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EDUCATION IN A WORLD OF REVOLUTION

SINCE we have learned that symbolism plays such a vital part in human communication, I should like to connect the ancient Greek legend of the "Slaying of the Minotaur" with the undertaking of education. You will remember that Theseus, chosen to fight the Minotaur, went into the labyrinth from which no one previously had escaped, and that, with the aid of Ariadne's thread, he was able not only to slay the Minotaur, but to retrace his steps and emerge victorious. I would like to identify Ariadne's thread with education and the Cretan labyrinth with the life of contemporary man. I would like to have you see the labyrinth as having two dimensions, one an internal or psychological labyrinth, the other an external or social labyrinth. Further, I would like you to associate our students with Theseus and see them in the heroic cast. If our students negotiate with some success the inner, psychological labyrinth, and the social labyrinth without, they may then become heroic figures—heroic in that they have gained a hard-wrought innocence born of pain and wisdom to replace the original innocence born of experience and dependency.

A more familiar myth tends to symbolize the birth of man into the paradise of irresponsibility, of being totally cared for, of effortless security—the paradise, if you will, of the womb or the internalized Garden of Eden. Life may then be seen as a passage from the womb of Eden to the realistic Eden of life that only the new Adam can discover: the Eden of responsibility, the Eden born of pain and of the slow process of self-maturation.

Now, then, the question is, how does man evolve from his original garden of irresponsibility to the more mature garden of independence, responsibility, empathy, and personal meaning? How can Education (Ariadne's thread) in a world of revolution help man to negotiate the labyrinth of self and the labyrinth of society?

Let us start with the self, with the "me." What have the more recent thrusts in the fields of psychology, philosophy and anthropology to tell us today about man? What do we know now about ourselves that perhaps we felt only intuitively before? Well, there are a few things that we are relatively certain about. We know for example of man's ambivalence, of his paradoxical nature. We know that no man is all good or all bad. We know of the close and continuous intertwining of antagonistic feelings. We know that love and hate are sides of the same coin. We know that there are at least two layers or two levels of good and bad—that which society deems good and that which we feel in our hearts to be good—so that sometimes these values correspond and sometimes they are unalterably opposed. For example, my heart may tell me that I must never kill, but my country may say that the time has come to murder in the cause of national sovereignty. Again, my heart may tell me that all people should have equal access to the world's food, but I may have carefully learned or been taught to view hungry people as lazy people. I know as well that I should love my brother, and that all men are brothers, but I may have learned from my church of the "natural superiority" of men of my own faith.

We know, then, that we are neither all good nor bad, that our emotions shift, often from moment to moment, and that we cannot idealize either ourselves or others in any final sense, but that we can only work at a more consistent kind of self-emergence.

What else do we know? We know that man lives in both a conscious world and an unconscious world. We know that often his conscious strivings are incompatible with his

unconscious feelings. We know that part of the dilemma of human interactions is the discovery of means to synthesize or correlate these unconscious impulses of fear and hope with our conscious desires and conscious perceptions. We know also that on the one hand man seeks knowledge and, on the other, he is afraid of it. He wants to be more like God, yet knowledge makes him aware of his frailties and his failures, so that each step forward is dogged by the insecurity of past and future uncertainties. This tells us that growth is not easy, that it is painful.

What else do we know? We know in no small measure (through the contributions of Freud and the Neo-Freudians) that man from the beginning requires an environment of warm acceptance and that when this environment is not given him with some consistency he tends to be negative toward life—distrustful, suspicious. He may even hide his suspicions from himself, in the unconscious mind. Here, below the level of consciousness, we file those feelings that are uncomfortable and painful. Thus we create an illusion of happiness, and where there is little real happiness the illusion is desperately needed. We know that personal life is in large measure made up of feelings, often unconscious, which create our dispositions and attitudes. These feelings come from the original relationship with adults (especially parents and teachers).

These steps along the way lend themselves to the development of what we might call either a positively or a negatively oriented personality: A positive personality engenders trust and understanding and has maturing convictions and interests; it is a personality whose ego expands, not at the expense of others, but through healthy relationships with others.

The new knowledge is promising, but may also be threatening because the old values, the simple values of how to bring up a child—of what to say and do with finality in order to produce certain traits—now appear terribly naïve. So with new knowledge come new threats, in the form of new demands to relate to one another with more openness, less condemnation, less judgment and categorizing. The eternal labyrinth of self awaits every man. None of us can remove the pain of growth, the problems of developing adequate self-images. Who can dispense with doubts of how worthy a person he is in the eyes of others and in the eyes of his parents and himself? Each is confronted with "the human predicament" and each will be called upon to respond in his own way.

It is important not to see ourselves as being unique because we are a part of a revolutionary age. Yet it is important to understand the nature of the revolution—a revolution which has always been a part of man's struggle to conquer the inequalities that plague him. We cannot avoid living in a revolutionary context, though one may avoid, to some degree, active participation. However, the age of revolution is upon us all and I would suggest that our problem here is not one of avoidance but of how to take part with dignity and a sense of challenge and joy.

Before we can enlist our efforts, however, we have to see what sense revolutionary trends or issues make to us, especially to those of us who dare to call ourselves educators or teachers. I would suggest that our age of revolution centers in the following eight critical areas of social existence: (1) the *issue of equality,* now dramatized by the civil rights movement; (2) the *issue of war,* as focused by nuclear weaponry systems; (3) *the issue of economics,* being sharpened by automation; (4) the *issue of progress,* opened up by scientific research and developing technology; (5) the *issue of national sovereignty,* defined by the growing need for a united nations; (6) the *issue of human nature,* as now revealed by recent investigations into the psychology of self and self-emergence; (7) the *issue of values,* made crucial by the breakdown of traditional ideas of right and wrong and the breakdown of trust in traditional forms of external authority; and (8) the *issue of alienation,*

becoming all-pervasive through the prevailing atmosphere and mood of estrangement and depersonalization.

Each of these areas, of course, has revolutionary implications and should be evaluated in some detail, if we are to develop that climate of opinion so necessary to appropriate shifts in attitudes.

Equality: The issue of equality is not new. It started, whether we admit it or not, with the first man who assumed certain social, economic or political privileges over his fellow man. It will not be settled until these privileges are more equitably distributed, more profoundly justified or are proved, as I suspect they will be proved, to be unnecessary for the management and growth of the good society. But we have to be careful today in that we do not imagine equality will have been achieved simply through a workable process of racial integration. The problem is much deeper than that; equality obviously will never be achieved so long as there is any kind of discrimination, not only white against white or white against black, but discrimination of any kind between and within the races, such as: social discrimination, economic discrimination, and, perhaps the most insidious of all, intellectual discrimination. It is in the area of intellectual discrimination that the schools, through the "indiscriminate" use of an outmoded and unjustifiable grading system, contribute to one of the most damaging forms of inequality, namely, psychological inequality. Here, if there is evil or wrong, it exists in unbelievable magnitudes. Inequality can be and is continually created, not only by conditions of racial and economic privilege, but through conditions that make for intellectual privilege. The schools have a great deal to do to right wrongs that pervade every corridor and classroom at this level of equality.

War: It is now accepted that a major war probably means the death of all. The seriousness of this is hard to realize. For if, for a million years or so, man has been conditioned to believe he can bring about right with might, and is then abruptly informed that this will no longer work, he feels cast into a blinding dead-end. A million years of conditioning suddenly becomes inappropriate for our times. Might can no longer make right—that is, if it is followed to the ultimate extreme it can only make for madness, a position that we are now in, since the pushing of a button destroys us all and gives victory to no one. This is a clear part of the revolution, the urgent search for new and non-violent attitudes regarding final action when we feel righteously trespassed upon. So, the attitude of peace now has no alternatives, certainly a new condition for man. This is part of the revolution—the profound realization that the only alternative to all-out war is all-out peace.

Economics: In the area of economics, we run into the problem of automation, causing us to modify a hard-won, long-developing attitude centered around the fact that until now man found meaning through his work. He often found ultimate reason for his existence by his earning power and the product he produced. With the movement toward automation, man is being forced to re-evaluate the meaning for his existence in non-economic terms. The time, it seems, will soon be upon us when young men of tomorrow, when the new Adam, will have to find meaning outside his ability to produce material things, outside his ability to earn money. The time is coming when man will have to stand for something other than what he produces for material gain.

Science: The concept of scientific and technological advance as an automatic good is now open to serious question. The wedding of science with technology has been an expensive marriage, indeed. The price of progress is congestion, dependency on mechanical things, the exclusion of interpersonal relationships in favor of machines, the spread of air-pollution, the reduction of the fresh water supply, the pollution of all waters, fresh and salt, and the slow and cancerous exploitation of all that is natural in

man's environment. Scientific progress, as such, is no longer *ipso facto* a positive value. Our need now is for careful control of all that is chemical, scientific, or technological; that science produces it, whether it is an insecticide, a washing machine or "Mr. Clean," does not make it good. Each of these has its negative influences and effects on the individual, the family, the community, the nation and the world. Progress that opposes man's psychic need to relate to a person, as a person, not as a thing; progress that destroys man's biological roots with nature, has to be seriously questioned and controlled. The revolution here is that science is not what we originally thought.

Sovereignty: The America which was once "always right" can no longer afford any such luxury of thinking. Just as any other nation, the United States now is forced by the shrinkage of distance to consider the effects of its actions and needs on the pluralistic world of nations in which we now live. Not only do we have a pluralistic world within our shores; a larger one is without our shores, and the welfare of both has to be carefully considered when any act is planned. The revolution here is the demand for a shift from national sovereignty to international sovereignty, from appeasement to "accommodation," from isolation to unification.

Human Nature: The sixth issue, of human nature, calls again for a revolutionary shift in thinking. Man, traditionally seen as selfish, animalistic, greedy, primitive, physiologically or genetically determined, is known to be an amazingly plastic, amazingly dependent organism with extreme sensitivity from birth to the attitudes of others, and deeply responsive, therefore, to the emotional *milieu* in which he has been brought up. Now, rather than emphasizing human nature as the cause of our problems, we are forced to recognize that the psychic and social environment we have created is the source of much of "human nature." We are beginning to see as well the importance of self-value as the chief spur to positive motivation. We are acknowledging the complexity of the human individual and the shallowness of past attempts to describe man in simple and absolute terms. He now is seen less as a "thing" with a certain capacity, and more as an evolving self with limitless potential—a viewpoint which, as you can guess, outmodes the traditional concepts of testing, assumptions about what it is we test, traditional concepts of measurement and what we measure, traditional ideas of intelligence, especially as defined by I.Q.'s. These now seem gross and heavy instruments, inappropriate to the kind of being that we are and are becoming.

Values: The revolution here accompanies the gradual erosion of man's traditional faith in the enlightenment and reason, in the dogmas of the church, in politics and what politics can do, in science and what science can do, and, therefore, it brings the growing realization that somehow or other none of these things, in and of themselves, can give us salvation or truth. The grim fact that nobody can be "told" the truth is dawning heavily upon us, so that the individual is being forced to accept the responsibility for discovering for himself and often within himself the truth, the way, and the value that makes his life meaningful.

Alienation: Finally, the problem of alienation and the loss of the vital relationship of man to man is seen as a dilemma, if not *the* dilemma of our time. The dilemma is tragically exemplified by the non-concern and the uninvolvement of many, many people during moments of crisis. We see this in the silent spectators of death and destruction, the quiet groups, sometimes crowds who watch without involvement the tragic calamities about them. It is this kind of alienation and unconcern that overshadows us today, so that we are forced to look deep within our institutional life to see to what extent we are unwittingly fostering non-concern.

Now, to bring this into focus. What is the Ariadne's thread that education can produce? What might help the student through the labyrinth of self and the labryrinth of society? What are some of the positions that seem worth

experimenting with, in order to facilitate that part of the revolution that seems meaningful to our highest natures? Let me propose the following stance for educators and teachers who choose to be a part of the education of the new Adam.

I suggest that those administrative devices and procedures which make for inequality be carefully evaluated and that, as soon as possible, adequate substitutes be found, or that these devices be dispensed with. Such devices as I.Q.'s, grades, grading systems and marking systems should, it seems to me, be the first to be modified, if not discontinued. I would suggest that the correct posture of the school in dealing with war is to clearly recognize its complete undesirability in a world that cannot survive without peace. In this respect a very minimum effort would be to explode the myth of the bomb shelter and air raid drill. I would suggest that we begin to see education as having very little to do with economic success; that a new kind of non-economic success, pertinent to the needs of each individual, be discovered and worked with; and that teachers and students now talk about success in non-materialistic terms and begin to work out concepts and values that are suggestive of new forms of student success and, therefore, new forms of student motivation.

In the area of science and technology, I would be more concerned, at this time, with the framework in which scientific research and technological advances are used rather than with science for its own sake. I would be more or at least equally concerned with the dangers inherent in the misuse of technology and science than with the search for pure fact.

I would suggest that the school concern itself with a broader concept of patriotism, a patriotism born of the real values of our society in relationship to the immediate need for a united world.

The new psychology of man tells us that we cannot classify in any permanent terms human effort as we see it in the classroom. We can only enlist our services, our gifts, in the reinforcement and the stimulus of all human potential everywhere. Labeling, classifying, grouping, in most of their present forms, are clearly dangerous to the individual.

The open discussion of values is also crucial. In the area of values, we now see that the individual, more than ever, is forced to discover his own sense of right and wrong, if he is to be a man. If he tries not to accept the responsibility of being a man, with its demand for self-discovered beliefs, he has a difficult chore indeed, in a world rampant with inconsistencies. He must look at his parents and his teachers, many of whom have not fought out the struggle for personal values and personal consistency of action. He will see greed on one hand and platitudes for righteousness and charity on the other. He will see that economic competition is emphasized on the one hand and that brotherhood and church on Sunday is emphasized on the other. He sees these inconsistencies and he really has nowhere to turn. He knows deep within himself that the logic of the mind and the freeing of the mind brought about by the enlightenment has not brought truth. He sees a world that is more chaotic and confused than ever before, yet which swears that it is more enlightened. He sees also that on the one hand there appears to be more progress, more space shots, more orbital performances than ever before, while at the same time his world is full of radioactivity, the possibility of total annihilation, and that his diminishing supply of air and drinking water is polluted. As never before, he has now to discover his own sense of right and wrong. As a matter of fact, this awakening individual is really our dearest hope, since it is we who have been unable to provide consistency for ourselves.

The task, then, is to retrace the struggle of man as typified in each generation and through history in the Greek story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Today, we see the child born in security, born into a Garden of Eden, but eventually thrust into a world in which he must

find his own way. This is a strange and complicated world that few of us can even begin to grasp. He not only must discover who he is through his own feeling system, his own feelings of confusion, of hate, fear and despair, of love and hope; he not only must come to terms with his own ambivalence, his own ambiguities, but he must find the way through a society filled with inconsistencies, ridden with dead-ends, and yet with incalculable potential. The task is to renew and revitalize our aid to him as educators. If, with this help, he struggles through in some measure to the light within himself, to the potential within his culture, he may come out a man who has lived with pain, and this is not bad, for a "heart without hurt is hollow." Yes, he may emerge from the labyrinth as a man who, has had pain, who has seen tragedy, who has felt the utter depths of his own despair, but who stands as the new Adam, the new hero. We may have more new Adams in different forms and kinds than ever before, if we do our job well.

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REVIEW
"IS THERE THE EGO?"

IT is not often that one finds a serious argument about the immortality of the soul in the pages of a liberal magazine. But this may happen, apparently, when a philosophically-minded critic like Theodore Roszak encounters a skillful advocate of Christian doctrine such as Denis de Rougement. Two books by de Rougement are under review by Roszak in the *Nation* for Jan. 11. One, *Love Declared* (Beacon paperback), is briefly identified as a series of useful footnotes to de Rougement's *Love in the Western World.* The other, *Dramatic Personages* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston), gets close attention.

The point of this latter book, the reviewer suggests, is a defense of the Western (Christian) doctrine of the immortal soul against what is regarded as the dissolving influence of Oriental (Buddhist) mysticism:

> Using his own "philosophy of the person" (which he considers authentically Christian) and this opposing philosophical yellow peril, he [de Rougement] quixotically divides the world, half and half. Then, to the Christian conception of the person, he traces all things good, including industrial progress; while to the Orient's conception of the "transitory ego" he assigns stagnation and poor hygiene.

Mr. Roszak has some searching comment to offer, but it may be well, before looking at it, to consider the psychological roots of all arguments about the soul and the possibility of its surviving the death of the body. Such arguments always answer either one or the other of two questions, and usually deal with both. The questions are: Is this doctrine true? Is it useful?

Historically, the claim of "certainty" in answering these questions has often been a reactionary phenomenon. The philosophers are usually reticent. In the session with his intimates, before drinking the hemlock, Socrates seems to think that the inward security of a good man in his goodness is more important than theological promises of survival or coming rewards, although it is clear enough that Plato held to the doctrine of palingenesis or rebirth. To avoid making unverifiable dogmas, perhaps, Plato sometimes conveyed this idea of immortality in the form of a myth. The Stoics took the view that a man ought to be above such anxieties. What sort of moral weakling, they argued, would make his decisions for present conduct dependent upon a future state? Rewards and punishments, they held, ought to be irrelevant to a man who knows what is right.

If you skip to eighteenth-century Europe, you find the argument moving around in a very different context. The first aggressive expressions of anti-clerical naturalism are found in the works of La Mettrie and Holbach. Of the two, La Mettrie is the milder. He seems content with a kind of agnosticism in regard to the "truth" of religious doctrines of God and soul. Yet he makes his unbelieving spokesman say:

> If Atheism were universally disseminated, all the branches of religion would be torn up by the roots. Then there would be no more theological wars: there would be no more soldiers of religion, that terrible kind of soldier. Nature, which had been infected by the consecrated poison, would win back her rights and her purity.

La Mettrie counted without seeing the possibility of soldiers of a religion of Atheism—something which much later champions of "scientific truth" also overlooked—but his purpose is plain: Get rid of doctrines which make men kill one another in order to establish their "truth"! Dietrich von Holbach was more explicit:

> Man disdained the study of nature to pursue after phantoms. . . . It is therefore time to seek in nature remedies against the evils into which fanaticism has plunged us. There is but one truth, and it can never harm us. To error are due the grievous fetters by which tyrants and priests everywhere succeed in chaining the nations; from error arose the bondage to which the nations are subject; from error the terrors of religion, which brought about that men mouldered in fear, or fanatically throttled each other for chimeras. From error arose deep-rooted hatred and cruel persecutions, the continual bloodshed and horrid tragedies of which

earth must be made the theatre to serve the interests of heaven.

Soul, according to Holbach, is but the brain in operation, and all moral and intellectual faculties are derived from our sensibility to the impressions from the external world. "The dogma of the immortality of the soul," he says, "has made morality into a science of conjectures, which teaches us nothing at all of the true means to influence mankind. . . . morality and politics might derive advantages from Materialism that the dogma of an immaterial soul can never give them, and which it prevents us even from thinking of."

Obviously, the strength of these arguments lies in the claim that the idea of immortality has no value—worse, it is harmful; the question of the true nature of man—some kind of "machine"—is left to future determination by science. The materialists of the eighteenth century were plainly moral opportunists. Religion is entirely false, and science will soon fill the void of our ignorance. How could they know that science would fill the wrong void, and leave a greater emptiness in human life?

Yet even the Buddha, about whose teaching on immortality there has been much controversy, took a noticeably pragmatic view. When the "wandering monk," Vacchagotta, asked whether or not there was really a (surviving) ego in man, the Teacher remained silent. Later, questioned by Ananda, Buddha explained:

> "If I, Ananda, when the wandering monk Vacchagotta asked me: 'Is there the Ego?' had answered: 'The Ego is,' then that, Ananda, would have confirmed the doctrines of the Samanas and Brahmanas who believe in permanence. [A contrary answer] would have confirmed the doctrine of the Samanas and Brahmanas who believe in annihilation.
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> "If I, Ananda, when the wandering monk Vacchagotta asked me: 'Is there the Ego?' had answered: 'The Ego is,' would that have served my end, Ananda, by producing in him the knowledge: all existences are non-Ego?"
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> "That it would not, sire."
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> "But if I, Ananda, when the wandering monk Vacchagotta asked me: 'Is there not the Ego?' had answered: 'The Ego is not,' then that, Ananda, would only have caused the wandering monk Vacchagotta to be thrown from one bewilderment to another. 'My Ego, did it not exist before? But now it exists no longer!" (Quoted from *The Creed of Buddha* by Edmond Holmes.)

Edward Conze, in *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (Philosophical Library), suggests that the difficulty in understanding the Buddhist teaching on this point lies in the human longing for a kind of survival which has not the stuff of the eternal in it, and is therefore impossible. After a long discussion of the question, Conze writes:

> Mr. John Smith, turned immortal, would not recognize himself at all. He would have lost everything that made him recognizable to himself and to others. And he could be born anew only if he had learned to deny all that clutters up the immortal side of his being—which lies, as the Buddhists would put it, outside his five skandhas—if he would deny all that constitutes his dear little self. Buddhist training consists indeed, in systematically weakening our hold on those things in us which keep us from regaining the immortality we lost when we were born. . . .
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> But . . . it all depends on one's view of the nature of man. Those who regard man as a creature of the earth only, will be inclined to compare this Buddhist yearning for immortality with the snail which leaves its house in order to go on a flying expedition. Those who regard man as an essentially spiritual being will prefer the Buddhist simile of the mountain swans who, when they have left their mountain lake, go from puddle to puddle, without making their home anywhere, until they are back to their true home in the clear waters of the mountain lake.

Well, the one thing that ought not to be done, it seems evident, is to subject so subtle and inward a question to heavy polemical treatment. This would bring only the result predicted by Socrates: "Now there are two classes of persons: one class of those will agree with you and take your words as a revelation; another class to whom they will be utterly unmeaning, and who will naturally deem them to be idle tales, for they see no sort of profit which is to be obtained from them. . . ."

All these considerations, we think, help to frame the concluding portion of Mr. Roszak's review, in which he says:

> The traditional Christian conception of the soul—that irreducible, indestructible atomic particle of uniform identity—is not only something men must struggle to spare from eternal perdition (hence, perhaps, our strenuous fear of death). It is as well something we must constantly and laboriously sweat to isolate from the unitary flow of experience and from the ecological field of nature in which we participate. It is this obsession with keeping the ego concentrated and well-defined, this refusal to recognize that reality is a web of relations that makes all things "members of one another," that vitiates so many of our human and natural relations. . . . What de Rougement does not recognize is the great therapeutic and moral value of the Buddhist critique of the self.

Mr. Roszak also wonders if the strenuous effort of the Western ego to assert itself "against death and nature" may not be in part responsible for the irrational aspects of Western "progress," now so involved, and perhaps "ending," with the invention of "instruments of mass annihilation." Just possibly, our "thrust toward technical mastery of the world was not, from its inception, either sane or life-affirming." The reviewer, in short, finds much of the critical side of Buddhist mysticism useful for reform of the Western idea of the self, although he prefers Western naturalism to the subtler, affirmative doctrines of the East.

COMMENTARY
EMERGING MATURITIES

IF, from Mr. Raebeck's temperate and remarkably complete outline of present-day knowledge of man, we take what he says about the factors which shape human character, and apply it to the problem set in this week's Review, we may be surprised to see how easily our fixed ideas "loosen up."

It soon becomes plain that the greatest gift that the human race has had from any source—divine or terrestrial—is not a "revelation" of truth, but a demonstration of *method* in locating and verifying it.

The greatest hazard in the search for truth, it appears, is the pressure of "group opinion," which may be compounded by the fears and angers of self-righteousness.

When can a man be sure he has got rid of these influences in his thinking?

And will he, once he has reached this hypothetical peak of complete independence of mind, find himself without any positive convictions at all?

This seems unlikely. The people with the most psychological security, on the whole, are those who are not in the least disturbed by whether other people agree with them or not. They stand upon a rock of inward stability. If their friends wonder where this strength comes from, and ask about it, such people do not waste time trying to change the "opinions" of their questioners, but do what they can to illustrate how individual self-reliance may be gained.

Out of this comes a further conclusion. The true opinions of free men are exceedingly difficult to determine. A valid view about the nature of things is not just a proposition that can be verbalized. It is a vista of ordered and connected reality which includes all the private, individual realizations or "becomings" upon which the proposition rests. A man who has some knowledge of this sort will never make glib summaries of what he knows, in the pretense that it can be communicated in words. He will say, instead, what Socrates said, or what Buddha said, to explain his reticence. He will do what he can to make plain, as Mr. Raebeck says, the grim fact that nobody can be "told" the truth, and that each individual must sooner or later "accept responsibility for discovering for himself and often within himself the truth, the way, and the value that makes his life meaningful."

This, surely, is the primary "certainty" in any ultimate human concern. If it is neglected in what is alleged to be an important communication of "truth," the communication itself is probably not worth much attention.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
EDUCATION AND RELIGION

As previously noted here, the hot debates following the Supreme Court decision of 1963 to outlaw "religious instruction" in the public schools have been succeeded by useful and even illuminating dialogues among philosophically-minded educators. While "third force" psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow are evolving a new, nonsectarian language for evaluation of spiritual experience, others have been considering the feasibility of such proposals as those put by Prof. Theodore Brameld—a study of religion which would assure respect for the core of ethical inspiration in all great teachings, and transcend divisiveness. (See MANAS, April 8 and 15, 1964.)

Now, while strongly endorsing the Supreme Court rulings banning prayer and Bible readings from school classrooms, and opposing Congressional attempts to overthrow the court decisions, the American Association of School Administrators has concluded that if the nation's schools are seriously committed to teaching the basic philosophical implications of the Bill of Rights, they will be touching upon what might be called universal religious *values* and diverting attention from the partisanship implicit in many religious practices. An article in the *Phi Delta Kappan* (October, 1964) by Vincent Rogers and Bruce Burnes, titled "Religion in the Classroom—Another Look," points out two situations in need of study and discussion. First, when tests are given to teachers who do not know their answers relate to the "religion in the schools" issue, it is readily disclosed that "sectarian religious concepts *are* often taught to American children at times other than those mentioned above [prayer and Bible reading]. This occurs in the day-by-day, informal situations that so often come up in our classrooms, initiated perhaps by news events and happenings in the everyday lives of children." Secondly, Rogers and Burnes, seeking literature dealing with this subject, found that very little has been published which deals with the infusion of sectarian beliefs in classroom situations—apart from textbook analyses and some studies of religious practices during the Christmas holiday season. In order to approach this unexplored but important area, the authors created a "Classroom Problems Test":

> The test consisted of fifteen hypothetical situations, each built around a child's question. The teacher was asked to describe how she would handle each situation if the question were to be raised in her classroom. Ten of the items were decoys, dealing with classroom cheating, teaching about the United Nations, etc. Interspersed among the decoys were five questions concerning death, the origins of life, and the concept of a supreme being.
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> The test was administered to 133 of the 164 elementary school teachers in a suburban school district adjoining a large midwestern city. Apparently, it fulfilled its basic purpose, *i.e.,* it tested teachers' approaches to questions with religious overtones in a setting which was clouded enough by decoy questions so that the teacher did not know she was being tested on the teaching of religion. . . .
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> Test responses were categorized as either wholly religious, wholly nonreligious, or indeterminate. For the purposes of this study, an answer was categorized as religious if it *supported the existence* of an anthropomorphic being with the use of such words as Divine Being, Creator, He, His, Supreme Being, or God, *without any* qualifications. In a sense, "religious" answers might well be defined in this study as supportive of the concept of theism. If there was no reference to a supreme being, or if reference was made in a negative, denying sense, or if an explanation was given that appeared to be entirely science- or nature-oriented, the answer was categorized as nonreligious. If, on the other hand, a response contained more than one idea, perhaps one of a religious nature *and* one of a nonreligious nature or no answer was given, the response was categorized as "indeterminate."
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> The results of the study indicate that over 52 per cent of the responses to our test questions can properly be categorized as unqualified religious answers. Further, religious answers were stated overwhelmingly in terms of an orthodox, Christian theology. . . .

There was a significant relationship . . . between opposition to the Supreme Court's decision and religious answers on the "Classroom Problems Test." Apparently, those who did answer test questions in unqualified religious terms tended to oppose the court's decision regardless of their formal religious affiliation.

Rogers and Burnes conclude:

If we accept Justice Brennan's reasoning in *Abington School District* v. *Schempp, i.e.,* the public schools should help children assimilate a heritage "neither theistic nor atheistic but simply civic and patriotic," there is obviously much work to be done. Teachers, administrators, and those engaged in teacher education will need to give considerable time, energy, and thought to the educational implications of the separation principle as interpreted above. On the other hand, the Supreme Court as a whole could serve a most useful purpose by further clarifying its position as soon as an opportunity arises to do so.

The same issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan* reports on an oblique approach to the teaching of "values," illustrated by a Humanities course introduced in Pennsylvania by the Department of Public Instruction. In Richard Gibboney's words:

Pennsylvania leaders have organized a "great issues" course to deal with vital questions too often ignored. This ambitious program could set a national trend as public schools seek ways of developing moral discernment and responsibility in the young. . . . The Department of Public Instruction created this select committee on the humanities to present content relating to moral and ethical values in what must be a nonsectarian public school curriculum. . . .

As a strong advocate of this course, which in many communities is arousing much interest, Mr. Gibboney provides an excellent summary of its value:

We believe that the humanities deal with nothing less than life itself—the idea of truth, right and wrong, beauty. The student can compare his confused exploratory ideas with the ideas of the artists, writers, and philosophers who preceded him in time, perhaps, but whose work is relevant and necessary in the drifting present.

It should be understood what this study is not. It is not a course in religion, although in part it is a study about religions and the role that ethical beliefs play in man's life. It is not a course in philosophy, although philosophical writings are encountered throughout. It is not a course in fine arts, although art is an integral part of the program. The humanities course draws on the several fields of knowledge, exploiting each on the basis of the course objectives. The synthesis, admittedly difficult to achieve, hopefully occurs in the student's mind and the world thereby is made a bit less confusing.

Of what relevance, some may ask, are the humanities to a technological society? The answer is that the humanities are not only relevant, they are essential.

Protagoras said that man is the measure of all things. If this be true, let man renew and sustain himself with the great creations of the human mind in poetry, art, and philosophy. Man needs beauty. He wants to sing, even in this century, but no one has taught him or he has forgotten how. The big questions, in this time as in other times, are human questions: Who am I? What should I do? What is the good life?

The humanities, despite their occasional corruption by the effete or sterilely academic, deal with nothing less than life itself. They are not a decorative frill to be worn on ceremonial occasions by an Orwellian society interested only in man as a means to inhuman ends.

Surely in this computerized, chemicalized, televised, and tranquilized society there must be a place for man as a man.

FRONTIERS
The Deepest Issue

AN editorial in the January *Eastern World* puts the factor of nuclear weaponry into the psychological context of world politics so effectively that the implications of this view cannot be ignored. The editorial is headed, "The Deadly Status Symbol," and begins:

> The Chinese bomb may not have caused jitters in military circles, but it has had some repercussions which make the future outlook for the world even more precarious. The atomic powers, U.S., Britain, U.S.S.R., and France, have only themselves to blame for China's nuclear ambitions. By the erroneous conception that atomic power alone qualifies a nation to sit on the supreme councils of the world, a prestige race has been started which may be just as pernicious to world peace as the actual explosion of their deadly weapons. To be an atomic power has been elevated to a status symbol. That was why France worked so feverishly at developing her bomb, why China had to show that she, too, was a big power, and why Egyptian and Indonesian ambitions point in that direction. The fight for a place on the trigger—always accompanied by pious assurances that this is only to prevent the bomb from exploding prematurely—has bedeviled European politics for the past few years and is now spreading to other parts of the world.
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> The big powers, while rightly condemning proliferation, obviously cannot prevent it at the present state of international science. But they will have to revise their maxim that atomic bombs are a passport to international prominence, otherwise they will have to accept China as a member of their club, and will logically have to admit to it all those who will join in the nuclear race, as equals. If, on the other hand, they are willing to do so, their own reluctance to abolish nuclear weapons will have to be overcome and serious steps will have to be taken to ban all nuclear hardware all over the world—thus, incidentally, saving it from utter destruction.

While one may doubt that the logic of this analysis will exert much pressure on Western policy-makers—for the present, at any rate—that the capacity to be armed with nuclear weapons has become a "deadly status symbol" for nationalist emotion seems an unmistakable fact. And more important than the pragmatic or *realpolitik* conclusions drawn by this editorial is the further fact that, in terms of this symbol, the individual citizen is made into an absolutely impotent onlooker, so far as the good of his country is concerned. He stands apart, awed, frightened, or indifferent, while the technicians of nuclear physics work their magic for his salvation. What sort of dim, induced, surrogate feeling of "participation" can he experience, when the carefully managed press of his country reveals to him that at last the "principle" of the highest military good is in the hands of his defenders?

This is not a question of East-West competition, nor of taking sides in the battle of rival ideological powers, but of the fact that, the more they adopt the means of technologically created security, the less distinction can be made between these powers by an objective observer. It is a question of the roots of human life for all men of the twentieth century. Where, how, by what imaginable means is the individual human being to regain the initiative of independent moral decision in relation to humanly scaled obligations to the social community? The refinements of technology have made us all into ignorant peasants compelled to choose between being blind believers and frustrated, irrational doubters of the "balance of terror" doctrine.

It may seem going far afield to pass from this subject to a recent paper by Carl R. Rogers on "Freedom and Commitment," yet the pertinence of his discussion at once becomes plain. Dr. Rogers begins:

> One of the deepest issues in modern life, in modern man, is the question as to whether the concept of personal freedom has any meaning whatsoever in our present-day scientific world. The growing ability of the behavioral scientist to predict and control behavior has brought the issue sharply to the fore. If we accept the logical positivist and strictly behaviorist emphases which are predominant in the American psychological scene, there is not even room for discussion. The title of this paper is then completely without meaning.

No one who admits to wanting to shape his own life—who insists that he has motives which are really *his own*—can allow Dr. Rogers' paper to be judged as without meaning. What, then, does this paper contend for? The first pages are devoted to showing how skillful behavioral scientists have been able to control people's decisions while making them believe that they were "free" in what they chose to think and do. But having established with impressive evidence this power of conditioning over human behavior, Dr. Rogers adds that the experiments "leave something very important unsaid." He illustrates what seems to him to have been left out by drawing on his own experience as a therapist:

> I think of a young man classed as a schizophrenic with whom I had been working for a long time in a state hospital. He was a very inarticulate man, and during one hour he made a few remarks about individuals who had recently left the hospital; then he remained silent for almost forty minutes. When he got up to go, he mumbled almost under his breath, "If some of *them* can do it, maybe I can too." That was all—not a dramatic statement, not uttered with force and vigor, yet a statement of choice by this young man to work toward his own improvement and eventual release from the hospital. It is not too surprising that about eight months after that statement he was out of the hospital. I believe this experience of responsible choice is one of the deepest aspects of psychotherapy and one of the elements which most solidly underlies personality change.
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> I think of another young person, this time a young woman graduate student, who was deeply disturbed and on the borderline of a psychotic break. Yet after a number of interviews in which she talked very critically about all of the people who had failed to give her what she needed, she finally concluded: "Well, with that sort of foundation, well, it's really up to *me*. I mean it seems to be really apparent to me that I can't depend on someone else to *give* me an education." And then she added very softly: "I'll really have to get it myself." She goes on to explore this experience of important and responsible choice. She finds it a frightening experience and yet one which gives her a feeling of strength. A force seems to surge up within her which is big and strong, and yet she also feels very much alone and sort of cut off from support. She adds: "I am going to begin to do more things that I know how to do." And she did.

We quote this material from Dr. Rogers for the reason that, as it seems to us, there are parallels between the extremity of the world situation and the plight of these individuals who were helped by a therapy which assumes that freedom and commitment are realities in human life. It also seems obvious that the solution of the world's problems can come only by extrapolating these simple realities into the analysis of the struggle for power. Our ends must be in our means, if the ends are to be reached. No identifiable human ends are in the means we are using now.