal-minded, orthodox reading of the Christian myth. And we know that Galileo was seriously threatened with the same stake for denying that the sun revolved around the earth, as taught in the Bible. To anyone brought up to regard mythology as symbol instead of fact however—the curious literal mindedness both of the Occidental champions of supernatural revelation and of their atheistical challengers cannot but appear to be a rather childish affair.

Now I believe that one of the really great contributions of Oriental thought and art to the development and maturity of our present Occidental intellect has been that of its release of our minds from the purely literal reading of our own mythology. But it must also be said, I believe, that the principal figures in the West affected by this influence have not been our theologians or doctors of philosophy, but our poets, artists, literary men, and maverick philosophers. And the reason, I should say, is clear; for the rendering of myth in poetry and art has always been poetic—in some measure, at least, poetic—and not simply anecdotal and historical. Poetry and art that do not affect us as immediate experience simply fail of their end.

And so the poets and artists were the ones most ready in the West to recognize and assimilate the spiritual message from the other side of our cultural watershed. We may think, for example, of Goethe, Blake, and Wagner in Europe, and of Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau in America.

Theological resistance to Oriental thought is nowhere more evident than in the failure of contemporary Christians to comprehend its depth. Christian writers seem to have very little historical sense. That is, they seldom show any comprehension of the price exacted of Western civilization for the childlike, literal beliefs of Christians of the past, and for the not-so-childlike methods that were used to force these beliefs on everyone. Giordano Bruno was but one of many thousands who perished in flames, and Galileo, who got off with threats and a kind of "house arrest," enjoyed unusual good fortune. The bigotry, however, worked a greater disaster than the martyrdom of independent spirits: it accomplished a ravaging mutilation of the Western mind. And while the theological knife no longer cuts so deeply, the heavy scar tissue is with us yet, coarsening our thought and confining the imagination.

In the second part of his article, Mr. Campbell speaks of the West in terms that throw a great deal of light on Eastern difficulties and misapprehensions:

The general problem, or system of problems, common to the whole field of the Oriental arts in the modern world is that of an archaic, exquisitely developed, relatively static constellation of inherited traditions, suddenly confronted with a new universe of ideas and forms, which is still developing, still in formation, and hardly aware of its own force. For whereas the dominant philosophical, religious, and æsthetic traditions of the Orient have hardly changed in form and principle since the eighth century A.D., those of the modern West are outgrown and left behind almost as soon as they are conceived. And this dynamic, fluent character of the contemporary movement seems not yet to have been grasped by the Oriental mind.

Mr. Campbell quotes from an Oriental friend, who said "with a sad shake of his head":

"We in Asia are looking to the West simply for your machines and philosophies of materialism, but you in the West are adding our spiritual traditions to your own.—And so, once again, it is you who are the winners in this cultural exchange."

Campbell comments:

What he meant was that we in the West have nothing but materialism to teach the Orient, and in this, of course, he was making a typical Oriental mistake—which, I would say, is a principal cause of some present spiritual difficulties, for they have failed almost completely to grasp the philosophical background of this Occidental power and prosperity which they so greatly envy and pretend to despise.

Many Asians whom I have met have a notion that if they had only chanced to think of these gadgets themselves, they would have developed them easily in their spare time. A curious readiness to feel great and important much too quickly is one of the most striking characteristics of the Westernoriented Oriental artist, or litterateur. Whereas his brother, who has chosen to become trained in some Oriental

> discipline will spend years and years in the humble practice of his apprenticeship, the Westernized Asian is often too quick to rush into action—and the result is a curiously baffling contrast in the Orient between the skills and realizations of those practicing traditional disciplines and the disappointing characteristics of so many of the modern schools.

Readers may wish to secure this issue (Fall, 1958) of the *College Art Journal* to read Mr. Campbell's article in full. Single copies are fifty cents and may be purchased from the College Art Association, 432 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N.Y.