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THE PARADOX OF MOTIVES

THE question of where ultimate human fulfillment is found—whether in the concrete achievements of the daily round of life, or in an inward process of awakening which is related to, but not dependent upon, the finite goals we set for ourselves—is very nearly the most fundamental philosophical inquiry a man can make. In religious terms, it is the issue between "faith" and "works," and at the psychological level it involves the distinction between "attitude" and "accomplishment."

In classical Eastern mystical works, the external triumphs are held to be mere symbols of the inner realization. The disciple is urged to penetrate the veil of "Maya," of the cosmic illusion, and to find peace and liberation through identification with the Supreme Spirit. "Without moving, O holder of the bow, is the travelling in this road," says the ancient *Dnyaneshvari.*

It is natural for the Westerner, however, when confronted with such traditional expressions of the gospel of inwardness, to argue that the world and its works should not be so easily discounted. If the entire significance of life can be thought of as involving no more than some sort of extraordinary revery of the mind, then all our strivings must seem to be much ado about nothing. This apparently quietist doctrine has our intuitive rejection.

Perhaps we can say that both doctrines have each its element of truth, and that the problem is to explicate and qualify these points of view so that they may gain mutual harmony and mutual support. For this purpose the statement of a MANAS reader, which sets the dilemma in the terms of Western thought, should be of value. This reader writes:

> In *The Rebel*, Camus held that the significance and worth in individual lives, considered as a metaphysical object, lies outside the flux of history. Do you agree? If you do not—and not only Marxists and Christians, but also adherents of the doctrine of progress, do not agree—how do you escape what might be termed the "fallacy of preparationalism," or the view that any given present receives its value chiefly as a course of bricks laid in the building of some mighty structure to be dwelt in . . . or contemplated . . . beyond its history?
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> Is history *ad astra per aspera*, or is the *going* the goal? If Camus is correct, both views hold. But I suspect (even though history is my excuse to be with students) that the Western absorption with the meaning and goal of history is analogous to the obsession of some of Buddha's disciples with whether God exists or the soul is immortal, or whether the world is finite or infinite. Buddha did not give answers to these and similar questions because, he said, "this profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion." Where is the kingdom that Jesus admonished his hearers to seek first . . . in themselves? or in or at the end of history? And finally, even if history is *not* a science, but, say, a separate mode of truth, it is, along with poetry, a motherlode of meaning.

There are dozens of practical situations in which these questions may be examined at a homely level. For example, if you are running a business, in competition with other businesses, how much attention can you give to the "personal development" of your employees? Can you keep a person because he seems to be "growing" in his job, despite the fact that others would almost certainly be more productive or efficient? A business is not an educational institution, but there are likely to be limited areas within its operations where the intentions of business and the intentions of education might be made to coincide.

Then there is the "democratic" way of getting projects going, in which you discuss and discuss, allowing everyone to express an opinion, even to the point of clogging the progress of the project or rendering it ineffectual. The "democracy,"

someone may say, is the real thing, and not the project itself, which is only a means. Unfortunately, when this philosophy is thoroughly applied, the project itself often suffers from an unreality which gives even the educational or democratic aspects of what is being attempted a superficial air. If "inwardness" is all-important, how shall we get around this difficulty?

What, in short, is the *real* end? Obviously, ends and means in human life form a vastly complex hierarchy, in which ends in one relationship become means in another, in which mere "by-products" of what is thought to be a vital process turn out to be much more valuable than the ostensible fruit of the process. But how do you decide, beforehand, about such things?

Nothing, it has been said, will settle a man's mind so much as the knowledge that he is to be hanged in the morning! Suppose we were *all* to be hanged in the morning: what would we have to say about ends and means, then?

There is no difficulty in seeing that human beings, nearly all of us, are ambivalent most of the time about what we want. If the thought of impending death can, in a few minutes' time, turn us into philosophers, ought we to think more about death? Or why, on the other hand, should we have to die in such an "unfinished" state?

That questions of this sort leave us 'way up in the air, and even make us indignant because we cannot answer them, is evidence of the traditionless character of our culture or the lack of serious philosophy in our lives. A man can do without philosophy if he has philosophical traditions; or he can do without traditions if he has philosophy; but he cannot do without both and avoid being either a shallow or a miserable man.

It is the business of philosophers to think about ends, and of educators to provoke thought about ends. But have the philosophers and educators—even the best—been able to tell us our place and ends in life?

Only a little thought about *this* question makes it plain that nobody can tell anyone else what his ends are or ought to be, for the reason that ends are self-generated objectives. Both the goal and the person who wants to move toward the goal are subjective entities. You can have a metaphysic which declares that the individual is a monad which seeks absorption or identification with the One; or you can have a theology which declares that he is a soul which wishes or ought to wish to unite with God—or get as "close" to God as that particular theology will allow; but these are abstractions of the mind. You can't tell a man what to have for a goal any more than you can tell him whom to love or which foods to like. Such matters are his private mysteries and he has to work them out for himself.

This, then, is a descriptive account of the fact that people have very different ends, and a partial explanation, therefore, of why there is so much argument about the ends that human beings should pursue.

But *why* do they have such different ends? Can anything be said about this? The answer seems fairly simple. People identify themselves with various conceptions of the good, thereby defining their ends. It is self-identification which creates the end. Some people want to live in suburbia and have an income of $15,000 a year. They go into business and try to climb the ladder of the organization. Others decide that they would like to understand the people who become organization men; and these become psychologists and sociologists.

Now it is a plain fact that everyone who strives after goals suffers disappointments and frustrations. In some cases, even reaching the goal turns out to be a disappointment and a frustration; it wasn't what was *really* sought. Two kinds of people are immune to disappointments and frustrations: the men who attempt nothing and the men who understand the essence of everything. Everyone else is doomed to some

kind of disappointment, along with partial successes.

What happens when a man experiences disappointment? Three things can happen. First, he can give up, and fall back upon the pattern of his culture, enjoying the anonymity or lack of identity which total conformity permits. This is the practical equivalent of attempting nothing. Second, the man may redefine his goal in terms of what he hopes is a more "real" or less vulnerable objective. Finally, he may recognize the relativity of *all* identifications, admitting to himself that every goal he selects is bound, in the nature of things, to prove disappointing. This man decides to make peace with an eternal process of constant revision of his goals, on the ground that the revision of goals is the *real* activity in which human beings are engaged. This, in a sense, is to confront the abyss. But the abyss, like the theoretical "ideal" goal, is only an abstraction. You can't stop identifying yourself with ends. You can only try.

But there is a value in considering as an abstraction the idea of a man who no longer identifies himself with anything and who no longer pursues any goal. Krishna, the spiritual instructor of the *Bhagavad-Gita,* is such a man. Addressing his disciple, Arjuna, he says:

> There is nothing, O son of Pritha, in the three regions of the universe which it is necessary for me to perform, nor anything possible to obtain which I have not obtained; and yet I am constantly in action. If I were not indefatigable in action, all men would presently follow my example, O son of Pritha. If I did not perform actions these creatures would perish; I should be the cause of confusion of castes, and should have slain all these creatures. O son of Bharata, as the ignorant perform the duties of life from the hope of reward, so the wise man, from the wish to bring the world to duty and benefit mankind, should perform his actions without motives of interest. He should not create confusion in the understandings of the ignorant, who are inclined to outward works, but by being himself engaged in action should cause them to act also.

This, if we may use a somewhat Irish expression, is an account of the Supreme Spirit at work. It has, no doubt, a great truth in it, but it also creates great hazard, since from so transcendental a revelation it is possible to raise up a vast number of pious frauds. If a man is lazy, or has delusions of grandeur, he may be led by an acquaintance with what Krishna says to wish to identify himself with a wise man, or a spiritual teacher; and thus, by this most dangerous of self-identifications, he is made into a pretender and a hypocrite—or, as the *Gita* puts it, he becomes a false pietist of bewildered soul. I, he lets it be known, have risen above that; and these small matters do not interest me; I leave such things to more ordinary men.

No one confuses the hierarchy of ends so badly as the pretender to "spiritual knowledge." But he confuses himself most of all, since he can permit himself no honest desires. For such as he, Dr. Freud is pre-eminently the physician. Indeed, it seems likely that we shall never outgrow psychoanalysis until we have outgrown the hypocrisies and pretentious pieties of conventional religion.

But why should the honoring of a "spiritual" end make us sick? It should be evident that there is nothing spiritual or "ultimate" about not wanting anything or needing to "do" anything, until this high condition is wholly natural and the man is inwardly inclined to nothing else. But then, as Krishna said, he will not avoid action, but will do "everything"—being "constantly in action." So the *beau ideal* of spiritual development—the man who has attained to the true goal—can never be recognized from what he does. He will be as busy as the next fellow, probably a lot busier.

Krishna, we might say, identifies himself with the motionless center of things; yet, since the motionless center is not only in Christs and sages, but everywhere else as well, Krishna is as ceaselessly in action as the universe at large.

It is as though Krishna had appended a footnote to the passage from the *Dnyaneshvari*,

making it also read: ". . . with ceaseless motion, O holder of the bow, is the travelling in this road."

The secret, of course, is that each man's resolution of the paradox is entirely his own, and cannot be had from anyone else. Each individual is moving toward a great climactic moment of his life, when he will feel the end in the means and the means in the end. Then, from that hour, he will begin to make his identifications with a kind of reservation or sophistication; he will still respond to longings and dream dreams, but will hold a portion of himself in reserve, to be a witness. He will create, somewhere within himself, an absolute stance, a point of understanding, of "enjoyment," which neither takes nor gives, but simply *comprehends.* For this man, the timeless dialogue, represented by the colloquy between Krishna and Arjuna, has now begun within himself. He is now to become free from tradition, from the cultural or communicated version of how to distinguish between ends and means. Making this distinction has now become his real life. He is a philosopher.

We should not, then, go about seeking "goals" or making arguments as to their relative validity, but should give ourselves to wondering how to arrive at the "climactic moment," when we shall begin to feel the means in the end and the end in the means. Does this moment come unbidden, or can it be pursued? How do we know that it will not remain forever in the wings, never appearing at all, like *Godot?*

Well, there are at least two ways to seek or invite the moment: one is through art, the other is by philosophy. The work of art is a symbol of the moment, for it is at once both ends and means. It is an end, since it seeks nothing beyond itself; it is a means, since its form and reference generate the realization it produces. The "dance" goes through the motions of life, yet is not involved in any binding way with the activities of life. The dance, the drama, the poem, the painting, the sculpture—all these are sheer overtones of life, utterly "unnecessary," yet filled with the essentiality of our being. A work of art has immortality if it joins ends and means in some communicable way. It is a successful defiance of the limitations of matter and form. It is matter turned to an immaterial purpose—transcendence and apotheosis.

It is the role of art to bring us a touch of the *feeling* of a climactic moment. Philosophy—that is, metaphysics—erects a structure of thought by means of which a man may gain a sense of intellectual orientation in relation to his quest. Philosophy is concerned with the *theory* of identity. The man who tries to be a philosopher is a man who examines his natural inclinations—his spontaneous tendency to identify himself with this or that—in the light of a general theory of identity. If he has any hope of freedom in the choice of a goal, he will get it from the practice of philosophy.

To the man who exclaims, "Don't tell *me* that I don't know what I ought to do; I shall do what is *natural!"*, philosophy will rejoin, "Fine, but how can you be so sure you know what is 'natural'?" Is all moral struggle merely a symptom of mental illness? Is the anarchy of indecision no more than a reflex of the complex tug of conflicting desires?

The cry for the "natural" comes from honest rebellion against an excessively intellectual or ideological approach to life. It is the monolithic refutation of casuistry and tiresome moralizing. It is a "let-us-make-all-things-new" declaration which becomes common during the decline of an epoch of civilization. It overlooks, however, the fact that intellectual systems and ideologies are attempts to cope with and explain the conflicting evidence of what is "natural" for human beings. This spontaneous "naturalism" has always had a very brief life, historically speaking. For the man who seriously comes out for naturalism is obliged to give you some definition of what is natural, and then you have an intellectual system all over again—as, for example, in our own time, in the psychological theories of Trigant Burrow.

Almost inevitably, theories of the natural are guilty of bad over-simplifications. There are the

materialistic theories which endeavor to equate man's physical drives with the material conditions of life. Usually, the materialistic theories are hedonistic and utilitarian in ethics, and lean heavily on the current "facts" of science for their primary assumptions. Then there are the idealistic theories which have their eyes fixed upon some "far-off divine event" and are lacking in any touch with the angers, passions and appetites, the sorrows and frustrations of man as he is. But a workable theory of the natural must encompass not only the good; it must also take account of the actual and explain the evil. It must help us to understand and to live with man at-odds-with-himself, and man in-conflict-with-his-fellows, and to clarify these contradictions not only in moral terms but in naturalistic terms as well. We cannot live merely in flight from evil. There is too much good bound up in evil for us to escape from it without understanding it. Idealism which flies from evil is only the higher hedonism. Actually, the partisan of good is also a partisan of evil, since you can never separate the two without relinquishing both.

It seems likely that philosophy, if it is to give any appreciable assistance to the man in search of his climactic moment, will have to get down to its real business and begin to inquire into the nature of man in earnest. People want to know whether there is a soul or not, whether there is a God or not. They want to understand why they suffer the devastations of disease and death, and whether birth is no more than a triumph of the wiles of the organism. These are the great questions, which philosophy—modern philosophy, suffering from an inferiority complex and a futile identification with "science"—has too long neglected.

Time has passed since Buddha walked the earth. Today, such questions have a great deal to do with "the fundamentals of religion." The age of paternalism, of revelation, in religion, is over, and the age of individualism, of defining our nature for ourselves, is here.

REVIEW
THE CONTEMPORARY BUDDHA

DEVOTIONAL reference to Gautama Buddha as "a universal being" gains considerable support from the current popularity of Zen Buddhist concepts. Interest in Zen seems to cut across many of the boundaries which ordinarily isolate traditional forms of thought. Readers who have been following the series in "Children . . . and Ourselves" on the "Beat Generation" will have noted that even the "hipster" writers and poets like to talk about Zen ideas—and at least know the right words for them. Nancy Wilson Ross contributes to the January *Mademoiselle* an article, "What is Zen?", which attempts to explain why "everyone" is talking about it.

Mrs. Ross speaks of the spread in America of this form of Buddhist philosophy:

> Zen is lately exerting a curious influence on a number of writers, painters, musicians and students in this country. The so-called "San Francisco group" is said to have wholeheartedly embraced it. J. D. Salinger is reported to be "up to his neck in it." Painters Morris Graves and Mark Tobey, musicians John Cage and Dizzy Gillespie, psychoanalyst Erich Fromm have all, in one way or another, expressed strong personal interest in the subject. A racing-car driver this New Yorker had met at the very party she had just mentioned told her his whole driving technique had been permanently altered by reading a little book called *Zen in the Art of Archery*.

What will explain this interest in exotic mysticism? Mrs. Ross, we think, has an answer:

> In accounting for the present interest in Zen in the West one must look to the shaft struck into the Western mind by psychoanalysis; the grave warnings of psychologists in general about the unhappy effects of ignoring the deeper levels of the human consciousness, the unfortunate results to be seen on every side of repressing the more subtle and invisible aspects of the human being in total favor of an externalized existence. Something has gotten badly out of balance; the "flow of life" has been stopped. The emphasis on fulfilling the appetite for "things" is at an all-time high. Zen invites one to another range of experience. It may admit to the charge that it appears at first hopelessly paradoxical, difficult and mystifying, but it also claims a basic simplicity when it offers such bits of sound practical advice as learning to "let go" or to "go with," and in its subtle suggestion not just to *think* about a problem but rather to try *just gazing at it closely*.

The people now interested in Zen Buddhism, in other words, are probably members of Riesman's "Lonely Crowd" who have finally realized that they are lonely—and are beginning to suspect that their loneliness results from a failure in *self*-orientation. Mrs. Ross continues:

> Zen followers are convinced that the emphasis they place on self-realization and self-mastery springs straight from Siddartha Gautama's psychological approach—no matter what other schools of Buddhism may say on this subject. The Buddha was unwilling to accept any designation to himself of special grace or unique divinity. He challenged his disciples with the iconoclastic suggestion: "Look within, *thou* art the Buddha." By this he implied that every man has the capacity for attaining the enlightenment to which he, Siddartha Gautama, came by his own unswerving efforts.
>
> In modern psychological terms Zen is a way of connecting with the deep Unconscious so that one becomes what one is, as the tree grows, the cloud forms itself, the bird flies. Zen does not depend exclusively on the rational top mind for the solving of an individual's problem—his "meaning" to himself and to life. Zen, indeed, refuses to permit the top mind, or "reason" alone, to assume the place of mastery as it does in Western philosophy, the inheritor of the Greek viewpoint. To the Zen view, verbalism, however brilliant, theories, however irrefutable, can never answer the deeply personal, truly basic questions of life—What, Who and Why—for reason is so often employed to refute itself and one theory simply leads to another, on and on endlessly. Talking about water will not quench a thirst, speaking of food will not fill a hunger. There is, says Zen, another way to awareness and freedom: a way of insight in which the direct intuitional faculties of the human being are put to use.

While it has pleased Christian scholars to regard Buddhism as more "primitive" than Christianity (aided in this direction only by the fact that Buddha lived some five hundred years before Christ), most contemporary followers of Zen apparently have decided that it is Christianity, not

Buddhism, which is primitive. Daniel Bronstein, in his discussion of Suzuki in the *Saturday Review* (Nov. 15, 1957), explains the difference between seeking *satori* (enlightenment) and seeking heaven or a state of grace made possible by the death of Christ or the intercession of a church. Bronstein writes:

> According to Dr. Suzuki, there is an "inner truth" hidden deep within our consciousness which Zen aims to discover. This cannot be done by any ordinary methods. It is not something that one man, even after he discovers it, can tell another. Each must grasp it himself.
>
> A key concept is *satori*, defined as an intuitive rather than an analytical grasp of the nature of things. He who attains *satori* enjoys a spiritual enhancement of his whole life, an *enlightenment*, somewhat resembling what other religions call a "conversion." But the latter term is too emotive. A better word picture for *satori*, as suggested by the author, would be "brightening up of the mind-works." In contrast with conventional religion, Zen attains its goal without benefit of such notions as sin, faith, God, grace, salvation, a future life, etc. It is non-theological and non-ecclesiastic; even the ethical component plays a minor role in Zen Buddhism.

Perceptive Western scholars have long been aware of the greater integrity of Buddhist philosophy and psychology. Paul Carus, like Edmond Holmes, found the study of Buddhist teachings to be profoundly inspiring. Dr. Carus, in *The Gospel of the Buddha*, published in 1905, wrote what many more present students of Buddhism are saying now. We find in his Preface:

> It is a remarkable fact that the two greatest religions of the world, Christianity and Buddhism, present so many striking coincidences in their philosophical basis as well as in the ethical applications of their faith, while their modes of systematising them in dogmas are radically different; and it is difficult to understand why these agreements should have caused animosity, instead of creating sentiments of friendship and good-will.
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> The main trouble arises from a wrong conception of Christianity. There are many Christians who assume that Christianity alone is in the possession of truth and that man could not, in the natural way of his moral evolution, have obtained that nobler conception of life which enjoins the practice of a universal good-will towards both friends and enemies. This narrow view of Christianity is refuted by the mere existence of Buddhism.
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> Must we add that the lamentable exclusiveness that prevails in many Christian churches, is not based upon Scriptural teachings, but upon a wrong metaphysics?
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> All the essential moral truths of Christianity are, in our opinion, deeply rooted in the nature of things, and do not, as is often assumed, stand in contradiction to the cosmic order of the world. They have been formulated by the Church in certain symbols, and since these symbols contain contradictions and come in conflict with science, the educated classes are estranged from religion. Now, Buddhism is a religion which knows of no supernatural revelation, and proclaims doctrines that require no other argument than the "come and see." Buddha bases his religion solely upon man's knowledge of the nature of things, upon provable truth. Thus, we trust that a comparison of Christianity with Buddhism will be a great help to distinguish in both religions the essential from the accidental, the eternal from the transient, the truth from the allegory in which it has found its symbolic expression.

COMMENTARY
THE LONG SHADOW OF DR. FAUSTUS

WHAT men honor through their attention and interest is sometimes puzzling to the intellect, yet not so strange to the heart. How can we understand the admiration stirred by Kerouac's *On the Road* among serious critics—a few of them, at least? It is, we think, a sympathy or admiration for what the book fails to do, rather than what it does.

There is a Prometheus, a Lucifer, and a Faust in every one of us, and the poets, as Blake said, are of the devil's party, although they may not know it. The poet is a man who, if he could, would

> . . . grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
> . . . shatter it to bits—and then
> Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

Even abortive efforts in this direction are understood by some portion of our sympathies. For there are half- and quarter-poets among us, even as there are half- and quarter-men. The fool who flouts authority, the gambler who loses his last dime, the drunkard who falls to degradation with a touch of splendor which lets you know he doesn't think he is losing very much—all these are acts which excite an element of sympathy along with other reactions. It is the mood of the act—certainly not the act, itself destructive and wasteful—which retains a faint glimmer of romance.

In a similar vein is John Clellon Holmes' passage quoted in this week's "Children":

> . . . they are spiritual crimes, crimes against the identity of another human being, crimes which reveal with stark and terrifying clarity the lengths to which a desperate need for values can drive the young. For in actuality it is the *longing* for values which is expressed in such a crime, and not the hatred for them. It is the longing to do or feel something meaningful, and it provides a sobering glimpse of how completely the cataclysms of this century have obliterated the rational, humanistic view of Man on which modern society has been erected.

To find in evil an agonized inversion of the good: is this only sentimentality? or is it an obscure comprehension of the War in Heaven, the tragedy of a fallen angel?

These revolts of immaturity, these petty rejections, these posturings of a cult of nonconformity—what have these to do with the mighty struggle of a tormented ego?

But if we are all men, if even the children are men in their own way, then the little ripples of resistance and rebellion, the blind gestures of independence, the stubborn determination to have a world of one's own—even a very little world, a kind of play-yard—are still the acts and exercises of human beings trying to find their way.

We do not need to call it art and philosophy to admit this. The pain and hope of a child are still pain and hope. The agony of a fool is still agony. The madness of a man who seeks freedom in a tropical jungle of unleashed emotions is still the madness of a man trying to be free.

What we can look for in all these strange phenomena and the slowly emerging compassionate interpretation of them is the elements of a new morality.

We *need* a new morality. The old morality—the morality which takes us into war, which builds prisons and banks and teaches the young to stay out of the one and get into the other, which insists that appearances are the thing, that a careful hypocrisy is the same as a virtuous life—this old morality is a vicious thing. It turns men against themselves and against each other. What can we, who practice this morality, know about good and evil? Who has the right to condemn anybody?

We are not against liars; only unskillful liars. We are not against sinners; only unconventional sinners. We are not against moral weakness; we rather like it. We are against moral strength because it exposes the old morality for what it is.

All this hypocrisy is the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and we know that, too. But the only way

to dispense with hypocrisy, so far as we can see, is to throw yourself away. Reading about the Beat Generation is like going on a vicarious drunk. *Go, man, go!*

Faust has a long shadow. He fascinates because he gives up prudence. Yet he wins in the end. If we could only believe it! If we could only get out of ourselves!

It takes courage to say, like the sinful Kabalist in the *Dybuk*, "If not by fair means, by foul!" Courage—we admire that, too.

Are these twisted strivings and anguished cries shadowy memories of lost Nirvanas of the spirit? Do they represent something of the realities which got left out of "the rational, humanistic view of Man on which modern society has been erected"? Are they manifestations of, not a man, but an entire *culture*, in travail?

Something has "snapped" in these people—the "beat" people, young and old. But something "snaps" in every man who begins to find a new life. He can never really go back. So far, we seem to be mistaking the sound of the snap for the beginning of a new life.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

DISCUSSION OF A GENERATION: VI

FOR the past several weeks we have been assembling quotations concerned with puzzling aspects of present youth's emotional behavior. The evaluations have been diverse, but certain leading characteristics of the psyche of "the beat generation" seem to appear again and again. For one thing, whether they are super-conformist college youths who find no allure in critical thinking, or young delinquents guilty of senseless crimes of violence, they show a clear tendency toward identification with everyone who seems dispossessed. Students, for instance, who show no reason (in answers to a questionnaire) to get excited about the prospect of losing their civil liberties are quite interested in facts and figures relating to delinquency, even though they are not, themselves, delinquent. And there seems to be no objection on the part of most members of the generation to seeing themselves depicted in an unflattering light by movies or novels. Discussing the sort of movies the "beat generation" respond to, John Clellon Holmes reported this interesting clue:

> Critics constantly express amazement at the willingness, even the delight, with which this generation accepts what are (to the critics) basically unflattering images of itself. It was noticed, for instance, that the most vociferous champions of the film, *The Wild Ones* (which gave a brutal, unsympathetic account of the wanton pillage of a California town by a band of motorcyclists), were the motorcyclists themselves. Equally, most juvenile delinquents probably saw, and approved of, the portrait of themselves offered in *Rebel Without a Cause*, even though they laughed at the social-worker motivations for their conduct that filled the script.

Similarly, an interest in jazz, bop and rock 'n' roll rhythm seems to serve as a basis for some feeling of solidarity among the members of the "beat" generation.

Anatole Broyard, in his "Portrait of the Hipster" for the *Partisan Review,* June, 1948, attempts to interpret:

> As he was the illegitimate son of the Lost Generation, the Hipster was really *nowhere.* And, just as amputees often seem to localize their strongest sensations in the *missing* limb, so the Hipster longed, from the very beginning, to be *somewhere.* He was like a beetle on its back; his life was a struggle to get *straight.* But the law of human gravity kept him overthrown, because he was always of the minority—opposed in race or feeling to those who owned the machinery of recognition.

Ralph Gleason, music editor of the San Francisco *Chronicle,* cites Broyard (in the *Saturday Review,* Jan. 11) in order to discuss Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and its connection with jazz music. Mr. Gleason is optimistic about "the beat generation," seeing some sort of meaningful fulfillment in addiction to jazz:

> The central character in Jack Kerouac's "On the Road" (*SR* Sept. 7) is no hipster, even if the literary critics may call him one. That is, he is no hipster in the jazz musician sense. But he is a hipster in the Broyardian sense of trying to get somewhere. His motivation is the same and it carries with it the identification with jazz. The entire book is, on more than one level, the account of postwar youth trying madly to get somewhere, somehow.
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> And despite the fact that there is actually very little about jazz in this book—and where there is, it is usually a reflection of the European critical view of entrenched primitivism *(i.e.,* crow-jim)—it is still a jazz novel in that it reflects, immediately and vividly, to those who have been stricken with the jazz virus, a knowledge and expression of their own struggle to get straight, like Mr. Broyard's beetle.
>
> Kerouac is of a generation that has willingly acknowledged jazz as its voice, that identifies itself with jazz. In an early passage of "On the Road" Kerouac refers to "that sound in the night which bop has come to represent for all of us." This is the whole point. Faced with a society which he considers has rejected him (and the fact that he believes this makes it real, if not a fact), the young intellectual has come to identify himself in a great degree with jazz music because this is also the position of the jazz artist. It has aspects of a cult, to be sure. But it also has something much more than that. It has a culture.

> Later in the book Kerouac asks, "What's your road, man? Holyboy road, madman road, rainbow road . . . it's an anywhere road for anybody, anyhow." And unlike a member of a generation that is really beat, Kerouac leaves you with no feeling of despair, but rather of exaltation.
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> This is really the quality we get from jazz, even from the lowest of low-down blues. Ellington's lyric "The saddest tale on land or sea is the tale they told when they told the truth on me" has exaltation in it. And "On the Road" certainly has. Locked in the perpetual struggle against the formality of what has been accepted (just as jazz is struggling for its own tradition) the postwar generation can be "cool" or "beat" or whatever you want to call it.

Having read *On the Road*, we are a bit puzzled by Mr. Gleason's finding of "exaltation," despite our effort to look for "the best" in these matters. The most discouraging examples of the hipsters are the young criminals who are criminal without a purpose, but concerning even these, John Clellon Holmes seems to seek an affirmative meaning. After telling (in *Esquire* for February) about crimes committed by the "crudest and most nihilistic slum hoodlums," Mr. Holmes remarks that even these are "concerned with the problem of belief, albeit unconsciously." Of shocking juvenile murders, he says that "such crimes, which are no longer rarities and which are all committed by people under twenty-five, cannot be understood if we go on mouthing the same old panaceas about broken homes and slum environments and bad company, for they are spiritual crimes, crimes against the identity of another human being, crimes which reveal with stark and terrifying clarity the lengths to which a desperate need for values can drive the young. For in actuality it is the *longing* for values which is expressed in such a crime, and not the hatred of them. It is the longing to do or feel something meaningful, and it provides a sobering glimpse of how completely the cataclysms of this century have obliterated the rational, humanistic view of Man on which modern society has been erected."

Again and again we see the enactment of tragedy without a point, which also invites reflection upon the extent to which the ideal of the hero has vanished. Rod Nordell, Book Editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*, discusses the transition in a January I6 feature by way of a still precocious title, "The Hero Stops Vanishing." Mr. Nordell tries to show that the hero *will* come back, refurbished and more realistically related to the predicament of the average man:

> Some said that tragedy ended where it began, in Greece, where Aeschylus and Sophocles could draw on an agreed moral or spiritual order of things against which the actions of the heroic individual had meaning. When Euripides began to explore the psychological twists in his characters, the grand pattern was already starting to crumble.
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> Others saw tragedy—in the elevated, and elevating definition—continuing with Racine and Shakespeare and Milton, and even into the inflated "heroic" literature that followed.
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> But as religious doubt grew, as the earth-centered universe gave way to vaster perspectives, the Psalmist's question seemed more than ever prophetic: "What is man, that thou are mindful of him?"
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> Tragedy became "tragic" in the tabloid newspaper sense. As new psychological and philosophical theories seemed to rob men of free will, the novelist and dramatist had new problems. They might make the reader or spectator feel sorry for a character's plight; it was harder to bring inspiration with a plausible ultimate triumph. Except in escapist literature the word "hero" began to mean simply a central character instead of a great man. . . .
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> Oddly enough, some otherwise misguided writers provided goads if not solutions, for recent authors seeking to lift men from apathetic acceptance of their condition. On the Continent (Europe), Jean-Paul Sartre, in explaining his philosophy of existentialism, wrote: "Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. . . . In choosing for himself he chooses for all men. For in effect, of all the actions a man may take in order to create himself as he wills to be, there is not one which is not creative, at the same time, of an image of man such as he believes he ought to be." Thus, in present novels, a character's decisions, far from being meaningless compulsions, are acts affecting both himself and others.

FRONTIERS

Letter to the President

To the Editors of MANAS: It is interesting that while the State Department rests from its labors and considers the results of its efforts to achieve disarmament and further "free elections," there is a turning to educators and scientists to enlist their aid and support in achieving a greater defense for this country. There is even encouragement of the members of this intelligent minority to express their views. Would you consider printing a letter I have written to the President and my Congressmen wherein I take this opportunity as a teacher and fulfill my obligation as a citizen? I could only hope it might stimulate other readers of MANAS to express their views at this time. I believe that if enough individuals would write, their efforts as a whole would have great influence. At least I would hope you would discuss these suggestions so that people will feel compelled to help solve this great problem.

Dear Mr. President,

I have carefully followed your proposals to the Soviet leaders concerning disarmament. In them you stated that our country insists that the Soviet Union agree to free elections for *certain* countries. I have also followed the policy, or lack of it, in regard to other countries such as Venezuela, Hungary, Algeria, and Korea, when the people protested and revolted for freedom and democracy. I think it is time for our State Department to come to definite conclusions in regard to our stand on free elections (regarding unity, dictatorship, foreign rule). I believe that this stand should be an *impartial* one, and separate from our efforts to achieve universal disarmament. Two programs of action should be planned, and our efforts should be directed through the United Nations.

The United Nations should be available to organized and orderly groups from any country desiring to petition for assistance to relieve economic or political instability or suppression. The United Nations should be able to provide a UN police force to the troubled country which would insure a definite interim period of peace, free speech and free press, preparatory to free elections. During this period committees of the United Nations should assist representatives of the country in planning for economic survival and progress. Krushchev in his TV speech last summer favored free elections—we must plan for their staging. We must convince our *allies* that such a program must be available to *all* countries.

Perhaps the Communists are "insincere." But perhaps we have failed to consider sufficiently the psychology of Russian and Chinese rulers and make the best use of them, for we are stuck with them at present. These leaders have demonstrated their passions for personal glory, manipulation, and extensive planning for improved economies. In their way, they believe in equality and the same standard of living for all peoples as a goal. I think we could enlist their cooperation in planning to move together if we would consider this as an acceptable goal. Our efforts must be directed toward a fair balance of trade which would benefit the Soviet Union and other countries.

If this program really got going the foundations would be laid for mutual trust in a program of general universal disarmament. Communist terror and the tentacles of Soviet subversion would no longer threaten weak countries. Neither would colonial rule or so-called American capitalism or imperialism. There would be opportunity for a free airing of the economic needs of all nations, subject to constant readjustment. Therefore, we could propose a complete abandonment of all large weapons, such as bombs, planes, missiles, warships, tanks. Perhaps there could be a series of agreements whereby these weapons could mutually be made available to small peaceful nations where they would be converted to use in transportation, communication, power, and industry. A concurrent program should be furthered to control disease and improve agriculture throughout the

world. Much has already been done along these lines and more could be done through international cooperation, as you suggested.

In order to engage the Soviet government successfully in cooperative planning, I think it is important for us to emphasize *our real goals.* Unless we state them plainly to all the peoples of the world, we too may be accused of "insincerity"—at least of *immaturity* and *confusion.* The great concentration and publicity concerning satellite displays has led to a sudden nation-wide belief that educators and scientists must be called upon to aid the government in furthering its multitudinous plans for greater defense which we seem to envision as continuing indefinitely! What are the real goals of educators and scientists? As a teacher, I would say that education seeks to further self-sufficiency, independence, and strong character, to encourage the development of just laws and obedience to them, to emphasize the obligations of citizenship and our place in a community of nations. (They are not, as is suggested, to beat the Russians.) The goals of scientists are to improve the standard of living and health of all peoples (not to threaten them with missiles). You must consider these goals before undertaking a temporary manipulation of this intelligent minority.

At the same time, in planning for peace realistically, it is important for people in this country to feel some personal security and confidence in disarmament if defense industries were to shut down and armed forces be dispersed. What assurance can this government give that it is able to provide planning showing that the U.S. could convert to a peace economy without widespread unemployment? Many more people would write letters urging peace and support foreign aid if they knew they would continue to have jobs and could enjoy an easing of the tax burden. It has been easy for us to laugh and criticize bungled Soviet economic planning. The question now confronts us: Are we really capable of planning for defense to meet the challenge, or do we really need to plan for the peace we *say* we want? Is this government sincere and adequate? Geared either for war or peace, the Soviet economy seems sure of its survival! With proper planning, we should be able to show a lowering of taxes and a great availability of food, products and know-how to aid under-privileged areas in the forms of gifts and loans with definite plans for long-term repayment. As a people, business-wise, we should remain healthy, stable, respected and well-liked.

I believe, therefore, that two separate plans should be undertaken to include all countries: one for free elections and economic assistance, and one for mutual disarmament. I believe also that our government should outline a "peace plan" for this economy. To drift, to allow rivalries, to favor only certain nations, to indulge in continued arms competitions, will only prove fatal.

Sincerely
Louise K. Burr

400 Coyle Ave.,
Arcadia, Calif.