VOLUME XVIII, NO. 1
JANUARY 6, 1965

THE SACRED BONDS

THE question of with what or whom to unite is probably the oldest inquiry pursued by the human species—older, even, than the question, "What is truth?" There are endless analogues in life for this primal longing, and these can be recognized regardless of what one supposes to be its original form. The man who thinks of human reality as rooted in biological processes may take the lost security of the womb as a symbol of the search. A political thinker might define the ideal matrix in terms of utopian relationships, and, according to whether he thinks in legalistic or "organic" categories, will develop an account of how the framing basis of social unity is to be created. The movie-saturated adolescent will turn his feelings into breeding-ground of images of the perfect romantic alliance. A man who lives in his mind, whose hours are filled by making mathematical correlations to "fit" observed physical reality, is likely to dream of some unified field theory. It is *pattern,* after all, which adds unity to diversity, and the shapes and forms, the times and movements of reciprocal relationships are elements of the unifying matrix which men can think about and put into some conceptual order.

How can we use this idea for a better understanding of history and of ourselves?

We might begin by making some assumptions about ancient cultures. It seems reasonable to say that when human beings first came to reflective consciousness, they felt a natural unity with the world around them. One might argue that primeval pantheism began with simple generalizations of feelings about the natural environment. The first religious rites were doubtless means of affirming this sense of unity. Then, with the growth of self-awareness, these feelings began to be more particularly interpreted, the elements of experience taking on the form of personifications, thus creating in time the patterns of religious beliefs. It would be an over-simplification to propose that ancient religion was no more than rationalizations of spontaneous feelings about man's life in the matrix of Nature; there are also archetypal conceptions, even abstractions, of great subtlety and depth in even the most archaic faiths; but, whatever the source of these conceptions, they seem to have been modified by historical or cultural processes which grew out of awakening self-consciousness, showing, finally, the effects of a kind of alienation or feeling of isolation. Some passages from Robert Redfield's *The Primitive World and its Transformations* (Cornell University Press, 1953) provide an anthropological outline of these changes.

> Primitive man [Dr. Redfield writes] is at once in nature and yet acting on it, getting his living, taking from it food and shelter. But as that nature is part of the same moral system in which man and the affairs between men also find themselves, man's actions with regard to nature are limited by notions of inherent, not expediential rightness. Even the practical little-animistic Eskimo obey many exacting food taboos, religious restrictions on practical activity, rituals of propitiation or personal adjustments to field or forest, abound in ethnological literature. "All economic activities, such as hunting, gathering fuel, cultivating the land, storing food, assume a relatedness to the encompassing universe." And the relatedness is moral or religious.

The *Puranas* of India, amounting to a religion of ancient folk tales, make this instruction to one who seeks confirmation of his unity with the powers of life:

> While taking medicine one should think of Vishnu or the all-pervading; while eating, of Janardana, the All-Giver while Iying down, of Padmanabha; while marrying, of Prajapati, the Lord of Creatures; while fighting, of Chakradhara; while traveling in a foreign land, of Trivikrama; at the time of death, of Narayana, at the time of reunion with friends, of Sridhara; after dreaming bad dreams, of

> Govinda; at the time of danger, of Madhusudana; in the midst of a forest, of Narsingha; in the midst of fire, of Jalasai, or the one lying on the water; in the midst of water, of Varaha; on the mountain, of Raghunundana; while going, of Vaurana; and in all acts, of Madhava.

These are ways, obviously, of helping the individual to feel that he is not alone, even when in great difficulty. And if a man has to die, we might ask, when does he die with the greatest dignity? When he believes he has lived his life and is meeting his death on the side of a high principle. He has his salvation from this feeling of unity.

For all their monuments and diverse pantheons, the old Egyptians made themselves secure from injustice by the principle of order they followed in their lives. As H. Frankfort says in *Ancient Egyptian Religion:*

> . . . just because the Egyptians believed justice and truth to be part of the cosmic order, there could be no question of a judgment of all the dead in the sense which biblical religion gives to that conception. For the Egyptian, the righteous man was in harmony with the divine order, and there the matter ended. This view, which does away with formal judgment altogether, has great dignity. . . . I merely mention the judgment here because many scholars, in their anxiety to make the Egyptians appear like one of us, have laid great stress on this "judgment of the dead" as evidence of his advanced standards. As we have seen, the Egyptians were firmly convinced that one should live according to common human decency, and that those acts which we too call evil lead to disaster. But his fear of the forty-two judges of the netherworld is in line with his fear that he might forget his name or that he might have to walk upside down.

In antiquity, all life was made to represent the alliance of man with nature. As Richard Herz says in *Man on a Rock:*

> Karl Buecher collected hundreds of songs echoing the divine animation that springs forth daily under a thousand different skies—songs which people used to sing during the ceremony we call work. Chinese peasants, moving into the mountains every morning to gather tea, sang a hymn in honor of their enterprise, which they compared to a pilgrimage to the Western paradise. The Volga boatmen "accepted the universe," and the women of Madagascar acted, when they cultivated the rice fields, like bayaderes trying to please a god.
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> Miguel Covarrubias, in his book on Bali, describes the bandjars, or cooperative societies as we would call them in our dry idiom; they watched the magic of work unfold with proper art and majesty in their Indonesian eden; when night fell they sent the arpeggios of their tireless orchestras through fragrant vales. . . .
>
> The medieval fraternities of workers in Flanders and Lyons, toiling in the frozen music of crepuscular cities, rolled the stone from the tomb of their narrow space, their triumph over the refractory material of the world was not mere routine, but was understood by them in its vast metaphysical connotations. Work interpreted as spiritual discipline gave these people a superhuman patience, detachment from results.

The chief burden of ancient religion was that men are one with, have a part in, the Cosmos. Speaking of New Year's rituals and celebrations, Merceau Eliade writes (in the Fall, 1958 *Diogenes):*

> Why did men from traditional societies feel the need to relive the cosmogony annually? In order to regenerate the world by reintegrating original sacred time, the time when the creation of the world occurred. In all the pre-Judaic religions sacred time was the time of the myth, primordial time, in which the exemplary acts of the gods were accomplished. But in reactualizing primordial time, that profane time which was already past, the time that contains death in its own duration, was suppressed. All the individual and collective purifications that took place on the occasion of the new year came from the abolition of time gone by and, consequently, after the abolition of all that time had worn out. Time was reborn "pure," just as it was in the beginning, from the very fact that at each year the world was created anew. By reiterating the cosmogony, primordial sacred time was restored. The re-creation of the cosmos implied the regeneration of time. The interdependence of the cosmos and cosmic time was so thoroughly perceived by pre-modern man that in many languages the term designating the "world" is employed to mean the "year." For example, certain North American tribes say "the world is past," to mean that "a year has passed."

In Eliade's view, these symbolisms represent an archetypal reality. He concludes:

> All creations—divine or human—are definitively dependent upon the model which constitutes the cosmogony. To create is, after all, to remake the world—whether the "world" happens to be a modest cabin, a humble tool, or a poem. The repetition of the cosmogony, whether periodic or not, is not an absurd and childish superstition of a humanity squatting in the darkness of primordial stupidity. In deciding to imitate the gods and to repeat their creative acts, primitive man had already taken upon himself that which, later, was revealed to us, the moderns—the very destiny of man. By this I mean the creation of the world we live in, the creation of the universe in which one wishes to live.

We are ready, now, to return to Prof. Redfield for his comparison of the ancient with the modern outlook:

> The difference between the world view of primitive peoples, in which the universe is seen as morally significant, and that of civilized peoples, in which that significance is doubted or is not conceived at all, is well brought out in some investigations that have been made as to the concept of immanent justice in the cases of American Indians on the one hand and Swiss children on the other. "Immanent justice" is that retribution for my faults which I believe will fall on me out of the universe, apart from the policeman or a parental spanking. If I do what I know I should not do, will I, crossing the brook, perhaps slip and fall into the water? If I believe this will happen, I live in no indifferent universe; the Not-Man cares about my moral career. Now, when significantly large samples of children were asked questions about this, the results provide comparisons of interest to us in considering the difference between primitive and modern world views. Of the Swiss children from six to seven years of age, 86 per cent believed in immanent justice. But the older Swiss children began to cease to believe in it; of those from twelve to eighteen years of age, only 39 per cent believed. With the Indian children, the development was just the other way; of the younger Hopi children 71 per cent, and of the younger Navaho children, 87 per cent believed in immanent justice. Among the older children of both Indian groups (from twelve to eighteen years of age), practically all (87 per cent and 97 per cent) believed in immanent justice. The modern European child begins with a more primitive world view which he corrects to conform to the prevailing world view which grows stronger with age.

Prof. Redfield's generalization is this:

> If we compare the primary world view that has been sketched in these pages with that which comes to prevail in modern times, especially in the West, where science has been so influential, we may recognize one of the great transformations of the human mind. It is that transformation by which the primitive world has been overturned. The three characteristics of that view which have been stressed . . . have been weakened or disappeared. Man comes out of the unity of the universe within which he is oriented now as something separate from nature and comes to confront nature as something with physical qualities only, upon which he may work his will. As this happens, the universe loses its moral character and becomes to him indifferent, a system uncaring of man. The existence today of ethical systems and of religions only qualifies this statement; ethics and religion struggle in one way or another to take account of a physical universe indifferent to man.

All sorts of questions arise, many of them related to the basic inquiry: What caused this transformation?

Probably the most important consideration, today, is not to jump too quickly to an answer to such questions. Literalist champions of the scientific cosmology will claim that the old world view was simply false, and has been replaced by modern knowledge of geology, astronomy, and biology. And one group of these literalists will argue that a social philosophy based upon the solidarity of the working classes, instead of a mythical unity with "Nature," is now available and already in operation in some parts of the world.

What is of interest, here, is not so much the claims of partisans of the scientific world view, as the fact that we cannot get along without *some* world view. And that the world view men adopt is invariably related to the area in which they feel the most deprivation. All-embracing economic theories directly reflect bodily needs, the sense of being denied the necessities of a decent existence on earth. "God," as Gandhi said, "dare not appear to the hungry man save in the form of bread."

No clear view of the changes in the human outlook on the world is possible without taking account of the effects of unreasonable and

enforced doctrines of belief. The following analysis by Joseph Campbell (in the Fall, 1958 *College Art Journal*) bears directly on this question:

> Eastward of Iran the dominant cultural traditions are fundamentally visionary and metaphysical, whereas those westward are concrete and rational, ethical and theological. Mythological and ritual motifs that in the Orient are read as poetry, in the West are read as fact.
>
> Let us take, for example, the myths of creation: No one in the Orient believes that the universe is actually and literally a lotus growing from the navel of Vishnu, or literally the dance of Shiva; yet practically everybody in the West believed for centuries that a masculine god named Yahveh created the world, quite literally, about 4004 B.C., by saying such things as "Let there be light!" It is no great wonder, therefore, that when it began to appear, in the period of the Renaissance, that the whole system of cosmology and universal history represented in the Near Eastern mythos of the Bible was contrary to fact and represented simply one variant of an archaic mythological inheritance that had been quite differently interpreted in other provinces of our civilization, considerable spiritual confusion was introduced into the schools and religious councils of the Occident.
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> We know that Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for doubting the literal-minded, orthodox reading of the Christian myth. And we know that Galileo was seriously threatened with the same stake for denying that the sun revolved around the earth, as taught in the Bible. To anyone brought up to regard mythology as symbol instead of fact, however—the curious literal-mindedness both of Occidental champions of supernatural revelation and of their atheistic challengers cannot but appear as a childish affair.

So the Western rejection of old cosmological conceptions and of the idea of immanent justice is not to be read as simply evolutionary progress. The modern view represents an angry reaction to a ridiculous and fact-defying explanation of the world. In his Introduction to Lange's *History of Materialism,* Bertrand Russell put the matter well:

> Historically, we may regard materialism as a system of dogma set up to combat orthodox dogma. As a rule, the materialistic dogma has not been set up by men who loved dogma, but by men who felt that nothing less definite would enable them to fight the dogmas they disliked. They were in the position of men who raise armies to enforce peace. Accordingly we find that, as ancient orthodoxies disintegrate, materialism more and more gives way to scepticism. At the present day, the chief protagonists of materialism are certain men of science in America and certain politicians in Russia, because it is in those two countries that traditional theology is still powerful. [Russell wrote this in 1925, but the main sense of his comment still holds.]

What is now becoming apparent is the fact that a measured skepticism, a wary withdrawal from any and all conceptions of the meaning of the world, will not support human life. Academic abstraction from the commitment of faith, civilized revulsion from its ruthless political substitutes, sophisticated rejection of philosophical metaphysics—these attitudes, while embodying critical maturity, turn the world over to a policy of drift and to the shallow expedients of improvisation. A kind of cultural paralysis results when men at the head of affairs feel no response in themselves to the sacred bonds of life. And increasingly, the people at large experience an ominous sense of pursuing their lives on the brink of an abyss.

The improvisations intended to provide order to society increasingly reveal their mechanistic inhumanity. The indifference of our judicial system to the individual reality of its victims is illustrated by a remark of Dr. Frederic Wertham, a psychiatrist, after receiving a letter from a man who had been sentenced to a total of 139 years in Sing Sing prison. He was immediately transferred to a hospital for the criminally insane, and had been institutionalized for ten years when he wrote to Dr. Wertham, telling about the care he was giving to a sparrow that had lost its foot through frostbite. The psychiatrist commented:

> Ever since I got that letter I have been unable to dismiss the question from my mind: Did society ever show as much concern for sick Robert Irwin as he showed for a sick sparrow?

A writer in the *Christian Century* (Oct. 28, 1958) provides a perspective on the scene in which modern Western religion is supposed to exercise its benevolent influence:

> Radio, television, cinema, magazines and newspapers, paperback books . . . create the value patterns from which churches have scant opportunity to redeem men. These media are thoroughly secularized, even though they participate in the revival of religious interest and share the current religious "kick." But, as spokesmen of the popular revival itself are quick to point out, if one subtracts the expected article on a religious subject from a mass-circulation magazine, or the once-a-week network bout with religious issues from the rest of its calendar for television or radio: would one be able from the subject matter of what is left to say that religion or specifically evangelical Christianity—in any sense informs or once did inform our national culture? When these media are given over to the churches an embarrassment results, usually a pious overlay of secular values is presented.

Here is clear evidence of vacuum, supporting the recent suggestion of Gregory Armstrong that modern man exists "in the throes of a kind of nihilism." This writer continues: "Our whole society waits without any genuine expectation, in this time of science and the cold war when everything conspires to convince people of their insignificance, for some deliverance from its uncertain condition." People are waiting, he adds, "for something which can assume the role of the religions of the past, for something which can orient them in the modern world and for something which can make the fact of their humanity meaningful once more."

Returning to the question of what caused the breakdown of faith—the great transformation of which Prof. Redfield spoke—there is one thing further to be said. Science has been not only an iconoclast force in relation to materialized religion. It has also removed personality from the idea of natural cause. Modern man is simply unable to believe any more in the personifications of the forces of nature. You might say that it has given religion an opportunity to become "pure," in the sense of returning to those primeval longings for unity as the first data of religious experience, and to seek understanding and satisfaction of them in more appropriate terms. Further, you might say that science is itself a phenomenon of the increasing self-consciousness of human beings—that it is an effect, and not really a cause, of the changing attitudes of human beings toward nature and themselves. Viewed negatively, and in the context of an aimless and largely disintegrating culture, the change might be called massive *alienation* from all familiar sources of faith and confidence. But looking at the qualities of the thoughtful men of our time, there is reason to understand the change as also a heightening of self-consciousness, a slowly increasing sense of being human, of being able to stand apart from the modifications of history, from the forms of religious symbolism, the claims of political identity, and from even the agony of loneliness which arises out of growing psychological independence.

Where does alienation take us? It takes us either to some more fundamental kind of union, or to isolation and death. Human beings cannot live without the sacred bonds. We have to know and believe in some kind of unity; we have to move, by the deepest intent of our lives, toward some ideal reconciliation, some resolving fulfillment. If this movement, this ultimate yearning, is frustrated, the conatus of life itself turns into channels of hostility and self-defeat, and then, at the climaxes of history, instead of flowering, we get nihilist men of the Terror—the Netchayevs, the Lenins (with their *epigoni,* the Stalins), and twisted madmen like Hitler who know how to fan desperation into wild *Götterdämmerung* flames of universal destruction.

The sacred bonds exist. What changes is our awareness of them, our reading of their meaning. You could say that the entire meaning of human life is locked up in our understanding of those bonds—of what they bind and what they set free.

What of religion? Is it not manifest that *men* make religions, and remake them or cast them

away? Religion is never anything more than a reading or a misreading of the sacred bonds. And science, in its best sense, has been a brave attempt to trap the truths of religion in a strait jacket of objectivity. But what truth we gain of the sacred bonds comes from subtle intimations of our own consciousness at those rare moments when that consciousness stretches out to include universal dimensions. There is a sense in which institutional religions are only overheard echoes of the vision of other men—religion for beggars, thieves, and the frightened, who cannot believe their own hearts.

The disenchanted, alienated man is a man who has to go back into the world to hear and see for himself. What else is there for him to do? He cannot remain in the limbo of universal rejection. He cannot rest between heaven and earth, like a broken cloud. To be a man is indeed to stand apart, to be forever questioning with a divine discontent every settled notion of the meaning of his life. But it is also to go back into the thick of things with his new awareness, his undeceived eye. He is now his own man; he has become free; and by becoming free he knows at last, beyond equivocation, something of the unspoken meaning of the sacred bonds.

REVIEW

COMPARATIVE RELIGIOUS STUDY—BUDDHISM

THE first of a series on *Great Religions of Modern Man* (published by Washington Square Press, 1963) begins with an excellent discussion of Buddhism by the editor, Richard A. Gard. (Dr. Gard is Lecturer in Buddhist Studies at Yale University.) Like Huston Smith's popular one-volume study, *The Religions of Man,* this series should encourage philosophical discussion in a nonsectarian atmosphere. The problem in comparative religious study is plainly that of penetrating the forms, symbols and rituals and finding something of universal psychological meaning.

Dr. Gard opens with a historical sketch, "The Buddhist Point of View," and begins with these paragraphs:

> Conceived in Asia, Buddhism is an historic expression of a universal human ideal. It offers any individual or society a voluntary way of thought and conduct, based upon an analysis of conditioned existence, dependent upon supreme human effort, and directed toward the realization of freedom in perfect existence.
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> As a way of life, Buddhism has been variously understood, followed, and expounded by its adherents, and variously studied, interpreted, and described by non-Buddhists. Ethnic traits and social customs, subjective interests and partial knowledge, and many other factors have influenced the development of Buddhist beliefs and practices and thus condition an understanding of the nature of Buddhism by all concerned.
>
> In its historical development and geographical expansion—in twenty-two Asian languages—Buddhism has been designated in several ways. The Theravada Buddhists in South and Southeast Asia traditionally speak of, and live in, the Buddha Sasana. The Pali term *sasana* means "teaching, doctrine, discipline, religion" and "is perhaps the nearest equivalent of modern expression, Buddhism. In its developed sense, it denotes a System. It has a socio-religious content and is used as a term of delimitation, with a touch perhaps of communal consciousness too,—'within the *sasana*' meaning 'within the Buddhist system of faith and its rule of living'." (Sukumar Dutt: *The Buddha and Five After-Centuries.)* Hence, the Theravada conception of Buddhism connotes an emphasis upon community spirit and order in life. The Mahayana Buddhists in East Asia and elsewhere customarily refer to the Buddha Dharma in Sanskrit (cf. Buddha Dhamma in Pali, also used by the Theravadins), Fo-chiao in Chinese, Bukkyo in Japanese, Pulgyo in Korean, or Phat-Giao in Vietnamese, all meaning "the Teaching of the Buddha," while Chos in Tibetan signifies the Dharma or simply "the religion." Thus the Mahayana conception of Buddhism embodies an emphasis on doctrinal guidance in the conduct of life.

Most provocative in what would otherwise be a merely descriptive passage is the unspoken comparison with the bloody and fanatic divisiveness shown by the history of Western religion. There is a sense in which Buddhists have always possessed the "ecumenical" spirit, and the northern and southern devotees have recently approached each other, in world convocation, not so much out of a desire to de-emphasize differences as from a perception of a common teaching of "karma" as the Law of Life.

Never has the regulation of personal morality by coercive means been a part of the Buddhist tradition, either northern or southern. The Sangha (monastery or Buddhist community) may be variously burdened with disciplines and rituals for the disciples, but it is supposed to be understood that the disciplines are self-imposed—that they relate to the individual's own need for preparing for further enlightenment. According to the *Dhamma-dharma,* the collective existence of a monastery or community, including what a Westerner would call its "political" structure, is bound to be imperfect. The community, like the individual, is not only subject to change, but will evidence maturity by welcoming constructive alterations in attitude and practice. As Dr. Gard puts it, this "metaphysical view is the basis for a conception of change in society and a Buddhist interpretation of history."

Dr. Gard's summary of Buddhism indicates many ways in which the followers of Gautama

could always have laid claim to what we now call "sociological insights," as well as those of a psychological and devotional nature. What, then, is "morality" in the terms of Buddhist thought? It is, for each one, a personal degree of sensitivity to the need for blending the various elements of his own being. The first step involves the endeavor to attain "right views and aspirations," but it is never imagined that "right views" can be obtained without the development of analytic knowledge. Disciplines of speech and action, which fulfill the obligations of the moment, are meant to "culminate in right energy, concentration and meditation in which the dynamic forces of psyche reach their greatest potentiality." Dr. Gard concludes by presenting the idea of the "spiral" of continuous evolution for the individual soul, and by explaining what is meant by the Buddhist emphasis that "knowledge" is superior to "morality"—that is, morality as defined by the community or any Buddhist canon:

> Morality has no meaning or value without knowledge. Therefore knowledge is placed before morality. Concentration on the other hand without morality is like a house without foundation. Morality is the discipline in the outer life on which concentration, the discipline of the inner life, is built up. Morality thus has to precede concentration. Concentration again is of no value in itself; it is an instrument for the attainment of insight and wisdom which in its turn produces a higher form of morality and concentration until by this spiral-like progression (in which the same elements reappear on each higher stage in greater intensity) Bodhi or enlightenment is attained. On the first step Panna is not more than an intellectual attitude, based on investigation and reflection. On the corresponding higher step it is wisdom based on the experience of meditation (inner vision) and in the last two stages it is enlightenment as the true nature of a Tathagata. These two highest stages correspond to the factors of enlightenment and to those faculties and forces which form their basis.

The Buddhist-engendered feeling of universal tolerance, in contrast to many other religious traditions, did not result from a final sifting down or clashing of exclusive beliefs. The root of universality in attitude, which every form of Buddhism has in some measure expressed, is based, as Dr. Gard shows, on the belief that *all* beings can attain the freedom and good will which understanding brings.

COMMENTARY
THE ISLANDS AND THE SEA

IT is a fact of extreme interest, and one not easily explained, that a sense of widening dissolution—even of going through "the throes of a kind of nihilism," as Gregory Armstrong says—has come to pervade much of the modern world during the years when the signs and indices of material progress have reached an all-time high. And it is true enough, as Dixon Gayer was quoted as saying in last week's lead article, that the "opportunity for education is unequalled" in the United States, and that, for all our complaints, there is also extraordinary freedom to do as one pleases.

Not everyone, of course, *feels* the loss of direction, the aimlessness which so largely affects the intellectual community, and those who do feel it may sometimes wonder at their own alienation from a world so filled with material comforts and mechanical conveniences. It is becoming apparent that new factors of sensibility are beginning to play a part in human life. Not only are the intelligent members of the affluent society recognizing that there is something seriously wrong with arrangements which heap so much bounty on a comparative few. This guilt is present, but beyond that is a deeper ill which bespeaks a kind of starvation in the midst of plenty, and a profound sense of human failure which has only indirect connection with the surfeit of material good fortune.

There are probably dozens of attempts to explain this strange situation, but the one that seems to fit best, here, is a passage from a recent book by Harold Searles, a practicing psychiatrist:

> It is my conviction that there is within the human individual a sense of *relatedness to his total environment,* that this relatedness is one of the transcendently important facts of human living, and that if he tries to ignore its importance to himself he does so at peril to his psychological well-being. . . . By "relatedness" I mean a sense of intimate kinship, a psychological commitment to the structural relationship which exists between man and his nonhuman environment.

It is at least possible that we have in this statement a kind of empirical testament to the reality of the sacred bonds. The language is different; what Dr. Searles says has little resemblance to the vocabulary of traditional religion; yet he is dealing, quite plainly, with values that were once embodied in ancient pantheistic faiths. His terms, you might say, are functional; and he is concerned with "health" rather than with what are familiarly referred to as "spiritual" objectives.

But out of such formulations may come the recognition that the verbalization of the idea of spiritual fulfillment has in many cases turned into an actual barrier to that sense of "kinship" of which Dr. Searles speaks. How does a man get such a feeling? One thing seems sure; he needs to get it before he presumes to *name* it.

The naming of the experience of transcendence, and then taking the name for the reality—a kind of casual blasphemy—is surely an instance of what Dr. Maslow calls "de-religionizing," a process which results whenever there is the attempt to limit the idea of the Good, or the Highest, to some particular set of symbols.

But how would a man go about generating in himself the subtle threads of an alliance with the world and the life about him?

What a question!

It is the sort of question Tolstoy asked himself when on the verge of suicide, and at the peak of his career. There are of course suggestions to be made; some of them old, some of them new; but none of them as good as the one a man might devise himself, since sooner or later he will *have* to stand alone before this threshold and find his own way.

Still, there ought to be some help somewhere. If there is, it will no doubt be found in the examples of men who became convinced that this penetration of the rind of existence, this hallowing of all the stuffs and substances and all the forms of intelligence in the world, has to be done by each one for himself. Such men never pretend to give "answers"; but there is a mode about their lives that can be examined, and common qualities, leading to common activities, that can be understood.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE "I AM ME" EXPERIENCE

A LEAD article of this title in the (Winter, 1964) *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry,* by Herbert Spiegelberg, serves as a focal point for a good deal of reflection. The spontaneous and almost mystical discovery of one's Self as a center of consciousness—able to create and initiate, as well as respond to external situations—clearly relates, for instance, to Abraham Maslow's distinction between a "self-actualizing" person and one who is "deficiency" motivated. Also, during the unpredictable unfoldment of the self-actualizing process, one's sense of solitary but real selfhood is accompanied by a corresponding development of empathy for others. (In *Motivation and Personality,* Dr. Maslow writes that "self-actualizing people are intra-individual [and] tend to find satisfaction within themselves," yet adds that "self-actualizing people have a heightened feeling for mankind—an identification with and sympathy for other people.")

A passage in Erich Fromm's *Psychoanalysis and Religion* similarly links psychology, philosophy and religion. Dr. Fromm writes that "an attitude of oneness not only in oneself but with all life [is *not*] one in which the uniqueness and individuality of the self are denied and the experience of self weakened." He continues:

> This sense is simultaneously the fullest experience of individuality and of its opposite; it is not so much a blending of the two as a polarity from whose tension religious experience springs. It is an attitude of pride and integrity and at the same time of a humility which stems from experiencing oneself as but a thread in the texture of the universe.

Bertrand Russell once confessed himself puzzled by his young son's insistence that *he* as the "I-am-me" must *always* have existed. Since this (to Russell) primitive conviction can hardly arise from "continuity of consciousness" in the usual sense, it is either ridiculous or profoundly important. Prof. Spiegelberg, in the *Existential Psychology* article, is apparently tilling a bit of soil in this field. He begins:

> The present study owes its origin to a long-standing interest in a personal experience which I have found strangely neglected by both philosophy and psychology. Its most spontaneous expression is the seemingly trivial sentence "I am me." I submit that especially in the context of its actual occurrence it is the outgrowth of a peculiar amazement, a vertiginous feeling which is particularly acute in childhood but by no means restricted to it. It differs significantly from the mere everyday awareness of selfhood or individuality as signified by the use of the pronoun "I." For the I-am-me experience involves a peculiar centripetal movement not to be found in the ordinary outward turn of our "I"-consciousness or even in the simple statement "I am."

Prof. Spiegelberg explains his own interest:

> My own stake in this field is primarily and ultimately philosophical in nature. My intrusion into empirical psychology had no other goal than to ascertain the spread of an experience which otherwise may seem to be completely private and hence not sufficiently common ground for philosophical discussion. Once this can be taken as established, the task of philosophical elucidation and interpretation begins. For the phenomenon itself is far from simple and transparent. In fact, the very formula "I-am-me," which seemed to be most common and most characteristic for it, is more than ambiguous. At first sight it appears to be a downright tautology. Yet for anyone who has been in the throes of the original experience the formula expresses anything but a truism.

The I-am-me experience in childhood has been variously expressed by psychologically inclined essayists and novelists. Writing on Baudelaire, Jean-Paul Sartre remarks that "everyone in his childhood has been able to observe the accidental and shattering apparition of the consciousness of self." Another characteristic passage is furnished by Richard Hughes in *A High Wind in Jamaica,* where a ten-year-old girl reflects upon the sudden awareness of herself:

> She suddenly realized who she was.
>
> There is little reason that one can see why it should not have happened to her five years earlier, or

even five later; and none, why it should have come that particular afternoon.

She stopped dead, and began looking over all of her person which came within the range of her eyes. She began examining the skin of her hands with the utmost care for it was *hers.* She slipped a shoulder out of the top of her frock, and having peeped in to make sure she really was continuous under her clothes, shrugged it up to touch her cheek. The contact of her face and the warm bare hollow of her shoulder gave her a comfortable thrill, as if it was the caress of some kind friend. But whether the feeling came to her through her cheek or her shoulder, which was the caresser and which the caressed, that no analysis could tell her.

Once fully convinced of this astonishing fact, that she was now Emily Bas-Thornton (why she inserted the "now" she did not know, for she certainly imagined no transmigrational nonsense of having been anyone else before), she began seriously to reckon its implications.

First, what agency had so ordered it that out of all the people in the world who she might have been, she was this particular one, this Emily; born in such-and-such a year out of all the years in Time, and encased in this particular rather pleasing little casket of flesh? Had she chosen herself, or had God done it?

Secondly, why had all this not occurred to her before? She had been alive for over ten years, now, and it had never once entered her head. . . . How could Emily have gone on being Emily for ten years, without once noticing this apparently obvious fact?

In the course of Prof. Spiegelberg's discussion he points out that there is a clear difference between the "I-am-me" experience and an awareness of self-identity which depends upon relating the successive phases of a person's life.

The "I-am-me" experience, whether sudden or gradually developed, has to do with a very different aspect of personal identity: the sense of "being it," of being the inescapable very me-myself, right now and here. As such the experience has no primary reference to past and future phases in its development nor to other comparable selves. This is, as it were, an experience of self-identity in depth rather than in temporal length and social breadth.

A passage in Herbert Fingarette's *The Self in Transformation* shows that perception of continuity in consciousness may be something more than the recollection of past events and circumstances. Each man, says Dr. Fingarette, is in a sense a "veritable community of selves," but what he feels as "I-am-me" can be regarded as something *sui generis*—not the same as the sum of all that has happened *to* him. A passage illustrates:

We become responsible agents when we can face the moral continuity of the familiar, conscious self with other strange, "alien" psychic entities—our "other selves." We should perhaps speak of an "identity" with other selves rather than a "continuity." For we must accept responsibility for the "acts" of these other selves, we must see these acts as *ours.* As Freud said of our dream lives, they are not only in me but act "from out of me as well."

The psychoanalytical quest for autonomy reveals the Self in greater depth; it reveals it as a *community* of selves. The genuinely startling thing in this quest is not simply the discovery that these other, archaic selves exist, nor even that they have an impact in the present. . . . What startles is the detailed analysis of the peculiarly close, subtle and complex texture of the threads which weave these other selves and the adult conscious self into a single great pattern. It is a special, startling kind of intimacy with which we deal.

FRONTIERS

Where Morality Begins

IT is a pleasant fact growing out of the extreme provincialism of big-nation populations that youthful workers for peace in the United States are likely to realize for the first time in their lives that Canada is more than a place-name or a source of minor headlines, from reading a copy of *Our Generation Against Nuclear War,* published in Quebec. It began in 1961, making this statement of purpose:

> Our generation must be firmly committed to putting an end to war once and for all. The values, sentiments, and thinking of our generation are different from that generation of people that is bent on war because of its crippled thinking. . . .
>
> "What we now need to discover in the social realm is the moral equivalent to war, something heroic that will speak to men as universally as war does, and yet will be as compatible with their spiritual selves as war has proven itself to be incompatible." (William James.) This must be the ethic of our generation, the goal, if our lives are to be meaningful. To this direction our journal is dedicated. It requires a re-examination of our present social structure, our thoughts, our economic interaction, our ethics. To this goal we propose to direct the best creative and knowledgeable thinking of our time.

The October 1964 number (Vol. 4, No. 2) of this quarterly is a Supplement on peace research. It soon becomes plain that the editors are determined to keep "peace research" from becoming a captive project for the academic mind. In a survey of existing activities in this field in the United States, Thomas Hayden and Richard Flacks observe:

> The very seat of nonchalance in the peace movement is in the university. No matter how much increased concern there is today, charges of inadequacy must be made. Too many men tailor their research in terms of the source of available money; or they simulate political behavior they have never experienced; they become more fascinated over the intricacy of models than with filling the gap between their model and their privately-uttered goals. They are, on the whole, unhurried men who have cast off apathy without ending their powerlessness. They manoeuver like politicians, under an ivory-tower facade, and have little sense of any potential role as critics loyal only to the truth. Paul Goodman writes cogently of this when he describes a "political pathology" that makes "revolutionary alternatives inconceivable to the social scientists. With the best will in the world, they cannot see any course of power outside the established power, so there is no point in wishing or talking in other terms. . . ."

The writers quote from Paul William Livant's report on the 1962 Arms Control Symposium at Ann Arbor:

> There was a strong feeling at the Conference that here was a new field; the prospects for money were good, and the participants took the obvious step, they made the field into a Profession, and who qualifies? . . .
>
> The first job of scientists in this field is to create a community to bring about those real changes so we may enrich our starved experience and grow our abstractions on soil fertile enough to sustain them. . . . But ... this means taking up common cause with those women in Washington, with all sorts of lay people, with members of "the enemy" to create that community. This is just what is threatening to . . . I should say . . . ninety per cent of the conferees.

This paper by Hayden and Flacks makes a number of positive proposals which relate community support to peace efforts and outline areas needing investigation.

Our Generation Against Nuclear War is a substantial publication (this issue has 100 pages), and the coverage of peace research is imaginative and diverse. Here we should like to take note of an article by Kenneth Boulding, an economist who directs the Center for Research in Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan. In this paper, "Needs and Opportunities in Peace Research and Peace Education," he says that the outline of "something which looks like an adequate theory of peace" is "beginning to show." It is clear, he continues, that—

> the problem of stable peace lies mainly in the province of "threat systems," that is, attempts to organize society by means of threats and counter-threats. A weapon, for instance, is only significant in so far as it is a part of the threat system, and the

whole problem of arms races and disarmament, therefore, clearly falls into this category. The present crisis of the international system is a result of the collapse of a traditional threat system (the world system of unilateral defense) as a further result of an extraordinary change in the technology of destruction. Threat systems, however, are very little understood even though they are very widespread in social life and a concerted attack on them by theorists, mathematicians, small-group experimentalists, simulators, historians, and so on, is badly needed.

A little later, he says:

If the threat system is to be reduced to tolerable proportions, substitutes for the threat as an organizer of social life must be found. We find these partly in the exchange system and partly in what I have elsewhere called the "integrative system." Exchange systems we know a good deal about, for this is a subject matter of economics, though even here we need to do much more reality testing, especially at the level of current ideological struggle. We know very little, however, about the integrative system, that is, how people develop such things as respect, empathy, and affection. We do not even know very much about how people develop a disintegrative system of hatred and prejudice.

Well, for a beginning at this sort of research, investigators might read carefully Jessamyn West's article, "Violence," in *Redbook* for January, 1963. This author, whose recent novel, *South of the Angels,* shows deep understanding of the roots of violence in an agricultural community of California, has this to say about the word "violence" as a euphemism:

. . . today there exists a conspiracy of double talk—a conspiracy to dehumanize the victims and whitewash the process by which they are erased. Death on the screen is so easy a matter. The fast draw, the quick collapse. We are never permitted to see very much of the man who is going to die. We must not learn to care for him, to feel that *his* death matters; otherwise our enjoyment of his violent end will be weakened. We must never see him as a fellow who planted radishes, made kites for his kids or patted a dog on the head. . . . By dehumanizing the action (real persons don't die, only the "bad men"), by never giving the proper name to what we see, are we blinded to reality? Is a generation of Americans being prepared for the routine and casual killings of concentration camps and gas chambers, of death marches and saturation bombings, of mass evacuations and 100-megaton explosions? Violence is a big word with sonorous syllables. Do we ever see behind it the small boy with his face blown away? . . .

There are many intelligent thoughtful people who believe that there is too much violence on our movie and television screens and that it is particularly bad for children to see it. But what is really wrong is that the children do *not* see it. They see only the pleasure of landing the blow without ever imagining the pain of receiving it, without even imagining that the one who receives the blow is capable of suffering pain.

The TV screen wherein only bad men die, and then neatly and with dispatch, dulls and kills the imagination—and whatever destroys the imagination limits and ultimately destroys man.

Miss West illustrates what she means by "imagination" by recalling what happened when the dapper young William Penn, having become a Quaker, asked George Fox what he should do about his sword—part of the proper dress of any seventeenth-century gentleman.

"Wear thy sword," George Fox is said to have replied, "as long as thee can, William."

Miss West continues:

Penn had no doubt hoped for an easier way out of his dilemma—a Quaker rule that said, "Swords strictly forbidden." That is not the Quaker way. A man's morality begins in his imagination—or he has none. The man who acts by rule is not moral, only legal. George Fox knew that as long as a man had a sword in his heart he would in an emergency find one, or a likely substitute, in his hand.

This writer concludes with a comment directly related to Mr. Boulding's research recommendation:

We must unbuckle our small personal swords. We must learn to feel, through the use of the imagination, that there is no inconsequential suffering. It is a small beginning. It may be too little and too late. But the time is now and this as individuals is what we can do. It is the way not only to survive, but to being able to put survival (if we are lucky enough to achieve it) to some good use.