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METAPHYSICS—SECOND ATTEMPT

DISCUSSIONS of Metaphysics, as such, almost inevitably have a dry, academic flavor, yet there are clear advantages in an occasional effort in this direction. All serious thought involves some kind of practice of metaphysics, and all theological questions turn on propositions which can be seen to have a metaphysical origin. Even the denial that metaphysics has validity as a form of thought involves a metaphysical assumption—a judgment concerning what knowledge is and what knowledge is possible for human beings.

The role of metaphysics in human thought may become less obscure if we seek an illustration of its presence in popular ideas of the meaning of existence. There are those, for example, who make an easy and sometimes pious reference to what they call the "Divine Plan." This is an assertion that some kind of larger meaning—larger than the personal or private intentions pursued by individuals—informs the activities of the universe. The man who talks about the Divine Plan, unless he explains with great thoroughness what this means to him, is exploiting a half-sentimental, half-intuitive "feeling" about things in general. "Divine Plan" is an honorific expression. You say this about the universe the way you call a man you know a "gentleman." The expression has a constellation of meanings in which the idea of goodness predominates. One who uses the expression gives you to understand that he is on the side of the angels, and that he honors the longing of human beings for a transcendental reality beyond the veil of nature.

Then, on the other side of the question, there is the man who insists that the idea of a divine plan is no more than emotional self-deception. He will present you with a lot of evidence. It is necessary to look at this evidence, because it is impressive. The cunning patterns of life you say, the over-arching design of the cosmos, the beauty of nature, the creative genius of man—all this, you propose, is evidence of goodness and greatness in the very grain of life. But this man who rejects the Plan recites to you a long list of catastrophes, some made by man, some by nature, and asks you to show him the "good" in these events. He reminds you, also, that advocates of divine plans have not been averse to practicing hideous cruelties on other men who disagreed with them. He argues, first, that what order exists in nature is a mindless and amoral order, by comparison to human interests, and, second, that theories of a beneficent order in nature either ignore the evil in human experience or become aggressive instruments *of* evil in human experience.

So you resolve to think some more. The problem is to arrive at a conception of general or larger meaning which can accommodate both the design in nature and the evil in human experience. This is difficult. It may also be painful, since it makes plain the need for a certain rigor in thought. You have to look at your first principles or assumptions. They must be principles which, under development, will not conflict with the facts of experience.

There are two escapes from rigor in metaphysics. One is the abolition of metaphysics. The other is its conversion into theology.

The abolition of metaphysics consists in the assertion that real knowledge of first principles does not, can not, exist; or, when put more subtly, the assertion is that we cannot know first principles, should they exist, so that in practical terms they are chimeras.

From this abolition of metaphysics comes a totally "functional" conception of knowledge. We know how to push the rock up the hill, but we don't know what the rock is, in itself, other than it presents itself to our senses as a rock. There is

and can be no theory of progress for rocks, or which includes rocks. There can be no Big Thinking about anything, because all big thinking which defines things in terms other than the terms of how we manipulate them, is fruitless speculation. Of course, if a yogi from the East came along and made rocks bounce around simply by thinking about them or "willing" that they bounce around, the problem would be considerably complicated for the enemy of metaphysics, but he would probably get over his initial embarrassment and make you a functional theory that covers bouncing rocks but no more. Meanwhile, the rarity of yogis keeps this sort of problem at a minimum.

The conversion of metaphysics into theology eliminates the pain of thinking by starting out with one grand assumption which makes anything possible. This assumption is one of an Omnipotent God who can do anything. If you say a thing is not natural, you are told that God is *super*natural. If you say that a thing is not *right*, you are told that it is right in the eyes of God, and since God can see more than you can see—He can see *Everything*—you must submit. If you object to the frustrations to rational understanding inherent in theology, you are told that rational understanding is after all the lesser and somewhat low portion of man's capacities, and that faith is an inward thing, born of the striving of the spirit. They will show you the places where you are permitted to be logical, and carefully mark other places where you must throw logic aside. In this way, the intellect gets its exercise and the heart is led to obedience to truth by a "higher" means.

Fortunately, there are men who will not put up with this sort of "heads you lose, tails I win" thinking. Nor are they willing to accept the pessimistic view of the anti-metaphysicians. They prefer the pain and the rigor to these easy solutions.

It is not a matter of denying any of the things said about inwardness and outwardness. The heart is indeed a higher authority than the intellect. No doubt there are some matters, not unreal, which are beyond reason. But the intellect is not necessarily the enemy of the heart, and both have their appropriate work to do.

Here, in short, is the field of the new metaphysics, occupied insistently, although "in all humility," by the new metaphysicians. They say, quite simply, let us look again at all these things. We shall not, they add, affirm what is "true," but we shall try to avoid believing what cannot be true, and try to comprehend as well as we can, the grounds of our beliefs.

A book and an article dealing with these questions may be helpful here. The book is *An Essay on Metaphysics* by R. G. Collingwood (Oxford, 1940). Admirers of Richard Gregg will be interested to know that its ideas helped Gregg to build the foundation for his book, *A Compass for Civilization.* Collingwood is of the view that the main business of metaphysics, at least for the present, is the examination of presuppositions. By presuppositions he means primary assumptions, which are not subject to analysis—that is, they cannot be reduced to other, more elementary assumptions. They are the starting-points of thought.

The article is Paul Wienpahl's "Philosophy and Nothing," published in the Summer 1959 issue of the *Chicago Review*. While Dr. Wienpahl's discussion is quite technical, the careful reader will be able to discern a current of thought which runs parallel to Collingwood's development, and in a sense beyond it. Like Collingwood, Wienpahl is proposing a fresh start for metaphysics.

At one point in his essay, Dr. Wienpahl draws on the tradition of Zen Buddhism:

> A Zen story helps here. A master handed one of two disciples a fan, asking what it was. The disciple handed it back and said: "A fan." A simple answer; the disciple did not appear to be caught up in theorizing and metaphysics. But the master frowned and handed the fan to the other disciple with the same query. This man said *not a word.* Instead he took the fan, scratched his back with it, stirred the coals in the *hibachi* with it, spread it, fanned himself, and,

> placing a gift on it, handed it back to the master. Whereupon the master was pleased.

Now what has such a little story to do with the problems of metaphysics?

Metaphysics, traditionally, is supposed to propose what is real. So, when a teacher asks what a thing is, he is asking what it *really* is. The fan is thus a symbol of the problem of knowledge. But the first disciple, unwilling to be trapped into a learned dissertation, responds simply that it is a fan. You could say that he is a man who has reached the Positivist stage of criticism. He says nothing of transcendental archetypes. He has learned the lesson of grandiose metaphysical self-deceptions. He has no big theories to expound. A fan is a fan—that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

When he says this, he is declaring the Nominalist criticism of the naïve Platonic Realists of the Middle Ages, and he is repeating the Positivist criticism of the Objective Idealists of modern times—the people who think that some kind of knowledge of the real structure of the universe can be arrived at and put into verbal form. He is saying, I have been through all these processes of imagining myself to be possessed of knowledge, and now I say, simply, "It is a fan."

The other disciple, wary of words, fans himself, indicating that for the purpose of the moment, the fan is a fan. But this is only an anthropocentric conception of that particular collection of atoms. It could as easily have other names. It could be called a back-scratcher, but how foolish to name it thus! It could be a fire-stirrer, but, again, why name it! All these categories—we impose them upon the elements of our experience as though our definitions of things were capable of giving graded shape to the eternal forms of nature. There is a sense in which it may be said that anything is everything else, but why fi11 the air with definitions? And then, of course, for the moment it is a fan, and I fan myself with it. But these are negligible matters. The teacher is wise, I learn from him, and this is a nexus in life and nature which I honor above all, so I use the fan as a tray for a gift to the teacher. But I make no ritual, I utter no word. Tomorrow some other meaning might belong to whatever question is asked. In saying nothing, I say enough.

But, unlike the Positivist, who only asserts the delusive character of verbal descriptions of the "inner nature" of things, and who shuts out the possibility of genuine knowledge, the Buddhist disciple believes that an encounter with things-in-themselves will result from an inward realization of the community of being which unites all things and beings with one another.

At the conclusion of his article, Dr. Wienpahl says:

> In one sense of the term, "mysticism" refers to a way of experiencing directly and without the media of concepts and theories. This is a way of experiencing into which the past and the future do not enter, for it is by means of theories and concepts (words) which relate experiences to each other that the past and the future are brought into an experience. Thus the leaving of us speechless.
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> Philosophy is not easy. The work of metaphysicians in the past can be regarded in a manner different from the above. Here we have regarded it as a meaningless activity, as one to be overcome, and as one which goes by the board when we think straight. However, it may also be regarded as precisely the activity which has led eventually to these realizations and which has made it possible for us at the same time to relate to our world and to be self-conscious. (Ordinarily being self-conscious makes it difficult or impossible to relate to things and people.) There is not room here to develop a case for this view of metaphysics. It may, however, be appreciated by asking: is there not, after all, a sense in which Carnap, Dewey, Heidegger, James and Wittgenstein are metaphysicians? It is not so much that we have overcome metaphysics as it is that we have a different slant on it. We used to *think* that the metaphysician was trying to discover the nature of reality. Now we see that he was and is dealing with himself, working toward a consciousness of self which will not be subjective, which allows for, indeed, is sure of the existence of things beyond the self. This is a state of mind not unlike that in which we are before we begin to reflect. It differs from the latter in that it has behind or in it reflection.

> Mountains are once again mountains and rivers. So now there is a possibility of metaphysics-new-style, metaphysics done with better awareness of what we are doing, metaphysics as an activity which does not lead to theories. Is not this one of the things to which asking what metaphysics is leads?

This is the new start for metaphysics—metaphysics which has outgrown its sophomore illusions, which acknowledges the difference between belief, hypothesis, and actual knowledge, yet inveterately continues with its constructions, since that is the proper work of that part of man's nature. After all, maybe there is a "divine plan." Our past bad thinking about it doesn't make divine plans impossible. At the most, our bad thinking requires us to think some more. But at the least, we need to understand rather precisely what we mean by "divine" and what we mean by "plan." Maybe the idea deserves a better description than these terms are capable of.

Metaphysical harmonies are constructed along a gamut bounded by two concepts of limit. One concept of limit grows out of the idea of a particular thing being what it is and also being potentially everything else—a mountain, say, is a mountain when you are climbing it; it is something else when it is something else when you are looking at and putting it in a picture; and still something else when you are mining it for gold. Then, the mountain has one sort of being when you are ignoring it, and another when you are appreciating its grandeur and serenity and learning from it. To know the mountain in itself is to know the self in itself and is the transcending of all metaphysics. Meanwhile, there is one metaphysic for looking at the mountain and another for looking away from it.

The other concept of limit, called "Nothing" by Heidegger and Paul Wienpahl, is the undifferentiated Field (which is not a field) of Being (which is not being). It might as easily be named "All," since you can say no more about "All" than you can say about "Nothing." So, when the Zen disciple says "nothing," but goes about his business, he is making a hymn to the Nothing which is Everything, including himself. The entire universe makes hymns, he too.

Letter from **BEIRUT**

BEIRUT.—To the traveler returning to Beirut for the first time in more than a year, there are changes.

Standing on one street corner spot in downtown Beirut, he sees on three of the newer and gaudier office buildings three large signs; CHASE MANHATTAN BANK, FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK, and BANK OF AMERICA. These are new. Not being a financier, I don't pretend to know in full what they mean.

The new buildings are themselves a change. Beirut looks more and more like a cosmopolitan Western city. There are numbers of new hotels, like those in Miami, more and more fancy, larger and larger. The hostelry in which I have stayed, on the water-front in downtown Beirut, is now a has-been. It has no swimming pool, no night-club. The towels and sheets are still linen, as though quietly maintaining the standards of a less frantic day.

But there is another change. Lebanon is frightened. It is living in a miasma of fear. People's thoughts revert to the "troubles" of last year, without warning and at the strangest points of a conversation. The phrase used—"the troubles"—is that consistently applied to the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-9, in which the Arabs took a round drubbing. The people of Lebanon feel as truly whipped by what happened to them last year as ever the Arabs felt about the Israeli war.

I have seen Beirut over a number of years: in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, with the American fleet in harbor on a good-will visit, and now with no fleet and not even the usual crowd of tourists. I have seen the Lebanese people angry at the Syrians over one of the perennial border disputes between the two countries. At such times they at least talked a good fight, though there never seemed to be one. I have seen them so excited at election time that a curfew had to be imposed for a week to prevent violence and allow tempers to cool. I thought it was necessary, too.

But here is something different. Here is fear. Not fear of Egypt, or of Iraq, or of Syria, or of Israel. Fear, instead, of themselves, of what they may do to each other in Lebanon, because they are so evenly divided between Moslem and Christian communities that, granted the total intransigeance of each group *vis à vis* the other, no solution seems possible.

In conversations over several days last week I began to see how this feeling grew, though I did not see how to unravel the tightening skein and allow the Lebanese to breathe freely again. It goes back, in part, of course, to the way this curious State was set up. Its population was, and is, somewhere nearly evenly divided between Moslem and Christian—give or take 10 per cent or so, which I take to be unimportant. We have seen enough trouble in the world in States in which there is an overbearing majority, and a minority either positively discriminated against, actually threatened, or just fearful. But here in Lebanon are several fanatic communities, formed into a state in a stand-off situation, each so fearful of the other that blind offense may at any moment be the reaction to an "incident." The longer it lasts, the more dangerous it becomes.

And the Government? It is like something out of a bad novel; as one becomes familiar it grows more incredible. We used to say that Lebanon came as near as was imaginable to having no Government at all. The President of this Republic is, and must be, a Maronite Christian. This is a vestigial sect, long independent of outside relationships but now related to Rome, whose protection in the mid-nineteenth century offered the West's excuse for establishing its influence in the then Turkish territory of Syria. Following a massacre in the 1860's, France demanded and was accorded by the

Turkish authorities a special status as protector of the Christians of the territory.

The Prime Minister of Lebanon is, and must be, a Moslem of the Sunni sect. The Foreign Minister is, and must be, a Christian, Greek Orthodox or Maronite. The Speaker of the House is required to be a Moslem of the Shi'a sect. The Minister of Defense is expected to be a Druze, representative of the little-known group which, driving upon Beirut in the 1860's, carried out the massacre of Christians mentioned above.

These groups represent approximately in descending order, the size and influence of the largest religious communities in the country. The complications represented by the situation which called forth so nicely-balanced a system of Government hardly need emphasis. That the country has remained relatively stable is, perhaps, the greatest surprise of all.

There are other complicating factors. Though the Sunni Moslems may be reasonably regarded as orthodox, from the outsider's point of view, and the Shi'a as schismatics, their relative numbers and importance vary remarkably in the Moslem countries. In the States surrounding Lebanon—Syria, Jordan, Egypt—the Sunni sect is heavily in the majority. In Iraq the Shi'a predominate—perhaps 65 per cent—but relations between the two Moslem groups are touchy. The Sunni, surrounding Lebanon, have a close feeling of brotherhood for their fellow Moslems in the self-consciously Christian State of Lebanon. At the same time any political issue which tends to set Iraq off from sister Arab States, tends also to exacerbate the touchy relations between Sunni and Shi'a within Lebanon, where, it is said,—though this may exaggerate,—the Moslems hate each other more cordially than either hates the Christians.

There is, of course, the Arab nationalist movement, led by Nasser of Egypt, who makes of it an instrument of Moslem pre-eminence. One has only to hear the Cairo radio, or be acquainted with the recent history of Islamization in Egypt, to realize what a visceral effect this has on the Christians of Lebanon, who feel isolated in a Moslem sea.

In the course of several days in Beirut I talked with a considerable number of Arabs, Christian and Moslem. Most of them were from the educated, somewhat Westernized classes. Several had been in Beirut during the troubles last year and had had narrow escapes from the insensate violence which was unleashed. The fear these peaceful and intelligent people feel, even now, in recalling events of those months, was something new to me. Both Moslem and Christian agree on one thing: the Christian counter revolt, which followed the earlier, mainly Moslem insurrection, was incomparably more vicious—a reaction born of insecurity and blind fear, compounded with the issues of Arab international politics. The present situation is a complete stalemate, with the Government walking a narrow path, taking no initiative, having no discernible policy except the maintenance of calm.

I heard a competent spokesman of the Arabs, Dr. Faiz Sayegh, make an interesting and able talk at the American University on "Neutralism and Arab Nationalism." In a full hour's discourse, well organized and intensely interesting, there was not one reference to the problem of Israel. To those of us who have maintained for several years that the problem of Israel is not the core of Middle East troubles, but rather a symptom, this was suggestive. The focus of Middle East problems has clearly shifted. Arab nationalism is coming of age. Arab nationalism itself is the central force in the area, and in its aims and purposes, its divisions and conflicts, must be sought the key to peace and stability in the Arab world.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
THOMAS PAINE—PHILOSOPHER

E. M. HALLIDAY'S "The Ghost of Tom Paine" in the June 15 *New Republic* protests against the undoubted fact that on the 150th anniversary of Paine's death (June 8, 1809), the American patriot will not be "widely remembered." Paine has had many admirers during the past century and a half, many of them students of the history of the American Revolution who have realized—as did General Washington—just how much the new republic owed to the fiery pamphleteer. In 1776 there were only two ways to secure unified action. One was the obvious, direct method of compelling acquiescence used by king or military commander. The second way, pioneered by Paine, was to circulate arguments so vital that people would *want* to read them, and, after reading, be willing to take up arms to defend the principles declared. Not that Paine invented the philosophy of self-government, but he helped a great many much less articulate Americans to grasp the implications of that which they were intuitively inclined to believe.

Mr. Halliday, though fully appreciative of Paine's contribution to the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, feels that Paine should be especially remembered at the present time because of our confusion concerning the relationship between politics and the Christian religion. Paine suffered no such confusion. Of course, the philosophical religion of Paine, Jefferson and Franklin has been preserved after a fashion in the spirit of our constitution; and, as Halliday says, "despite the rejection of Paine's deism by 19th-Century America, the 18th-Century ideology on which it was based—natural law, natural morality, and reason—had already become implicit in our great public documents and inextricably woven into our social heritage." But something of the meaning of the "weaving" is lost without an apprehension of the fact that only *philosophical* religion will satisfy the requirements of a working democracy.

Even before Paine's death this sort of understanding had become clouded. Paine himself, in his later writings on religion, showed more interest than ever in the crucial relationship between religion and government, and his devastating attacks on Christian dogma resulted from his concern with philosophical principles. And Paine would not, could not, mince words. As Mr. Halliday puts it, for him "Christianity and democracy were hopelessly irreconcilable, and if one was to be saved the other must be abandoned. Men like Paine, Franklin, and Jefferson believed that the God who had created Newton's marvelous world-machine would be most unlikely to express His will to man through the unreliable and unscientific medium of revelation. Such a mode of communication, they felt, was wholly unnecessary."

What was the meaning of Paine's insistence? What he was trying to do, we think, was to plant in the new soil of the first democratic republic the same seeds of a perception which distinguished the culture of Greece from that of Rome. And, to Paine, the life and direct instructions of Jesus of Nazareth were something different from a Christianity modeled on the authoritarian pattern of Roman state religion received by Christianity from the early Church fathers who followed the Greek tradition.

In the following paragraphs, Halliday explains why Paine's great concern with the separation of any form of religion from state concerns is important today:

> We have reached a point in our history when this relation is again exciting attention. A great many devout Americans now assume some inevitable bond between religion (especially Christianity) and anti-Communism; and thus, by extension, between piety and democracy. School children can no longer swear allegiance to the flag without invoking the name of God, although it is not quite clear how this fits in with the First Amendment to the Constitution. We are also hearing again the old arguments about whether a Roman Catholic can be elected President of the United States; and if elected whether he can be both a good President and a good Catholic?

> In these circumstances, it is instructive to look again at the basic questions that intrigued Tom Paine in those last years of his life, and at the answers offered not only by him but by some of the more venerable of the Founding Fathers. Franklin and Jefferson stood with Paine as outright deists; Monroe and Madison were sympathetic; even conservative John Adams felt that a good deal could be said on the side of "natural religion." So it is a curious cultural paradox that this faith of the Enlightenment should have been so soon so completely engulfed by the tide of Christian revivalism that swept the nation in the early years of the 19th Century.

Religious conformism always brings trouble, and for Paine, all formal religion was too provincial—no matter how large the province. The same man who earned the enmity of orthodox religion demonstrated in his own life that the only religion which America could afford would have to be completely international and intercultural in scope. It must exist, not in churches nor in external pieties, but in a hidden undercurrent of self-discovery in the lives of thinking men—and its chief hallmark would be the determination to break through the platitudinous bounds of sect, political party and mere national pride. Paine's own attitude is clearly revealed by his willingness to serve the cause of the French Revolution. He gave up his personal security in America to try to make the Revolution in France end in something besides bloodshed. Paine was not the only one of his time to feel a sympathy for France's struggle, but he is the only American revealed to history who was willing to risk his life in the maelstrom of the French Revolution for someone else's liberty. He has been described as "Our First Internationalist"; while unable even to speak the French language, he was willing to fight for the ideal of liberty in France and for the best means of securing it.

While many men were declaring their undying love for universal liberty, so that all men could live significant lives, Paine insisted upon applying his convictions, and could tolerate no other way of life. He felt that to labor for ideals rather than for personal advancement was to live intelligently, and said: "I am fully satisfied that what I am now doing . . . to conciliate mankind, to render their conditions happy, to unite nations, to extirpate war and break the chains of slavery and oppression, is the best service I can perform." In the context of Paine's career, these words take on profound meaning. His consistent devotion to ideals which the majority of mankind profess is explained by the fact that they were supported by the principles of his philosophy of life. All his political, economic and social convictions were founded on principles of philosophy; hence we find him constantly repeating "great principles" in an endeavor to show that from an agreement of men upon mutually consistent principles alone can come agreement on ways of living.

This tendency to connect the utilitarian with the metaphysical has been puzzling to students of Paine. Moncure D. Conway, in his introduction to Paine's *Writings*, says of Paine that "his utilitarian schemes, following statements of great principles are sometimes even somewhat droll, as if a woodcutter should describe gravitation as a law for bringing his axe down upon a log." Well, we are a nation choked and clogged with "utilitarian schemes," some of them doubtless of a beneficial nature, and some of them dangerous. To men like Paine, it seems that the intrusion of conventional religious sentiment allows us to forget the meaning and content of principle. It is for this reason that MANAS stands consistently against the practice of Christian customs in public places, for the sort of democracy which Paine envisioned cannot be guided by sectarian versions of that which is true, good, or just.

COMMENTARY
CRITICISM IN RELIGION

IT is natural that, after the discussions of Christian belief in recent issues, someone should put the question: Why are you so uncompromising? Why so insistent upon purity of moral conviction on your own terms? Surely the churches, with whatever faults they have—and these may be many—are serving the needs of people who are not about to become revolutionary thinkers.

Well, purity of moral conviction is a good thing to think about, as well as a good thing to strive after, especially when this is done through search for ethical principles. And it is inevitable that there should be some comparisons with the practice and attitudes of religious institutions during this search.

Of necessity, ethical thinking is both personal and impersonal. It is impersonal in the sense that it seeks general principles as the guide, rather than personal inclinations, however good. And it is personal in that it can commit or direct no one except the individual making the inquiry.

Criticism in religious thought is not directed against *people*, who must be left free to decide for themselves. This being the case, how shall we regard the enormous religious institutions which seem to embody the attitudes of the great majority of people? Even if they seem to represent a welter of intellectual and moral compromises, who is to say that they are not fit vehicles for the religious impulses of the millions who belong to them?

But this is precisely the point of criticism! Those who decide to engage in urgent ethical inquiry no longer fit into the categories of mass religious institutions. "Come ye out and be ye separate" was surely something more than an invitation to join another religious sect!

This sort of inquiry does not have for its aim the planning of the religious life of the millions who go to church. It is not a manifestation of the system-building tendency, but an effort to de-institutionalize serious thinking about religion and religious philosophy.

We shall probably have religious institutions for a long, long time, but should it be a fact that religious institutions, as we know them, represent an authoritarian compensation for religious immaturities and insecurities, then it is of some importance to recognize that fact. It is conceivable that some sort of association of human beings in quest of truth will always serve a useful purpose, but a constructive alliance of this kind would never stultify the quest or pretend that it was no longer necessary to pursue.

Meanwhile, there is a value in bringing these questions out into the open.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE BEST OF BEATNESS

Two issues (May and June) of the anarcho-pacifist month*ly*, *Liberation*, afford grounds for optimism concerning "beat generation" attitudes, and while some of the forward-looking conclusions may stand in need of qualification, there should be a value, for these days of gloomy prophecy, in hopeful views. The May piece is contributed by Jeanne Bagby. Writing as an "ex-Beatnik," Miss Bagby feels that the psychological condition of "beatness" represents—at least for many—a way of reaching an integration which might otherwise not be possible. She speaks of the "five years of frenzy and four of deliberate self-therapy to complete the break with the past and arrive at a more objective understanding." She continues:

> Today, even our stuffiest educators can be heard declaiming against the cipher-man; but they will rarely go so far as to admit that juvenile delinquency and Beatism are logical (if extreme) reactions to the world pressure towards standardized comfort. I believe with Henry Miller that it's usually better to be out living it up than safely home by the TV with a mild can of beer. Life is waiting for the living—and as long as our escapes are at least made of flesh and blood activity, we have a chance to grow beyond our conditioning. The non-conformism which is worn so blatantly by the Beatniks as a manifesto against society (in the form of dirty sneakers, smelly sweatshirts and paint-streaked pants) can also become a bulwark against creeping conformity.
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> I feel sure that many Beatniks have and will continue to win through to their own unique and valuable resolutions of the personal-universal paradox. Their constant urgency towards Ultimate Experience, rather than towards outer codes and vicarious living, will continue to work the alchemy of transmutation in their souls. Many will turn back, at the first glimpse of the dark precipice of the subconscious, which awaits their leap; others will dare and be lost; but many will find the suprapersonal power which will carry them safely down, guide them through Hell as Dante was guided, and return them securely to Earth, with the promise of a realizable Paradise.

One phrase in the foregoing—"the world pressure towards standardized comfort"—calls for special attention. In this context, some of the more thoughtful representatives of "beatism" actually do establish some point of contact with Zen Buddhism, however great the distortion of Zen psychology by other "beats." For Buddha sought to erase the distinctions among men born to differing status by indicating that "comfort" is a trap for the soul—either when inherited comfort produces self-indulgent habits or when there is only a longing for the worldly trappings which seem to guarantee comfortable surroundings. But the passive attitudes of many of the "Beatniks" deprive them of something which Zen Buddhists seem able to manage. Without some sense of direction and a corresponding discipline, a youth is not apt to form any rational alliances, which are as much a fulfillment of individuality as untrammeled expression and uninhibited behavior.

David McReynolds contributes "After the Beat Generation" to *Liberation* for June. McReynolds finds grounds for believing that what we have come to call "Beatness" is "a natural expression of our times, international in character and deeply rooted in the chaos of our society." Of particular interest is his discussion of the relation between jazz and the characteristic attitudes of hipsters:

> It is superficial to say that youth has adopted jazz because it is a music of protest. True, jazz music contains an element of protest—particularly early jazz, which grew from Negroes alienated from a white culture. But it is hard to accept this "obvious" explanation as the real one. The real explanation, I think, is that jazz is irrational music. It is music of spontaneity, of improvisation. A good jazz group does not need written music, a rehearsal or even a discussion. Starting with some tune the group knows, and working out from a steady beat, the musicians can create their own music on the spot—directly out of themselves.
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> Jazz appears as something of a mass social movement in a society which fears the unconscious as a seething maelstrom of incest, murder and the death wish; a society terrified that the unconscious may burst forth and overwhelm the "rational" mind. It is natural that a culture based on science and rationality must fear the intuitive, must try to deny and repress it. Rather than accepting the intuitive (i.e., the

irrational) as a necessary part of our selves and the source of all our creative impulses, we have tried to cut it off altogether. . . .

This breakthrough of irrationality is not confined to jazz and the hipsters. We find it also in modern art, and in the theater. It is natural to find the beat writers, the jazz musicians and the abstract painters in voluntary association—they share a common affirmation of the intuitive as opposed to the rational. Nor is it surprising that this group has met with such intense hostility from so many quarters. The antagonism is based on the fear which a rational culture has for something it cannot understand and therefore cannot control.

In embracing the intuitional element of man, the beat generation may point toward basic cultural change. Science has reached a dead end—hard as it may try, it cannot give us a set of values. It cannot tell us "why"—only "how." If man is to live in peace with his technology, then I think he will have to make peace with his intuitional self.

For all his faults, the hipster is a hero of our times because he has rebelled against a society which is only rational *but no longer sane*, a society which, because it has divorced man from his intuitive self, can talk calmly of waging nuclear war. The hipster's ability to act spontaneously in a society which demands conformity is in itself an affirmation of the ability of the human being to will his own actions.

So long as the experiences of "beat" are experiments in social alienation, they may contribute something of value. If one is not to be a victim of his culture, he must "alienate" fairly thoroughly and for a protracted period of time. It took Buddha a good many years to achieve this, and to pass beyond alienation to a new integration with the needs of human beings as souls. It is said that Jesus was similarly engaged, and it was the alienation of Socrates from the values and psychological patterns of the rulers of Athens which led to his timeless insights. McReynolds believes that the members of the Beat Generation who "win through" may discover an absolute value of immeasurable importance. Coming to see "the individual human being as a unique and valuable object that we will not shoot or jail or hate."

All of this is most interesting, but we wonder if either McReynolds or Bagby allows for an important psychological distinction, that between what Plato called the "psychic" elements of man's nature and his "noetic," or spiritual expression. For Plato, the spiritual became manifest through a sort of super-rationality—not the merely intellectual, but rather that quality of mind (or soul) which apprehends the meaning of justice.

The world governed by a lesser concept of rationality is the world which the "beat" individuals have deserted. But they may be moved to this desertion without volition, propelled by a sort of psychic wave. This is much the case, we think, with teen-age gangs, most of whose members neither understand nor desire to comprehend their own drift. McReynolds seems to have alienated himself from a world operated by reason superficially impelled, generated a passion for justice, and made "rational alliances" based upon his own judgment. And so it takes a McReynolds to see the best of beatness and to point to a goal to which one may win, *beyond* "beatness."

FRONTIERS

Perspectives On Healing

WHILE C. W. Weiant's *Medicine and Chiropractic* is a book that will be of interest chiefly to those immediately concerned with health and healing, those who have followed, even if simply as "patients," the progress of modern chiropractic will find this volume filled with the substance of careful research (pursued by the author in collaboration with Dr. Sol Goldschmidt). It is frankly the case for chiropractic as having a firm scientific foundation, with the documentation for chiropractic theory and practice drawn almost entirely from the literature of modern medicine. The book is written in a spirit of objectivity, with understanding and even some sympathy for the physician who has gained his impressions of chiropractic from the early days of this innovation in the field of healing. But its essential contribution lies in the demonstration from medical papers of the importance of chiropractic techniques. It seems likely that medical men who have never troubled to look into the work of chiropractors will be astonished by the contents of this volume, and that there may be a few who will feel that an entire area of their professional education has been seriously neglected.

To some readers, the most interesting section of the book will be the long chapter toward the end which describes the sudden popularity achieved by chiropractic in post-war Germany. It is the medical doctors in West Germany who have given this attention to chiropractic. There is a research organization of German doctors devoted to study of chiropractic, and the work of these men has already produced an extensive literature in West German professional journals. Some fourteen German doctors with distinguished professional records are cited by Dr. Weiant. All these men have investigated chiropractic concepts and methods and have reported on its value and application in particular medical problems. Taken as a whole, this program of research into chiropractic in Germany could be paralleled in the United States, only if several leading physicians were to contribute similar papers on chiropractic to the *Journal* of the A.M.A.!

Medicine and Chiropractic will probably have a widespread if unheralded influence in the United States, where an unfortunate hostility separates these two branches of the healing arts. Serious reviews of the book in conventional medical journals are hardly to be expected, but intelligent patients are likely to give it a wide circulation, possibly among friends who are doctors. Copies may be obtained from the author, Dr. C. W. Weiant, 105 South Division Street, Peekskill, New York.

While a broadening of attitudes on the part of professional men will play its part in harmonizing conflicts between medical schools of thought, the general public will probably have the greatest influence of all. More than the idea of being helped or "healed" is involved. The philosophy of health held by the individual is a primary consideration.

There is no obvious relationship between questions of this sort and the merit of chiropractic, yet any thought about differing medical schools is likely to provoke thought about the general question of health. For example, how about the matter of placing oneself entirely in the hands of "specialists"? There are times, of course, when there is nothing else to do, but a man ought to reflect on this question when choosing a school of medicine or healing.

Temperament and emotional tendency seem to have some importance, here. Some people are inclined to want a lot of "doctoring." That is, they make extensive use of some outside authority in relation to their health and well-being. Others have a strong feeling of resistance to any sort of dependence upon another, no matter how well qualified. These, perhaps, are the extremes of tendency, the problem being to find a middle path.

Some doctors value and encourage an independent mind on the part of a prospective

patient, others resent such an attitude. In judging a school of medicine, therefore, it seems important to consider the common professional reaction to a patient who insists upon understanding what is to be done to or for him. The long-term issue, here, is whether or not the physician's desire is to make the patient more or less dependent upon "doctoring."

In human relations, the habit of the individual in relation to doctors has noticeable effects. The man who is characteristically dependent on doctors is usually less self-governed than others who are more independent. An agreement with such a man is likely to be an agreement with him *and* with two or three surrogate selves in the form of his medical armamentarium.

In the case of such people, medicine comes to resemble the role of authoritarian religion. The outside authority of this sort of religion subtracts from the individuality of the believer, so that relations with him are also relations with the institution which exercises this authority. There is a superficial resemblance between this situation and the kind of relations one may have with a person of strong principles, the difference being that principles belong entirely to the man who holds them, while the institutional authority is external to the individual and is "felt" by others as an irrational influence.

There is more excuse, of course, in seeking outside help in the matter of health, since physical problems are different from moral problems. A man can reasonably take counsel on moral problems, but this is very different from submitting to the decision of a "specialist" in morals. On the other hand, choice of a physician should mean choosing a person whose general attitudes and philosophy of healing accord with one's own attitudes, since there may be occasions when he, because of his specialized knowledge, will be entrusted with important decisions.

The existence of chiropractic as a profession which overlaps in many areas the province of medicine provides a useful basis for comparison of attitudes among the practitioners of the healing arts.