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THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

TWO quotations will set the problem. The first is from Jack Jones, taken from his article in *Liberation* for July-August. Mr. Jones wrote:

> The meaning of this word [Freedom] has become the ideological Rosetta Stone of our time.

The other quotation is from Isaiah Berlin. It is taken from a review article, "Some Reflections on Freedom," by John W. Ward, in the Autumn 1959 *American Scholar*. In his recent volume, *Two Concepts of Liberty*. Prof. Berlin said:

> The conception of freedom directly derives from the view that is taken of what constitutes a self, a person, a man. Enough manipulation with the definition of man, and freedom can be made to mean whatever the manipulator wishes.

One quotation affirms the importance of the problem, the other its complexity. That Prof. Berlin is right in what he says is at once evident. Freedom has very different meanings for us for the reason that we want very different things. Yet we all "know" what freedom means in the sense that we experience a common sort of frustration when it is denied. No man has to have his longing for freedom pointed out to him. Freedom is the capacity to go after what we want. What we want is defined by what we think or feel is good for us; and what we think or feel is good for us is defined by what we think or feel we are.

For many men, probably most men, freedom is undistinguished by abstract or general thinking about it. For them, it is not yet a problem of freedom, but only of the satisfaction of desire. The problem of freedom, as such, comes into being only with some measure of reflective consciousness concerning the satisfaction of desire. Thus, to consider freedom, it is necessary to become aware of the self as self, of the surrounding field which contains objects of desire, and of the relations between the self and the elements of the field. To speak of "freedom" is to give notice that obstacles of some sort lie between the self and the objects of desire. To possess freedom is to have some power of decision in choosing the means of overcoming the obstacles. To be without freedom is to be in the situation of seeing the object of one's desire, and of seeing the obstacles, yet to remain powerless to remove them or go around them.

What is the gamut of all possible thinking about freedom? It extends, surely, from primitive beginnings in people who are ruled almost entirely by their desires to the purely subjective reflections of the mystic. A man's idea of freedom will depend upon what he holds to be of value. If the things he wants are all outside himself, his idea of freedom will have its tensions in an analysis of his environment. If, on the other hand, he finds the feeling of freedom in his own capacity to deal with any and all environments—in his ability to react according to his own values, and not merely by the provocations of circumstance—then, the realities of freedom are subjective realities.

Of course, such "pure" extremes are almost never encountered in actual experience. There is no human being who is totally controlled by externalities, unless it be the psychopath, who is often spoken of as a person whose thought-processes are entirely governed by egocentric drives, without reference to any other values. The psychopathic personality is of course much more complicated than this simple account would suggest, but phases of the psychopath's behavior are suggestive of the complications which may be present in a consideration of thinking about freedom. In the case of the psychopath, vagrant notions about "good and evil," "morality," and "law," of which he has heard, but for which he has no feeling, are purely instrumental to his ends. If men talk about freedom, and the psychopath notes that they respect freedom as a value, he will use the word "freedom" as a tool in persuading others that he ought to have his own way.

Psychopathic behavior of this sort will serve to illustrate a tendency, especially noticeable in political movements, of men to use abstract ideas of value as slogans and even bludgeons with which to win arguments and gain followers. The vocabulary of abstract ideas and value is the arsenal used in every sort of confused, opportunistic thinking.

Then, there is the more deliberate decision on the part of some to stop short the investigation of the meaning of freedom, in order to cash in on the relative values already established. Freedom, it is argued, is a *practical* matter. The abstract truth about freedom, supposing you can get at it, will be a fine thing to have, but meanwhile our thinking must have an *end*. We are doing this project because we want to do good with it. We are going to write a *Constitution!*

Of course, the constitution-writers differ from the psychopath in that their universe is populated by many men, while his is inhabited by only one. The universe of the constitution-writers is one in which the problem is to regulate human desire—or regulate its expression—in order that all men may have opportunity to satisfy their desires without too much interference with the similar activities of others. Thus the constitution-makers create the notion of *rights*. There are two ways of looking at rights. You can say that they come into being with constitutions, or you can say that they existed before they were recognized and defined in constitutions. The general opinion, today, is that rights have meaning only in some man-made system of law.

It is difficult to refute this general opinion. If you say that there are *natural* rights which belong to men, whether or not they adopt a constitution establishing them, then you have to go on and tell what you mean by "natural." What will you say? A right is something that belongs to a man a an essential part of his being—his being, in this case, including his sphere of activity—and which it is wrong to take away from him.

Has a hurricane any "rights"? An iceberg? A diamond? A fern? A hedgehog? Where do you begin in assigning natural rights? We are beginning to get into trouble with this idea. We are getting perilously close to the mind of God, and perilously close, also, to the assumption that God or the Universe is somehow a political institution.

The trouble with dropping the subject at this point is that it seems to be evading a pretty basic issue. Don't tell me some indignant objector will say, that that little child who has been hungry since birth, who is ridden with disease, who has little hope of a square meal during the next ten years—don't tell *me* this child has no natural right to the good things other children will be having!

So when we hear this, we quickly agree. *Yes*, we say, there are such rights, "natural" or not, and if the metaphysicians tell us that there are no "rights" in Nature, who cares? We'll abolish metaphysics and make them *legal* rights for this and every other child!

In this way is developed the empirical ethic of the humanitarian who will have no version of meaning which exhibits indifference to human suffering. The minute a theory of meaning offends his moral intuitions, he throws it out. No doubt he should. The only pertinent comment, here, is that perhaps he shouldn't stop theorizing because so far he has encountered only bad or useless theories in the resources of abstract or metaphysical thinking. The neglect of the metaphysical side of the subject may lead, finally, to the devaluation of freedom itself.

The chief difference between the liberal political philosophy of the eighteenth century and contemporary liberal politics is the disappearance from view of the idea of natural rights. We have the habit of belief in natural rights, but no serious defense of this idea, with the result that those supposedly "natural rights" which seem to have no practical or immediate relation to man's material welfare are increasingly disregarded. What rights fall into this category? The rights which are involved in man's non-material welfare—the rights of freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of expression.

In modern thinking, the idea of economic rights dominates the scene. The constitutions we have made are now devoted to expressions of economic philosophy—either that, or we interpret them as though they were primarily expressions of economic philosophy. The justification for establishing economic values as supreme is quite simple. Basically, it is the argument for the Welfare State, whether Capitalist or Communist, and for the Organization Man.

During the period when the economic philosophy was being formulated, human suffering was most obviously caused by extreme poverty. People did not get enough to eat. They could not give their children proper care. Lack of money was the obstacle to the satisfaction of the simplest, most primitive of desires—desire for stark necessities. Freedom, then, was defined in the terms of the political system which would assure the satisfaction of these basic needs and desires. It was assumed that the "other" freedoms could be taken care of, by such devices as bills of rights.

What was left out of these calculations was the enormous demands of technology—fruit of the union between science and industry—in organizational terms. The mechanisms of the production of plenty are so complicated and their requirements so exacting that our entire society has been redesigned around them. One of the unexpected characteristics of a machine is that it must be kept running or it becomes a serious liability. To keep a machine running you have to have a market for what it produces. After you have faced this problem for a while, you tend to think less and less about the inherent merit of the goods it produces, and more and more about maintaining production and sales. The logic runs something like this: Freedom equals wealth; wealth equals goods; machines make goods; but to make goods, you have to sell them; people buy goods; the more goods they buy, the more wealth they have, and wealth equals freedom. This is our system. A threat to the system is a threat to freedom. A threat to freedom cannot be tolerated, so we need a technological military apparatus to defend and preserve our technological freedom.

A chain of reasoning is as strong as its weakest link. Anyone who questions this reasoning endangers freedom. No right-thinking man, therefore, will question the logic which supports our system of technology. And while we "truly" respect such rights as freedom of religion, freedom of thought, and freedom of expression, we cannot allow any *distorted* thinking to question our chain of reasoning. Too much is at stake. Furthermore, all that stuff about "natural rights" was a piety of the eighteenth century. *Organization* created all the rights we have. We don't have to preserve any natural rights of man because they don't exist. We don't have to let madmen threaten our system and our freedom. The bill of rights certainly doesn't mean *that.*

This is about where, right or wrong, our humanitarian ethical empiricism has brought us. There are all sorts of variations and exceptions to be taken, of course, but the foregoing describes the present situation accurately enough, and gives the approximate reasons offered for justifying it—or rather, for not doing anything "radical" to change it.

And this is the situation which is producing so many thoughts, these days, on the subject of freedom. The men doing this thinking find the situation hateful, their freedom nominal, and their lives filled with frustrations. They see in it something very close to the system constructed by the psychopath.

Let us now go to the other end of the scale of ideas about freedom—to the thought of the mystics. To get started along this line we may borrow several paragraphs from Mr. Ward's

American Scholar review. He is discussing Isaiah Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty:*

> Professor Berlin offers two concepts of liberty, "negative" and "positive." The negative sense is involved in the answer to the question, "What is the area within which a subject—a person or a group of persons—is or should be left to do or be what he wants to do or be, without interference by other persons?" The positive sense comes in answer to the question, "What, or who, is the source of control or interference, that can determine someone to do, or be, one thing rather than another?" The two concepts are distinguished negatively and positively in the sense that one version of liberty is *freedom from* control, the other *freedom to do* or be something. . . .
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> Professor Berlin thinks men generally use the word "freedom" in its negative sense: "I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no human being interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can do what he wants." The emphasis on human interference is important; as Helvetius put it, "it is not lack of freedom not to fly like an eagle or swim like a whale." Professor Berlin does not confuse power with liberty. When Richard H. Tawney argues that freedom to dine at the Ritz is not freedom unless one has the money, the lack of economic power is a lack of freedom only on the assumption of a particular social and economic theory about the nature of poverty. If poverty is the result of personal inability or moral failure, then the lack of economic power is no infringement on liberty; but if poverty is the result of human actions which have arranged society to the profit of some and the loss of others, then it is. "The criterion of oppression," says Professor Berlin, "is the part that I believe to be played by other human beings directly or indirectly, in frustrating my wishes. By being free in this sense I mean not being interfered with by others. The wider the area of non-interference the wider my freedom."
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> The negative concept of freedom is, of course, the view of classical liberalism, of men like Locke and John Stuart Mill in England and Benjamin Constant and Tocqueville in France. As with such liberals, the argument quickly becomes where the line can be drawn, what the area of non-interference can be. This may involve considerable haggling, but the negative concept of liberty always means liberty *from, an* absence of interference at some point. The positive concept of liberty, on the other hand, derives "from the wish of the individual to be his own master. I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's, acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes which are my own." The freedom which consists in being one's own master and the freedom which consists in not being prevented by other men from choosing as one may "seem concepts at no great logical distance from each other—no more than negative or positive ways of saying the same thing." But Professor Berlin's whole point is that the two concepts have developed historically in sharply divergent directions.

Now comes an analysis of the meaning of what Prof. Berlin terms "positive" liberty:

> The notion of being one's own master leads, by a sleight of hand, to a division within the self. One is master of himself to the degree that he achieves his "true" or "higher" self, conforms, as Spinoza would have it, to the demands of reason, or, as others would have it, to some entity larger than one's individual self, the party, the church, the nation or the race. "This entity is then identified as being the 'true' self which, by imposing its collective, or 'organic,' single will upon its recalcitrant 'members,' achieves its own, and, therefore, their 'higher' freedom." At this point, one has come far from the simpler negative goal of liberty; one can ignore the actual wishes of men and bully or torture them in behalf of their "true" selves, in the name of what they "really" wish. Professor Berlin leaves it clear what he thinks of this "monstrous impersonation" in the name of liberty.

The idea of a "higher" or "true" self is by no means a sleight-of-hand division of the individual useful only to the exploiter of human beings. To make a big point out of this possibility ignores the fact that the riches of human culture are almost always expressed in the terms of affirmative freedom. There is the further possibility that the highest and subtlest conceptions of freedom have their origin in mystical perception. At any rate, great philosophical and religious systems were erected upon this assumption—systems which have engaged the attention of mankind for thousands of years, and still engage it. The psychological disciplines of the orient have no other purpose than to free the individual from the confinements of illusion. The question that we have to answer is not whether we shall "believe" or "agree" with teachers of these ancient systems of thought—such questions do not call for answers, but for investigation; the question rather concerns *the relation of political authority to such systems.* Obviously, the reason for Prof. Berlin's dismissal of positive freedom is the historical experience of Western civilization, involving a "monstrous impersonation" of the laws of the inner life by a political authority.

If we could accomplish a clear separation between political authority and every form and conception of positive or inner freedom, we would clear the atmosphere of much confusion, much psychological domination, and much righteous indignation. At present, there seems to be little hope that thought about freedom can be much more than a floating island of intuitive perceptions about its importance, with no roots in substantial philosophical conviction.

There is irony in the fact that, in an epoch in which the achievements of technology have made it possible for social historians to label the United States as an "affluent society," freedom, instead of being a glorious reality, has become mysterious and obscure. The apex of the economic pyramid was to have been represented by the release of men from drudgery to high cultural expression, but instead, the men who today speak of freedom so longingly feel themselves to be victims of oppressive restraints.

The main difficulty seems to be that our economic arrangements require a heavy-handed apparatus of propaganda and promotion, just to keep them going with something resembling *technological* efficiency, and that this cultural superstructure of the economic system has invaded the vacated regions of man's inner freedom and there set up its mills of persuasion. Now, from the very sanctuaries of the inner life, come the flood-tides of "salesmanship." So dominant are the forces of the economic philosophy that our cultural institutions eagerly borrow the commercial vocabulary, if only to show that technologically superfluous people like college professors and preachers are well aware of the true processes of the good life. If a deep thinker has a thought he believes the world needs, he sets out to "sell" it to the public. This is his gesture of having come to terms with "reality."

The obvious need is for some counter-doctrine of human identity to set against this total externalization of modern man. The need is two-fold. There is not only the need for a conception of inner freedom as an inviolate citadel of one's private life. There has also to be an exercise of this inner freedom toward some great end, to make the whole idea worth while. The popular religions are no help, here, since they are the great offenders who turned man's private life over to the public authorities. They have been guilty—nearly all of them—of the "monstrous impersonation" complained of by Prof. Berlin. There is almost a pragmatic necessity to go back to the inward, secret religion of the mystics. The tradition of inward struggle is found only in the lore of mysticism and in its intellectual counterpart of transcendental metaphysics.

Freedom is held to be important for two reasons. First, it is important because we feel pain when we experience confinement. Second, it is important because of a tradition out of the past, which declares it to be important. This tradition was once a primary doctrine of philosophy—a doctrine that is now little more than a rhetorical echo—a doctrine which probably cannot be restored to vitality except by renewed experience of the inner struggle.

REVIEW

LET'S ALWAYS HAVE AN ENGLAND

IT is an old MANAS habit, though hardly, we think, a bad one, to enjoy quoting British commentary on American affairs. Complete freedom from political bias may be impossible, but a surprising amount of discussion in English journals of opinion seems to reach beyond politics.

Dwight Macdonald once suggested that the freshness and excellence of so many of the short articles and "Letters to the Editors" which one notices in *The Manchester Guardian,* the *Listener,* and other publications is due to the fact that writing is a genuine avocation for a good number of Englishmen who pursue other professions as a livelihood. If American writers for journals of opinion are poorly paid, their English counterparts are paid less—or not at all—and since few English writers are "sponsored" to any significant degree by the newspapers and magazines who print them, the tendency to please the publisher is conspicuous by its absence. Hence, there is more originality, more healthy diversity of opinion, and little "predigested" reading matter of the sort found in such papers as *Time, News Week* and *U.S. News & World Report.* It follows that regular reading of British periodicals will provide Americans with points of view they might otherwise not encounter at all.

For example, the *Manchester Guardian* Weekly for Aug. 6 has an evaluation of the "American Week of Prayer" for those who suffer Communism. Roger Lloyd writes:

> We have not heard the last of the American Week of Prayer "for the liberation of enslaved peoples" behind the Iron Curtain, and many may well be wishing that we never had heard the first. It is possible that those were not the actual words of official bidding to prayer, or that they were amplified, or softened. Biddings are not easy to phrase rightly, and when officialdom tries its clumsy hand on them, it generally makes them far more complicated and pompous. But in politics, that does not much matter. Whether those were the actual words used or not, the Russians will by now be immovably convinced that they were. What good may come of this Week of Prayer we do not and cannot know. What harm has already come is distressingly obvious.
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> There does not seem any doubt that the words "enslaved peoples" were used in this bidding, and that the prayers thus bidden were intended to apply to countries like Hungary, and Tibet, and all the others which have been communised by force or fraud. That the wording was stupid and tactless is the least that can be said of it. Much worse than that is the self-righteousness and lack of humility which words like these betray in the minds of those who use them as a prelude to prayer.
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> But the real trouble about a national week of prayer of this kind is that it is apt to strengthen self-righteousness and sap humility, and both of these are attitudes of mind which make real prayer next to impossible. Even prayer, I suppose, may very occasionally be rightly a medium of accusation or indictment, but obviously the more seldom the better. But if prayers are sometimes concerned with sinners, it is also by sinners that they are invariably uttered. There can be only one right way of beginning a prayer for the freeing of enslaved peoples, and that is by some form of confession. Even when we know beyond a peradventure that we have, for once, been really virtuous, we still have to say, "We are unprofitable servants." Such is the humility without which true prayer cannot even begin.
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> There lies the insoluble difficulty about national weeks of prayer, whether for the freedom of enslaved peoples or for practically anything else. Very seldom and very fitfully can a nation be corporately humble. That is why Churches should always be exceedingly wary about requests coming from on high to organize national weeks of prayer for political issues. We do not know from whom came the request to the Churches of the United States to organise a national week of prayer for the liberation of enslaved nations. Did it come from the President? Or from Congress? Or from some representative committee of all the American Churches? . . . But if it came from the Churches themselves, then they ought to have known better than to allow such a questionable title for the week and such dubious biddings for its prayers. For peoples who are enslaved all Christians ought to be steadily praying every day of their lives. But it is as well for us all to remember that not all enslaved peoples are to be found behind the Iron Curtain. There are few nations in the world which can rightly be excused from beginning such prayers with the words, "Lord, have mercy upon us."

Mr. Lloyd's Christianity is of a sort that would lend dignity to any religious tradition. Unfortunately, the huckstering proclivities of a partisan Christian approach which apparently began in the early days of the Roman Church, and extend to the present, are multiplied a thousandfold when politicos attempt to exploit religious sentiment. This, we take it, is one of the less obvious reasons for insisting on the separation of all questions of State from Religion. Mr. Lloyd, we are sure, would deplore a recent ruling from Maryland's State Attorney General—a ruling which denied a commission to a Maryland appointee to Notary Public, because he refused to express a belief in the Deity.

The *Guardian* for July 30 reviews Michael Brecher's *Nehru: A Political Biography.* Nehru, together with Gandhi, supplied the chief strength of India's struggle to end England's rule of their country, but Nehru is more appreciated in England than in the United States, at the present time. While it might be argued that there is a good deal of feeling in England against American world domination, with corresponding gratitude to Nehru as a buffer to such trends, the following commentary seems definitely nonpolitical. Frank Edmead sums up Nehru's role, stressing his worth as a man capable of synthesis on issues vital to future world affairs. Mr. Edmead writes:

> Mr. Nehru grew up and attained power at the time of the meeting of civilisations; he is all mankind's epitome—the nearest approach so far to a statesman of the "one world" that is being created by modern communications. As it happens, his native tradition is the Hindu, with its unparalleled capacity for absorbing alien and even contradictory strains of thought. His upbringing, however, was predominantly English.
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> As important as the war on poverty to which Nehru has dedicated himself is the necessity to weld together a subcontinent with so many languages, religions, castes, and traditions. And here Gandhi taught what he could not teach in economics. Nehru was temperamentally an apt pupil. The unifying force of his personality, which helped to bring India through the perils of 1947 and the succeeding years, may prove to be a greater gift to his country even than his drive to modernise its economy. Bose (who went over to the Axis) could not have offered it, not could the rigid Hindu Patel, nor could the Communists. They would all have divided India. A man was needed in which the Yogi balanced the Commissar, three years at Cambridge balanced nine years in prison, the hero of the crowd balanced the lonely intellectual.

In the same issue of the *Guardian* a reviewer discusses Stuart Hampshire's *Thought and Action,* a book which "pleads for an altogether freer and wider approach to moral philosophy." To encourage a "philosophy of mind" is to encourage attitudes which pass beyond routine moralizing, whether in politics or religion. The reviewer writes:

> Mr. Hampshire's argument is that practical reasoning, if pressed to its conclusion, must always end in arguments that belong to the philosophy of mind. Indeed, he holds that disputable philosophical opinions are a necessary part of every phase of human thought:
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> "They arise directly," Mr. Hampshire writes, "from a man's critical reflections upon the reasoning that guides his own conduct when he tries to choose for himself the terms in which the different possibilities of action open to him are to be identified and distinguished. This choice of terms in which his intentions are to be formed is a condition of his regarding himself as a free and rational agent."
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> Regarding oneself as a free and rational agent requires that one shall have reviewed different methods of classifying conduct, and found reason for preferring one basis of classification rather than another; it requires that one should have reflected on the concept of action itself, and on the question of the sense in which a man can be said to be active in his thought, attitudes, states of mind, and feelings.

COMMENTARY
FREEDOM FOR WHAT?

BY pleasant coincidence, the notice of a book in this week's review gives a capsule version of the essential point our leading article seeks to make clear. "Practical reasoning," says the *Manchester Guardian* reviewer of Stuart Hampshire's *Thought and Action,* "if pressed to its conclusion, must always end in arguments that belong to the philosophy of mind." This is a view which applies particularly to reasoning about freedom. There could hardly be a more "practical" subject than that of Freedom, yet thorough investigation of it soon raises fundamental philosophical questions. More than any other subject, it requires, in Hampshire's words, "that one should have reflected on the concept of action itself, and on the question of the sense in which a man can be said to be active in thought, attitudes, states of mind, and feeling."

The Eastern systems of thought referred to in our lead article define freedom in terms of mental life, the fields of action being "attitudes, states of mind, and feeling." In these systems, the world of outward action is regarded as little more than a large rehearsal hall where human beings gain the experience needed to conduct their inner lives with greater discipline.

For centuries Western thinkers have shown little more than impatience for the implications of this general view. "Defeatism" and "passivity" are some of the epithets used to describe Oriental subjectivism. Today, however, under the conditions of what might be labelled a *surfeit* of external freedom, Westerners are beginning to ask themselves the critical question, "Freedom for what?"

Vague answers as, "To enjoy the Good Life," no longer suffice. The Good Life has been carelessly identified with a physically luxurious standard of living. "Culture" is of course referred to, but this culture has a close resemblance to the musical banks of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon,* in which the people deposited counterfeit coins on Sundays. The banks tinkled in response, and the uplifting act of the week was complete.

Our thinking about freedom breaks down because our thinking about man and his ends has not been pressed to any significant conclusion. We have entrusted our thinking about freedom to the slogan-makers and the promoters, and, as a result, they are now claiming our freedom as well: that is, they claim the right to *define* our freedom, which is the same as taking it away from us. The problem, now, is to get it back, but we don't know how. We don't know how or why we lost it, nor can we decide which slogans to abandon. After all, they were so easy to believe!

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
"METAPHILOSOPHY" AND EDUCATION

LATELY, here, we have focused on material which might be termed "controversial." Both obsessive TV watching of spectator sports and the issue of capital punishment afford a chance for sifting values, aesthetic and ethical. This might be a good time to turn to the writings of C. J. Ducasse, as a means of moving from specifics to considerations of principle in regard to such matters.

A Ducasse article, "On the Function and Nature of the Philosophy of Education," written for the *Harvard Educational Review* (Spring 1956), shows that ultimate philosophical questions cannot be separated from the æsthetic or ethical ones. Dr. Ducasse contends that there can be no true "philosophy of education" without habitual sifting of values. He might say, for example, that even a discussion of the cultural influence of the Dodgers, and certainly a discussion of the still threatened execution of Caryl Chessman, involve us in philosophical evaluation, and that the values we decide upon are relevant to education. In this paper, Dr. Ducasse writes:

> Philosophical reflection is not a mere spectator sport indulged in by idlers contemplating human affairs without participating in them. Rather, it is something to which almost every man finds himself driven when he faces practical problems of a certain type, which I shall first illustrate by an example from the field of education, and then define in general terms. The example is as follows:
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> Some years ago in a Western city, the mother of a child of school age said to me that the public school to which he had been going for some time adhered to the theories of so-called Progressive Education, and apparently interpreted them in so irresponsible a manner that the boy was learning nothing. She had looked about for another and more efficient school, and the only one so located that it would be practicable for the boy to attend it was a denominational school. It had the reputation of doing a good job of teaching the regular school subjects, but it also indoctrinated its pupils with religious beliefs which diverged radically from those of herself and her husband. In this situation, she found herself unable to tell what would be the wise course to adopt.
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> Now, obviously, any reasons that happened to suggest themselves to her or to her advisors for choosing one rather than another of the alternatives actually open to her constituted the embryo of a philosophy of education. If those reasons had been developed, critically examined, generalized, and purged of inconsistencies, irrelevancies, and ambiguities, then, as thus systematized, they would have constituted a comprehensive philosophy of education. It would have made clear two things: (a) the nature of the various values that are at stake in educational decisions and that must therefore be taken into account and (b) the various kinds of objective facts that have to be ascertained by observation or experiment, if one is to be in position to answer in a responsible manner puzzling educational questions that resemble in certain respects the question used above as example.

We could say, as Ducasse does, by way of making a point, that matters having to do with religious beliefs and ethical attitudes are "metaphilosophical"—in contradistinction to the rationalization of a *system* of teaching or learning. Just as *wisdom* involves another dimension of knowledge, so enlightened beliefs require a willingness to challenge existing assumptions, and to *consider what other and better assumptions might be put in their place.* In discussing the relationship between "wisdom" and educational decisions, Dr. Ducasse concludes his paper with counsel clearly related to the valuation of general ethical issues, indicating, for us, why there may be advantages in using the highly controversial issue of the Caryl Chessman execution for discussion by teachers, parents, and children. Ducasse writes:

> The third factor of wisdom consists in awareness of all the diverse values, positive and negative, intrinsic and instrumental, that would result from adoption, respectively, of the alternative courses of action open to choice in the particular case; and in perception of which particular one of those courses would, all things considered, yield the greatest total of value.
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> This perception is bound to be somewhat different in different persons, since what one person

> values highly may have little value in another's judgment. This means that the final judgment as to what, for the person whose choice of a course of action is concerned, is the wise, i.e., the best, course to choose cannot be made for him by another. What another may be able to do for him is only to *enlighten* his judgment by pointing out to him particular existing circumstances, or particular probable objective consequences of one or another possible choice, or particular kinds of value those choices or their consequences would have, of which the person called upon to choose a course of action was *not aware.* But, once this person has been made aware of all these relevant matters, the final judgment has to be his own. He may, of course, later come to judge it to have been foolish instead of wise; but this is the judgment of the then different and wiser person he has become. The most that can be said for the contention that there is such a thing as objective, super-personal wisdom is that the more the judgments of different persons as to the wise course in a given case get *enlightened* in the sense just described, the less divergent will those judgments probably become.

To our mind, the burden of all this is that one who would formulate a philosophy of education must first recognize the many complexities and subtleties involved, if the values finally arrived at are ever to become simple, clear, and convincing. Philosophers of education who fail to engage their minds with these complexities may end up by being "complex" only in terms of conceptual confusion and verbal difficulty.

But not only philosophers of education need to consider these matters. Every parent has decisions of the sort described by Dr. Ducasse before him, in which carelessness or "snap judgment" may result in far-reaching wrong to the children.

FRONTIERS

Yogurt, Black Strap Molasses, and All That

THIS Department has received the following criticism from a doctor of medicine:

> In the Oct. 7, 1959 issue, there appeared an article on "Hazards—Random Sampling." I thoroughly agreed with its beginning and its concluding paragraphs. But in the middle of this rambling dissertation appeared one of the wildest statements I've seen in a long time—namely, "The fact is, we think, that the food faddists, for all their excesses and occasional wild enthusiasms, have done more for the nation than the doctors, who usually wait till you get sick."
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> This rather brash statement, I feel, is quite ill-considered, irresponsible, and unworthy of the usual thoughtful articles in MANAS or the restrained rest of the same article. I can only guess this ridiculous statement was made by someone who exhibits a common neuroticism illustrated by food faddism whose ego has been threatened by attacks on food faddism and its adherents. This is a natural reaction—I would hope MANAS contributors could rise above such things (above even unscientific food faddism, but I'd settle for the former).
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> There is much to criticize in the medical profession. Modern M.D.'s get an excellent training in nutrition—biochemistry in medical schools is all-important. Perhaps we don't spend as much time as we should teaching good nutrition—usually we are too busy performing functions much more vital and necessary. I too deplore "shot therapy." But criticisms against M.D.'s for shortcomings in the nutritional field are usually directed by hypochondriacs who seek medical attention with preconceived, often fallacious ideas about how this or that food is their quick solution. Maybe the medical profession is too brusque in brushing off the hypochondriac's self-styled remedy. To put it bluntly, if certain general principles are observed, the diet is a very minor factor. Almost any sixth-grader knows the fundamentals of a good diet scientifically accepted. Why should the medical profession devote its primary "attention" to something quite a ways down the line for health and happiness? I think any more irresponsible outbursts by this writer would warrant his being packed in yogurt and wheat germ oil and shipped to Hollywood or Battle Creek so he can feel at home among these poor unfortunates whose lives are so unrewarding that their major daily concern is in *their* stomach, *their* bowel movements, *their* micturition. I feel for such people. But being in need of psycho-ceramic therapy doesn't imply any special wisdom or scientific knowledge.
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> P.S. Any conclusion that my security was threatened is of course to be abandoned. I comment from a purely scientific, analytic position!

To keep this debate out of the " 'Tis, 'Tain't" category, we hasten to admit that the "brash statement" objected to was not founded on careful studies of what the typical American eats, or what his doctor or his food-faddist mentor tells him to eat, but on the layest of lay observations concerning eating habits in the United States, and on acquaintance with a few conscientious mothers who give considerable attention to such matters. (Actually, we have printed this letter, not in the service of scientific truth, nor even in behalf of editorial impartiality, but simply for the signs of life in the last paragraph and the postscript. As for the "neuroticism" imputed to the MANAS writer, we submit that no neurotic could be as brief as the sentence cited as offensive—those people always go on and *on*.)

Back in the late 1920's a new type of cafeteria began to appear in New York city, sponsored by people who contended that fresh vegetables and a wide variety of salads are important to human health. These cafeterias were symptoms of a basic change in attitude concerning diet. Until that time, about all you could get in a restaurant was meat and potatoes. Then, along came Howard Hay, Gaylord Hauser, and their various successors, the Organic Gardening Movement, and (bless her) Adelle Davis. In 1939, Dr. Weston A. Price, a dentist, published his epoch-making study, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration.*

Someone who had watched developments of this sort carefully could probably write a large volume about it, grading the precedents and honors as they should be; we write only as a somewhat distant and casual observer, and a mild participant. Our point is that there has been a considerable change for the better in the eating habits of Americans, during the past thirty years; that this change is not due to any great illumination of the orthodox medical profession by the progress or notable discoveries in the science of nutrition, but to a few "radicals" and their devoted followers (some of them "fanatics," no doubt), who gave more time to the subject of diet than the rest of us "normal" people did.

This, of course, is par for the course of *any* orthodoxy. Paracelsus, now being dusted off and rehabilitated by contemporary medical historians, was pilloried by his angry colleagues in healing. Harvey was laughed at, Freud made the butt of all sorts of nasty implications. It has taken psychosomatic medicine a generation or more to get past the defenses of medical orthodoxy and establish a region of legitimate authority in conventional practice, and the end is not yet.

Here, our point is simply that there is no special reason to assume that orthodox medicine sits in a seat of infallible medical authority with the laws of nature in one hand and the Hippocratic oath in the other. There is even reason to assume the opposite.

The argument for slow-moving medical orthodoxy, indifferent to innovation, suspicious of heterodox theories—especially those which have not come up through "channels"—is that the public is protected from quackery and pretentious nonsense by the exceedingly slow-grinding mills of the scientific method. There is some truth in this. Whether you side with orthodoxy or with the rebels is perhaps a matter of temperament, daring, and how sick or well you happen to be, and what your experience has been with doctors and others. All we should like to establish, here, is that there is, always has been, and probably always will be, a no-man's land which borders the conventional practice of medicine, and that in that no man's land are often found the workers who represent the future progress of the healing arts. Bates, the eye man, was such a pioneer, and there have been many others—men who, during their lifetime, earned little more than indifference or even contempt from orthodox practitioners.

To justify our suggestion that nutrition should have the primary attention of medical educators (and incidentally, we don't know a thing, first-hand, about what happens in medical schools—we referred to an A.M.A. *Journal* editorial as source for the fact that they have neglected nutrition), we cite the following from Dr. Tom Spies, who said before the 1957 Annual Meeting of the American Medical Association:

> All diseases are caused by chemicals, and all diseases can be cured by chemicals. All the chemicals used by the body, except for the oxygen which we breathe and the water which we drink are taken in through food. If we only knew enough, all diseases could be prevented through proper nutrition. As tissues become damaged because they lack the chemicals of good nutrition, they tend to become old. They lack what I call tissue integrity. There are people of forty whose brains and arteries are senile. If we can help the tissues to repair themselves by correcting nutritional deficiencies, we can make old age wait.

To the foregoing, we add an analysis by Dr. Coda Martin, president of the American Academy of Nutrition, a member of the International College of Surgeons, the World Health Association, the A.M.A., and the New York Academy of Sciences. He teaches clinical medicine at New York Medical College and has appointments in the following hospitals of New York City: Metropolitan Hospital, Bird S. Color Memorial Hospital and Home, Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospitals, Woman's Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital. In an article in the *Journal of Applied Nutrition* (10: 3, 1957), he listed in the order of their prevalence diseases known today as chronic diseases due to metabolic disturbances (based on the sixth revision of the International Statistical Classification of Disease), as follows: Allergic disorders, 20,000,000; deafness, 15,000,000; blindness, 331,000; glaucoma, 1,000,000; psychosis and neurosis, 16,000,000; mental deficiency, 3,000,000; arteriosclerosis and degenerative heart disease, 10,000,000; arthritis and spondylitis, 10,000,000; epilepsy, 1,500,000; diabetes, 1,000,000; vascular lesions affecting central nervous system (hemiplegia), 1,000,000; malignancy, 700,000; tuberculosis, 400,000; multiple sclerosis, 250,000; cerebral palsy, 150,000; acute poliomyelitis (late stage), 68,000; peptic ulcers, 8,460,000; nephrosis, 534; alcoholism (chronic), 4,000,000; obesity, 32,000,000; muscular dystrophy, 100,000.

A number of chronic diseases are not listed because of the unavailability of figures. Concerning this record, Dr. Martin writes:

> The grand total of registered chronic diseases in the U.S. today is: 124,959,534
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> Subtract obesity and alcoholism—this still leaves 88,959,534 chronically ill out of a population of 168,000,000 people. This is an incomplete estimate as the prevalence of several chronic diseases is not yet available.
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> In this preliminary report the figures for chronic diseases are given as they were compiled for each disease and without critical analysis for duplication of one or more chronic diseases in the same person. Thus, the total number of people involved may be less than the number of diseases reported, but in spite of possible discrepancies this report reveals a deplorable state of health for the nation.
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> This physical degeneration of our bodies has been confirmed by various health surveys on groups of apparently healthy people. A check-up of 500 business executives average age of 48 years, at the University Hospital, Ann Arbor, Michigan, revealed that 41 per cent of them suffered from physical diseases of which they were not aware and 77 per cent of these healthy men had some physical abnormality. Thus only 23 per cent were in good physical health.
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> In another study, at the University of Pennsylvania, they found that out of 1,000 apparently well people examined, only 13 per cent were entirely free of physical defects.
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> There are many approaches to the prevention and treatment of such complex diseases but there appears to be one common denominator as the basic cause of degenerative diseases. That one factor is nutrition. This means over-nutrition as well as under-nutrition. When either is present, the body does not receive an adequate balance of nutritional factors to maintain normal cell metabolism, consequently, catabolism or the breaking-down process becomes predominant and deterioration of the tissue is the end result.
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> By way of contrast with this deplorable picture of a rapidly degenerating population is a report made by Dr. Robert McCarrison in the early twenties on the Hunza people of northern India. Dr. McCarrison called them "a group of people unsurpassed in health and physical endurance." To confirm his observation, he ran a feeding test on rats, giving them the same type of food eaten by the Hunza people. These rats lived and produced healthy litters for generations, without evidence of disease. Autopsies on the animals revealed no pathology of the organs. A control group of rats fed on diets similar to those eaten by the average American or Englishman developed pathology in nearly all the body organs similar to the degenerative diseases suffered by so many people in the U.S. today.
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> I believe that this report on the health of the nation points out the urgency of putting into immediate action the three-year expansion of the American Academy of Nutrition. Public education and medical research on the relation of soil fertility and nutrition to degenerative diseases, are a *must* if this country is to survive as a strong and dynamic nation.

The defense rests. Of course, rats are not men; again, we do not have the same environment that the Hunzas have (alas no); and we have "nervous tension" and atom bombs and all that; still, the figures are impressive, the experiments more so.

Now Drs. Spies and Martin, we shall be told, are not food faddists. Of course not; but what they are saying—and much more impressively, it must be admitted—is what a lot of the Nature Boys have been saying for a long time. Rigid orthodoxy in any field has the effect of delivering the cause of innovation to the extremists, the faddists, and even to the lunatic fringe. Then, by a process of quiet filtering, what is sound in the innovations slowly finds its way into orthodox practice, usually under new, "respectable" labels, with seldom any credit being given to the pioneers. Occasionally, a general practitioner is numbered among the latter, as for example, D. C. Jarvis, whose best-selling *Folk Medicine* has been immensely valuable as a stimulus to reflective thinking about the body and its needs. Actually, there is nothing especially "new" about the material in the Jarvis book—what is good about it is the self-reliance and common sense it may inspire in readers concerning the care and feeding of their bodies. It is here, perhaps, that the food faddists have made their greatest contribution.