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THE ACQUIREMENT OF INDIVIDUALITY

WHEN one speaks of "the individual" today, what he says is apt to be classified within the scope of psychology, but any exclusiveness implied by this designation should be avoided. The subject of Man now needs an approach which encourages synthesis between areas of study, rather than further specialization. This writing, therefore, is an effort to suggest that the language of psychology is presently in a vital stage of transformation, having already reached a point where it is possible to speak intelligibly and even inspiringly of what man, as individual, is, and what he may become. His complexes, neuroses and psychoses, upon which attention has been increasingly fixed since the advent of psychoanalysis, are not, clearly, the root of man, but instead simply his undernourished or misshapen fixations of self-image. We are learning that such fixations cannot be satisfyingly dispelled by return to a previous "normalcy," but must yield to a broader view of life and destiny. The "Third Force" psychologists of whom A. H. Maslow speaks have found the expression "self-actualization" useful as a broad description of the processes by which the individual liberates himself from bondage to ignorance and fear. David Riesman's "autonomous man" is one who is no longer lonely, because he has found himself, and, in Emerson's words, learned "to speak the utmost syllable of his convictions."

This broadening of the language of psychology suggests a distinction between the *persona,* or mask of self-image, and the root of a potentially autonomous individuality. As C. J. Ducasse once put it, "we must learn to take our present personalities with a large grain of salt." Beyond what we think we are—or are afraid we arc is the faceless image of what we may become. And here we arrive at a subtler way of looking at the image of man as soul, with which so many pages of all great scriptures are concerned. And we come, also, to a vision of the soul as hero, the "hero with a thousand faces" of Joseph Campbell, whose destiny is symbolically represented in myth and in dreams.

To suggest that man "acquires" individuality invites, of course, a certain confusion, especially if one inclines to the view that individuality cannot be possessed, cannot be inherited, is not a construct out of many things, but is itself an essence. The apple tree does not "acquire" apples; rather the apples manifest periodically as part of a life-process. As the seasons revolve, the death of the leaves precedes the reemergence of those life-forces which will produce both fruit and a new seedling. But when self-awareness becomes a factor, in the case of man, cycles of growth are no longer determined by the seasons but by the mind. The mind has its seasons, too—cycles of activity—yet no one can determine, as with the plants or trees, how far the growing process is likely to proceed. Human intelligence manifests its wondrous potential by sudden leaps across the abysses of ignorance, as well as by determined plodding. And the more important the abyss to be crossed, the more necessary it becomes for the adventurer to relinquish his confidence in the knowledge which served him for the last ascent: he has now a new sort of challenge, making the verities of past knowledge and belief insufficient. He must seek a new understanding; or, in other words, ready himself for further initiation in depth of perceptiveness.

In *The Myths of Death, Rebirth and Ressurrection,* Joseph L. Henderson focuses on the term "initiation" as the key to the psychological meaning of the death-rebirth cycle—a meaning suggested by ancient peoples in their accounts of the struggle of the soul to reach a higher state. The initiatory processes, it appears, are constant, although the context varies widely—from the symbol of the Bo tree to the symbol of the battlefield. The opportunity for initiation is always present, and is sometimes transformed into a destiny by an act of will.

Initiation may also be seen in the recognition of the meaning of the experience of separation or death,

and the translation of that meaning into the "new life" which then ensues. We have a dimly prescient grasp of this ancient view of human struggles towards growth, for despite our assertive confidence in the superiority of reason, we have maintained some touch with a mystical lore. "We are," as Milton Mayer has said, "vestigial Greeks." A passage from a recent essay of Mr. Mayer's is significant:

> We adhere to knowledge, but we have cut ourselves off from the mysticism that threaded Greek rationalism. We dying Greeks undertake to prove we-care-not-what by reason alone; and we succeed; and our success in the end undoes us. The thrall of Emerson's Things holds us in its meaningless mystique.

So far as the study of man is concerned, the influence of the scientific approach has led to fragmentation of thought, and the implication of the more ancient view leads in the opposite direction, towards integration. We have heard a great deal about the "quest for identity," which does indeed suggest something in respect to the title of this discussion. Identity is won, so to speak, by a conscious passage through the labyrinth of psychological experience. In terms of Joseph Campbell's "hero," this means that the individual discovers himself in two paradoxical ways. He learns, first, as John Steinbeck put it, to "merge successfully with his habitat," which is one of the functions of philosophy. That is, he must extract from his environment, from his heritage, that which is truly himself; and while he is doing this, the process is not one of rebellion against the values of his heritage but rather one of seeking empathy with them. Later, the process of growth is presaged and then exemplified by voluntary steps of separation from traditional culture, from habitudes of thought and action, in search of a broader perspective, a holy grail, a golden fleece, a land of the Nibelungen. It is at this point of the cycle that the Buddha wanders through the kingdom, voluntarily dispossessed. And the pre-Buddha, the lonely prince, is also Theseus caught in the labyrinth, faced with the terrifying task of slaying the Minotaur.

These symbolic figures are aspects of the human psyche which seldom find recognition in the contemporary outlook of psychoanalysis. Freud himself, though, apparently gave a greater emphasis to the naked will of the individual, and recognized that while every man is Oedipus, he is also Orestes; he can convert the difficult "fate" of being born human—possessed of a psyche which will control *him* unless he determines otherwise—into a self-directed destiny, and achieve liberation from his own psyche by an initiatory process.

Elisabeth Mann Borgese has indicated that the trends toward universalism in psychological, religious, and philosophical thought today emphasize "a return to the origin, the nucleus: the individual that precedes any schisms: the essence of universalization." Another way of putting this would be to say that the mind in our time has lost faith in itself, particularly in its capacities for mystical or directly intuitive perception; and therefore the movement towards *new* thought is also a movement back to origins, back to a state of mind preceding the specializations which are characteristic of our particular era.

A recent survey in MANAS (Aug. 7, 1963), titled "New Perspectives in Psychology," noted and illustrated the fact that during the past ten years a number of unusual psychologists have been saying unusual things for members of their profession to say—such as that man *does*, after all, receive light from within the mysterious recesses of his own being; that he is, in essence, a "soul" in evolution who may become self-directed.

When David Riesman speaks of "the autonomous man," this is the sort of man he means, and whether or not he uses the much-abused term "soul" is a matter of little importance. The same may be said of the increasingly influential writings of A. H. Maslow, for the meaning he gives to "self-actualization" is that of an ability for self-transformation. Viktor Frankl's school of psychotherapy affirms that no human being is fulfilled unless he is pursuing a quest for enduring meaning, unless he receives philosophic as well as emotional sustenance—un1ess transvaluation precedes transformation.

So far as the history of psychology is concerned, this is a new emphasis, the emergence of a language concerning the soul understood as Plato's "self-moving unit," and without reference to religious doctrine or belief. There is an area of religion, certainly, which co-exists with this sort of psychology. Non-sectarian religion, non-authoritarian religion, may advance the cause of a "science of the soul," while any psychology which is not determinedly materialistic will be similarly concerned. It is possible to cut through the flamboyantly festooned jungle of religious dogmas and ceremonies and perceive that a Buddha or a Christ was attempting to communicate with individuals, not with people affiliated in groups, and that the essence of the communication is an invitation to self-discovery. It is also possible to cut through the undergrowth of a host of assumptions on the part of psychologists and reject the doctrine that the consciousness and conscience of man are mere by-blows of physical processes.

To be a human being means in part to live on hope; all specific personal aspirations and expectations resolve into one—the belief that it is possible for a man to become something more than the image of self mirrored in a contemporary situation. The "Third Force in psychology" seems to be saying that individual man is the pivot for all else—that a complete psychology must include those dimensions of the human personality which are both the quintessence of the personal and somehow more than personal; and which demonstrate, at least on occasion, the capacity to transcend physical and psychic limitations of environment.

Two of the most provocative titles in the literature of our time are David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* and Herbert Fingarette's *The Self in Transformation.* The first, Riesman's, suggests to anyone who hears it that people do not fulfill themselves in groups, that they fulfill themselves only by fulfilling *themselves.* Fingarette's title suggests that there is one primary meaning and purpose in human existence, and that only the self "in transformation" is able to elevate its responses to familial, social, and political responsibilities. We are not here primarily concerned with the "emergence" of latent sensitivities and capacities by the human species, as species. The emergence of man is a *process* which, though it may affect and radically alter groups and cultures, is accomplished by the individual, whatever his setting. This is the view that man, rather than being created by an external "God," or by external forces called "the cosmic process," simply manifests his most exalted stature whenever he is *ready* to do so. To the extent that those who make up the third force in psychology today embody this view, they are creating or recreating philosophy.

The content of the MANAS article, "New Perspectives in Psychology," evoked a good deal of interested response. From beyond the formal domain of psychology, for example, Joseph Wood Krutch felt that a provocative humanistic dimension appeared in the words of the authors quoted—that their language was becoming less specialized and more human, and more fruitful for that reason. Abraham H. Maslow and Henry A. Murray felt that valuable cross-fertilization could be encouraged by bringing members of the "third force" to a clearer awareness of the interpenetration of one man's work by another. But the word "psychology," however favorably interpreted at this late date, does not seem to encompass that broader eventuality here termed "the emergence of man." Striking passages in contemporary novels, the luminous insights of a few philosophers, and the arresting discoveries of such an unusual scene of self-transformation as the Synanon Foundation, all seem to contribute to a magnificent theme. In that theme, some great scriptures of the past, some psychologies of the present, some discoveries made in truly therapeutic communities, all have their role to play; the myth of man as a hero with a thousand faces appears less a myth than a continued story.

REVIEW
ERIK ERIKSON

THE recent publication of the second edition (revised and enlarged) of Erik Erikson's monumental *Childhood and Society* (Norton, 1964) provides a timely opportunity to focus briefly on the books and ideas of this concerned mentor of children and young adults. Whenever professionals, and laymen as well, gather to discuss and to try to understand the emotional problems of the young and the dynamics of their growth, three names are almost always heard: Piaget, Bettelheim, and Erikson. Of the three, Erikson has the most wide-ranging and unconventional mind, although he writes for both professional and lay readers. Norton has felt that this new edition of *Childhood and Society* was potentially "popular" enough to rate a half-page advertisement in the New York *Times Book Review*.

Erikson came to psychiatry by way of art. His books are really closer to being novels-of-fact-and-exploration than the turgid and jargonized tomes too often associated with professional and academic writing. Frequently these books are groping and disorganized, but new ideas and groupings spring out from every page in language that is conversational, even lyrical: the artist's mind at work in the discipline of psychiatry and psychology, but transforming the discipline in the process of using it. Like all true artists, he is essentially a reformer; but unlike most reformers, he has had the wisdom to begin where all reforms must begin, in the nursery.

Dr. Erikson was for more than a decade a senior staff member of the Austen Riggs Center. He has participated in research programs at Harvard Psychological Clinic, the Yale Institute of Human Relations, the University of California Institute of Child Welfare, and the Western Psychiatric Institute in Pittsburgh. Currently, he is at Harvard University as professor of Human Development and lecturer on psychiatry.

Although the scope and depth of Erikson's work cannot be adequately even suggested in the space available here (he writes so lucidly that he is accessible to all readers), a few comments on random examples of his work may be helpful. In *Childhood and Society* he seems to have begun to ask a series of questions, to frame his life's inquiry, into the problems of being a child in a given society, of trying to grow and find a viable maturity, and of establishing the relationships between these processes and the methodology and insights of psychiatric investigation. He finds that childhood has as much to say about psychiatry as does psychiatry about childhood. The issues and dilemmas he frames in *Childhood and Society* (originally published in 1950) are still being more fully explored in his new books and papers, and in the work of others. This first major effort is a classic example of highly developed human perception persistently exploring a single issue—childhood—and finding that it leads off in all directions. The creative mind so apparent in this book seems to have decided to "dig in," to forego the fascinating and confusing "manifold forms abounding" in favor of exploration in a specific direction, only to find that wherever it probes—no matter how specific—once again the whole of the world appears in all its buzzing, blooming, confusion. Accepting the whole, he is able to find in it certain themes which not only fit the phenomena but point toward new relationships and greater understanding:

> This is a book on childhood. One may scan work after work on history, society, and morality and find little reference to the fact that all people start as children and that all peoples begin in their nurseries. It is human to have a long childhood; it is civilized to have an even longer childhood. Long childhood makes a technical and mental virtuoso out of man but it also leaves a lifelong residue of emotional immaturity in him. While tribes and nations, in many intuitive ways use child training to the end of gaining their particular form of mature human identity, their unique version of integrity, they are, and remain, beset by the irrational fears which stem from the very state of childhood which they exploited in their specific way.

The comparative and historical studies of childhood begun in *Childhood and Society* bring Erikson to pursue further the themes of the effects of primordial anxiety, the consequences of prolonged dependency, the ways human beings forge viable identities (also the failure of identity, the identity crisis), and the primacy of the ego, or reality-testing process, in forging this most valuable of personal possessions: a durable sense of self. These themes, plus the methodology of applying psychoanalysis to history and the comparative study of tribes, nations, and cultures, are the foundations upon which Erikson has built—and continues to build—a remarkable contribution to the study of man.

In "The Problem of Ego Identity" *(Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association,* IV, No. I, 1956, 58-121, reprinted in *Identity and Anxiety: Survival of the Person in Mass Society,* Stein, Vidich, and White, eds., Glencoe Free Press, 1960), Erikson presents a long summary of his explorations up to that point and lays the groundwork for his *Young Man Luther.* "The Problem of Ego Identity" is a kind of transition between his beginning studies of infancy and his discussion of young adulthood in *Young Man Luther*. It concentrates on the ways in which the ego succeeds or fails in creating a viable identity—and with the consequences of ego failure: the formation of a negative identity, and the fragmentation of the self.

Young Man Luther (Norton, 1958) is a less abstract formulation of the human ego's attempts to build an identity. Subtitled "A Study In Psychoanalysis and History," this book is an extended case-history of a famous man who lived through and with many of the problems of maturation associated with identity formation and dissolution. It contains some of Erikson's best writing:

> The late adolescent crisis, in addition to anticipating the more mature crisis, can at the same time hark back to the very earliest crises of life trust or mistrust toward existence as such. This concentration in the cataclysm of the adolescent identity crisis of both first and last crises in the human life may well explain why religiously and artistically creative men often seem to be suffering from a barely compensated psychosis, and yet later prove super-humanly gifted in conveying a total meaning for man's life; while malignant disturbances in late adolescence often display precocious wisdom and usurped integrity. The chosen young man extends the problem of his identity to the borders of existence in the known universe, other human beings bend all their efforts to adopt and fulfill the departmentalized identities which they find prepared in their communities. He can permit himself to face as permanent the trust problem which drives others in whom it remains or becomes dominant into denial, despair, and psychosis. He acts as if mankind were starting all over with his own beginning as an individual, conscious of his singularity as well as his humanity; others hide in the folds of whatever tradition they are part of because of membership occupation, or special interests. To him, history ends as well as starts with him, others must look to their memories, to legends, or to books to find models for the present and the future in what their predecessors have said and done. No wonder that he is something of an old man (a philosophus, and a sad one) when his age-mates are young, or that he remains something of a child when they age with finality. The name Lao-tse, I understand, means just that.

Such passages are not rare in Erikson's works, often so full of questions that one is frustrated in not being able to engage the writer with a whole series of, "What did you mean by . . .?"

In *Youth: Change and Challenge* (Basic Books, 1963), Erikson has edited a selection of writings which deal with Luther's problems, but in a modern context and idiom. Young people today are confronted by essentially the same dilemmas Luther had in achieving maturity, in designing for themselves a workable identity; each generation's young must find a way to synthesize their experience—or not. If they succeed, they are able to join history, rather than submit to it. His essay in *Youth,* "Youth: Fidelity and Diversity," ends with further refinements of these problems (questions first asked and framed in *Childhood and Society*):

> To enter history, each generation of youth must find an identity consonant with its own childhood and consonant with an ideological promise in the perceptible historical process. But in youth the tables of childhood dependence begin slowly to turn: no longer is it merely for the old to teach the young the meaning of life, whether individual or collective. It is the young who, by their responses and actions, tell the old whether life as represented by the old and as presented to the young has meaning; and it is the young who carry in them the power to confirm those who confirm them and, joining the issues, to renew and to regenerate, or to reform and to rebel. . . .
>
> Moralities sooner or later outlive themselves, ethics never: this is what the need for identity and for fidelity, reborn with each generation, seems to point to. Morality in the moralistic sense can be shown by modern means of inquiry to be predicated on superstitions and irrational inner mechanisms which ever again undermine the ethical fiber of generations, but morality is expendable only where ethics prevail. This is the wisdom the words of many languages have tried to tell man. He has tenaciously clung to the words, even though he has understood them only vaguely, and in his actions has disregarded or perverted them completely. But there is much in ancient wisdom which can now become knowledge. . . .
>
> The overriding issue is the creation not of a new ideology but of a universal ethics growing out of a universal technological civilization. This can be advanced only by men and women who are neither ideological youths nor moralistic old men, but who know that from generation to generation the test of what you produce is the *care* it inspires. If there is any chance at all, it is in a world more challenging, more workable, and more venerable than all myths, retrospective or prospective: it is in historical reality, at last ethically cared for.

The quality of Erik Erikson's mentorship may be measured in many ways: the individuals whom he has helped directly as patients, the training of psychiatrists, the influence he has had on other professionals (Dr. Robert Jay Lifton of Yale has acknowledged his indebtedness to Erikson, and there are many others), and the contribution he has made through his books to an enlarged view of human growth—books now available to a wide audience. It seems likely that the full measure of his contributions will not be realized for many years: he will be helping and informing generations to come.

COMMENTARY
RELIGION AND SOCIETY

THE discussion of religion and society in this week's "Children" article brings to the fore the fact that political freedom is not in itself sufficient support for an orderly, fruitful, and envisioning social life. Having in the ages before the eighteenth century experienced the psychological confinements and oppressions of religious autocracy, and having suffered the power-linked collaboration of "spiritual" and political institutions, the men of the revolutionary epoch quite naturally assumed that intellectual and moral freedom would bring the needed solution. Given freedom, and given conscientious public education, they argued, the people would surely find their way.

There is obvious truth in this view. Without freedom of religion, and without education, people are not even allowed to be people, but are subdivided into parts of some "larger" process of intentions—whether of an arrogant ruler, a would-be omnipotent state, or a power-seeking sacerdotal caste.

But what was not immediately apparent—but is rapidly becoming apparent, today—is that freedom, unless exercised in behalf of some deeply affirmative faith, relapses into empty negation. Instead of gathering and unifying the motives of a man's life to pursue some worthy ideal, this "negative" freedom leaves him aimless and even apathetic. Culture, we begin to realize, depends upon the spirit of high enterprise, held in solution in all human relationships; and so we ask: How can we make this spirit a pervasive influence in our lives, yet not give up our freedom? Which, of many high enterprises, can we adopt without mishap or prejudice to the rights of man?

Our chief difficulty, it may be, in answering this question, comes from concluding that because we got our freedom by political means, we can also give it depth and dimensions by political means. Our difficulty lies in believing that the people who won their political freedom—the high enterprise of the eighteenth century—are also capable of individual cultural enterprise in the twentieth century. So there is the tendency to tinker with the problem at the political level, eroding the freedom we sought with such longing and gained by such sacrifice and pain.

This will not work, of course. The values behind the abstraction of "freedom" do not lie anywhere except in the direction shown by individual search and discovery. Giving the example of "man thinking" about the ultimate questions is the best that anyone can do for his fellows, in this all-important task.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

RELIGION AND EDUCATION

RELIGION AND AMERICAN SOCIETY is a 77-page pamphlet presenting discussions of religion at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. It is the joint production of men who hold varying or opposing views regarding the relationship between democracy and religion, and the difference in outlook becomes especially apparent in a chapter titled "The Consensus." A clarification of this fundamental divergence should make an excellent point of departure for research and debate in Teacher Education courses, and be of interest, also, to many parents. A short paragraph states the issue:

> Some Americans who speak about the necessity for a public philosophy, a consensus, or who accent the words of the Declaration, "we hold these truths. . . . ," are enthusiastic about the development. But this discussion has not been universally hailed. Other Americans, representing a large and significant school of thought, have felt that the whole idea of spelling out a national purpose is foreign to the American genius, which they regard as strongly pragmatic and dependent for its continued vitality on a live-and-let-live spirit. The very articulation of a "purpose," they hold, is alien to our tradition.

The arguments against belief in a sacrosanct "consensus" are easy enough to make, for the defenders of a pluralistic society are able to point out that cultural imperialism often results from attempts to formulate a series of "truths" about man and society. The argument *for* the existence of such a consensus is seldom a popular one, but it would be a mistake to assume that this argument and political attempts to define "Americanism" are one and the same thing. Spokesmen of the extreme Right are eager to define American purpose and doctrine, but they also want to "weed out" opinions which seem to them to be dangerous or unsettling to their own conceptions. Those who argue effectively for the "consensus" argue for a concept of political philosophy which *cannot* be furthered by indoctrination, but only by increasingly percipient dialogue and education. Here is the case for this sort of "Consensus":

> The consensus, its proponents argue, provides the rational structure of our society; it is the basis of our law, it forms the bedrock foundation of our commitment to each other and to our institutions; it incorporates the political truths by which we live and a political philosophy that is our inheritance both as men of the West and as Americans. The consensus is open-ended, for it represents the product of human reason reflecting on human experience. Each new generation is expected to add to its content, to draw inferences from its established principles, and to purify its original insights. But the nature of civilization is such that each generation should cherish the basic consensus as a sacred patrimony and find in it a guide for political and social action.
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> Though there is a receptive attitude toward religion in this consensus, the truths in it are not theological, they are political. Indeed, it is part of the American consensus that we have no theological agreement in the United States. The truths incorporated in the consensus make no appeal to Revelation; they are the product of human reason alone. They are to be held by all our people, whatever their religion. Typical of these truths, the proponents of consensus say, are those stated in the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble of the Constitution: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with inalienable rights; that the purpose of government is to insure these rights: that government is charged with establishing justice, insuring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense, and promoting the general welfare.
>
> Where did these truths come from? It is held that the founding fathers would not even have asked themselves a question like this, for they were closer than we are to a tradition that stretches back past the Christian centuries to the political philosophers of Greek and Roman antiquity and before them to the concept of human dignity and freedom that lies at the basis of the decalogue, the Holiness Code (Leviticus, Chapter 19), and the teachings of the Hebrew prophets.
>
> Here, in the dim origins of Western civilization, the consensus began. Contributions were made to it by the fathers of the Christian Church, by medieval philosophers, Renaissance thinkers, Protestant reformers, the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment, the American colonists, and the founding fathers

> themselves. The consensus has taken its vitality from hundreds of different sources, some alien to each other. Its principles were developed; from a thousand old controversies that engaged the thinkers of the church, the academy, and the state; the truths it incorporates were discovered through the labors of a procession of wise men who reflected on the experiences of their own time.

To bring all this a step closer to the controversial issues of the day, we add a concluding statement from *Religion and American Society:*

> We have discovered that this basic disagreement underlies many arguments about the role of religion in American society. For instance, one group wants to refer church-state problems not only to the law of the land, as that law is presently interpreted, but to the broader consensus; it is through the consensus, this group holds, that we can discover whether the present interpretation of the law conforms to the larger understanding of the issues. Another group is more interested in the sociological realities of each case and, though it would like to see the issues argued, frequently hesitates to accept the terms of the argument as they are set down by the proponents of consensus. The result is often an impasse, with the one group feeling that the Tradition in which it sets great store is being betrayed, and the other feeling just as strongly that the imperial claims of The Facts are being slighted.

The school question is clearly a reflection of the basic differences in the views here described, as well as a reflection of special interest groups representing either religion or secularism. What about the child in the elementary grades? Is it possible to teach "about" religion without ending in a sectarianism which mirrors the prevailing religious influences in the particular school community? Is it desirable to expose children to theological variety instead of leaving them content (?) with the religious beliefs and heritage of their parents? Our recent reference to the proposals of Theodore Brameld should be recalled here, for Prof. Brameld, while acknowledging the difficulty of obtaining adequately trained teachers, believes that such a plan should be attempted in all favorably disposed communities—and that any serious effort in this direction is bound to increase our awareness of the subtleties involved. The conclusion of the Center pamphlet speaks generally to this latter point:

> The impressionability of young children was also a factor in arguments on the other side. Here it was pointed out that a child who never hears about the work of religious institutions in school will come to regard religion as simply irrelevant and unworthy of his attention. Leaving teaching *about* religion completely out of the curriculum, it was held shapes an attitude of indifference to, and perhaps even of disdain for religion, on the part of the child. Those who believe this is a serious shortcoming readily admitted that presenting religious material without promoting sectarian doctrines is difficult and offers a genuine challenge to the tolerance and ingenuity of public-school educators; but they were not ready to give up because mistakes might have been made in the past. As for religion in public institutions of higher learning, none of us would object to teaching *about* religion at the upper-high school and college level. We are agreed that knowledge of theological positions and of the role of religion in Western culture is an integral part of liberal education and that its importance cannot be ignored without damage to the quality of mature education.

FRONTIERS

The New Science

A LETTER from Ralph Borsodi, a Humanist who has done as much or more than anyone else to get decentralist thinking and practical decentralist action going, and who years ago founded the School for Living, finds something wrong, or lacking, in our article, "Toward a Redefinition of Science" (MANAS, March 25). Mr. Borsodi writes:

> My trouble can be illustrated in considering your question, "Can subjects—human beings—be studied scientifically without converting them into objects?" Now human beings are objects, not subjects; they may, it is true, display subjective characteristics, but to deny their objectivity is to indulge in manifest self-contradiction.

But we did not "deny their objectivity." We said:

> It might as well be admitted that whenever you get to matters which are vital to human beings *as* human beings, you are involved with realities and values which have substance only in the field of *concepts* and *ethical longings.* The consensus, whatever it is, must be established here. For Man is here. He is elsewhere, too, of course, but his good, his essence, his meaning, and his promise are here. The criteria in this field include all the tools of psychology, ethics, and metaphysics.

It would indeed be ridiculous to deny or ignore the objective aspect of human beings, or to fail to acknowledge that subjective determinations (can these be termed "behavior"?) are variously and partially reflected in objective acts. What we argued against was the assimilation of subjective "reality"—whatever it may be to the field of objective phenomena as some kind of "special case" of objective happenings. This, if we read him correctly, is exactly what Mr. Borsodi wants to do, for the sake of preserving intact the traditional scientific methodology, although he is no mechanist, but plainly an opponent of the mechanists. He continues:

> Human beings are objects just as truly as are sticks and stones. Like all objects, they can be seen, they can be weighed, they can be measured. . . . The problem arises when we come to characteristics, apparently present in human beings, and absent not only in sticks and stones but also in all other animals—characteristics which become manifest when we contrast the behavior of human beings as different as Albert Schweitzer and Adolf Hitler, and when we consider what not only ordinary human beings but human beings like Charles Darwin and William Shakespeare have done. It is this which needs explanation.

Now comes Mr. Borsodi's main point:

> When the concept of the subjective is thrown into the discussion of the nature of human nature (a concept referring to something which cannot be seen or weighed or measured), it is of the utmost importance that we provide the concept with a referrent as clear as that which science provides with regard to objects. Nothing is gained by talking about consciousness or any other concept as incommensurable as is the concept of the subjective. No matter how certain we may feel that man has subjective characteristics, until we find some objective referrent for them, not only mechanists and materialists but scientists generally will remain right in saying that the subjective in man cannot be scientifically studied.

Well, what would be gained by agreeing with Mr. Borsodi? You might say that by following his plan we would eventually get a number of indisputable statements about the nature of man. They would be indisputable in the sense that they would be "scientifically demonstrable" according to currently accepted criteria of scientific knowledge. They would form a part of the body of public truth. Then, having this kind of new truth about man, we could act upon it without fear of rational objection, and improve the human situation.

It seems fair to comment here on what may be happening, as a result of this recommendation. Just possibly, the image of man is being made to conform to the limitations of one mode of observation. Science, Mr. Borsodi says, cannot look at incommensurables. If man, therefore, has in him some incommensurables, science cannot look at them. However, if these incommensurables can lay finite eggs in the world

of measurements and scientific objectivity, then we can examine the eggs and say indisputable things about them, and what we say will be proper science.

Now if this is a possibility, it seems obvious that we could get into bad habits this way. We could by methodological conditioning come to limit all we say about man to what we can measure or "objectify," and in this way arrive at a situation in which the scientific image of man becomes a *dwarfed* image of man. Should this be the case, one can only add that the idea of man is a far too important matter for it to be left to the scientists.

It seems that some kind of double standard of truth is qualifying our humanity, here. For the present writer, or any human being, has two kinds of encounter with being human—a subjective encounter and an objective encounter (with other men)—and it is in the subjective encounter that he becomes aware of all the deeps of his life—here he suffers, here he cherishes dreams, here he gains what satisfactions are to be achieved and endures the disappointments which are his. Without this subjective encounter, the "I" would be *nothing.* "I" would not be. He might say: I will not tolerate any scientist telling me this encounter is unreal, or "secondary," or unworthy of study, scientific or not. Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and chart its peregrinations. I have a more important business—the attempt to understand myself. You leave me only a Hobson's choice: Curtail either science or yourself.

But, on the other hand, there is something to be said for the view that we cannot afford to give the study of man back to the theologians and the poets—or the mystics. Mr. Borsodi doesn't want all the blessed scientific certainty to leak away from the enterprise. With "objectivity" dissolving into introspective mists, the study of man will lose the authority it needs to get all those good things done in the world. So the aim of retaining all the objectivity we can must have a hearing. Mr. Borsodi writes:

> Now human actions, even though they cannot be weighed or measured, can be counted if scientifically observed and scientifically classified. But if this is done, the case method as used in medicine and law must be much more scientifically developed. If as a result of rigorous study of a sufficient number of cases of different kinds of human actions, actions were found which cannot be explained mechanistically or materialistically, scientific justification for the hypothesis of the subjective would be demonstrated. This is what physicists have done when they try to explain what they have observed in their laboratories and come to the conclusion that such things as electrons exist—electrons being, as you properly observe, as truly hypostatizations as is the "thing" called subjective.
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> This is the reason I feel a certain impatience with the protagonists of the subjective and even more impatience with the protagonists of what Confucius dismissed as "spirits." They will not face up to the necessity of doing what Rhine did, but doing it not only with regard to extra-sensory perception but with regard to all the mental characteristics which display themselves in human behavior of all kinds.

Now the meaning of this letter is becoming clearer. It proposes that there is a basic difference between the kind of attention a man, as man, gives to the subjective area of experience, and the attention a man as scientist gives to it. The scientist cannot admit—*yet*—that the subjective is "real," but must stalk it with the weapons of his objectifying method, trying to capture some part of it and make it hold still for objective definition.

But can a *man* do this? And what about scientists "as men"? What will be their private relations with this as yet hypothetically "non-existent" region of experience? (If, after all, for science, subjective reality is still hypothetical, then the unreality of the subjective is equally a hypothetical possibility.) It seems clear that the scientist, so regarded, can have only the most naïve and undisciplined relations with himself as a human being. He is a little man who isn't there.

But it is even clearer that the above analysis arrives at a *reductio ad absurdum.* The plain fact of the matter is that the scientists, to a man, have constant and enormously fruitful relationships

with their inner selves, leading to all sorts of exciting consequences in science. Whether or how they admit this process, or rationalize it, is quite another question.

It is also a fact that modern psychologists are now in the process of making open acknowledgement of this interchange with their own subjective experience, and are trying to see what can be done about fixing up their definitions of scientific method to accommodate such work. Quite plainly, the contributions to science made by this process have come *before* there is generally acceptable scientific definition of what is going on. This makes for some slight embarrassment. Our MANAS article of March 25 was an attempt to examine this embarrassment, since exposure must always happen, sooner or later, in cases of embarrassment, if withdrawal is to be avoided, and science, after all, should be above such immature emotions.

Actually, the new psychology is a way some scientists have chosen to say, "We are men, first, and scientists afterward, if we can be." And since this is the general historical order of all human progress through particular exploration, there is nothing remarkable about it.

The best way to resolve the difficulties raised by Mr. Borsodi's letter is perhaps to say that he is calling attention to an important crossroads reached by contemporary man—a crossroads where there is great temptation, and possibly the necessity, to make a radically new definition of scientific method. He is saying that the present limits of scientific method cannot be stretched to include incommensurable aspects of the subjective and that no good will be accomplished by losing the precision of scientific inquiry in the attempt. He is saying that you walk before you run—especially in science. And he is saying this *in behalf of* the values of Humanistic inquiry and the impartial rationalism of the scientific spirit. He doesn't want true progress to be blurred by a lot of unverifiable guesses and pious enthusiasm, which could soon lead to the collapse of any sort of science of man.

His advocacy of the development of techniques of study of all "mental characteristics" is a part of this view. He writes:

> I am speaking of mental activities advisedly for brain activities are not the problem. The brain is an object as truly as are all the other organs of man. It is the mind (another hypostatization), which is involved. I consider extra-sensory perception of very little importance compared with sensory perception because sensory perception is not only so much more reliable but because it plays so much larger a part in human living. No kind of introspection, whether used consciously or extra-sensorily, will provide us with a scientific study of the problem. As my studies of the problem seem to indicate, only the study of human actions promises to demonstrate scientifically the existence in man of faculties not present in sticks and stones and not present in other animals. Only the scientific study of human actions will demonstrate the absurdity of trying to reduce man to phenomena no different from that displayed by machines no matter how ingenious they may be. Only the study of human actions will make it plain that the whole theory of reductionism must be discarded. Finally only the scientific study of human actions seems to me to promise not merely a scientific answer to the problem of the subjective, but the whole age-old problem of the nature of human nature.
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> Let me emphasize scientific study, not just study.

The question we should like to raise, here, but not attempt to settle, although our inclinations can hardly fail to be plain, concerns the coverage of the word "scientific." Is there a kind of science which can accept contributions from Leo Tolstoy and William Blake? There are those, for example, who have found Tolstoy's My *Confession* a kind of revelation of subjective truth. You have to read him correctly, of course, but then you have to read the report of any investigation correctly, to get its meaning and value. Why is this not "scientific"?

Well, it could be argued that there will be people who do not admit Tolstoy's truth. And it can be answered that there are also people who

insist that the world is flat, even today. At this point the argument often resorts to voting or polls. Someone says that more people accept the rationalism of modern astronomy than the handful of nuts who don't. And then someone else blusters, *But the world is really round—go walk or sail around it!* But it is not ridiculous—only unusual—to ask him if *he* has done so. So you find that, on the whole, the honor given to science is largely a matter of faith—the faith of the uninstructed in the knowledge of the instructed. The faith of the first-year geometry student in Euclid. So far, *it works.* Now this faith is a kind of voting. It is acceptance of the consensus, plus a small amount of evidence.

Why can't there be the same sort of faith in Tolstoy? If men of science would turn their attention to Tolstoy in a spirit of determination to find out—to see what certainty there can be about Tolstoy's findings—something quite remarkable and unexpected might happen. Smart men like scientists could figure out all sorts of cross-checks and disciplines for measuring their own impartiality and penetration. They might eventually find that they had almost the certainty about some of Tolstoy's subjective conclusions that physical science has about gravitation—which, after all, is only a mathematical description of a very mysterious form of behavior.

This sort of application of scientific method has hardly been tried.

One thing more. It is only an assumption that we are altogether private, separate selves, without any access to one another except through the familiar modes of oral and written communication. Suppose we live, as James once suggested, in a sea of consciousness, and there are subjective interchanges among all men, but more among some men than with others, and that "truths" (and sometimes less desirable things) are spread in this way; and suppose that feeling and direct understanding of the content of another man's subjective experience are real possibilities—by more direct means (a heightened kind of love?) than the evocation of poetry and great scripture; and suppose there are disciplines, psychological as well as moral, for increasing this kind of awareness and part in the awareness of one another; and suppose we have, potentially, this sort of contact not just with other human beings, but with the world around us and all the teeming life it holds: what then?

Shouldn't our science be of a sort which does not, *ex hypothesi,* ignore such possibilities? And if such an order of direct experience is possible—through a further course of "evolution," perhaps—what then will become of our tight definitions of what is public, scientific truth, and what is not?

It is not necessary to affirm these ideas as articles of faith in order to propose that a scientific method directed to the understanding of man should be hospitable enough to include these modes of awareness as possible realities of the subjective life.