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THE HUMANIST CASE

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WHAT used to be called the War between Science and Religion was a hot war. That now in progress between Science and the Humanities is a cold one. It is being fought somewhat more chivalrously and with many protestations of respect on both sides. The scientist doesn't want to exterminate literature, and the humanist certainly doesn't want to abolish science. "Coexistence" is the catchword. But as in the case of the other cold war, the real question is, "On whose terms?" From both sides one gets something rather like the attitude of the Catholic priest who is said to have remarked to his Protestant opposite number: "After all, we are both trying to do God's work; you in your way and I—in His." There seems to be a good deal of question-begging and so many polite concessions that the terms are not usually clearly defined and the issues not squarely met.

C. P. Snow—a champion *sans peur* and *sans reproche*—seems to rest his case not so much on the superiority of science over the humanities as upon the alleged fact that scientists are better guys. There is, he argues, more good will among them, a larger common ground on which to operate and more willingness to make common cause. Probably this is true as long as they stay on this common ground. But scientists not infrequently are also patriots, adherents to this or that social philosophy and even, sometimes, loyal sons of some church. Those who are scientists and nothing else may be a bit *too* neutral—as, for instance, a famous rocket expert who appears to have been so little interested in anything except rockets that he was perfectly willing to make them for either side even in the middle of what less "objective" people regarded as Armageddon.

As William James said, "We may philosophize well or ill, but philosophize we must." Those who say they do not philosophize at all have usually answered philosophical questions arbitrarily and without thought. And for all the claims made that science itself can become an adequate philosophy, it seems to an unregenerate humanist like myself that such philosophy provides no answer to questions that have to be answered either thoughtfully or, as the scientist often tends to answer them, arbitrarily. We may, says a distinguished American professor of experimental psychology, take it for granted that all ultimate questions can be reduced to one—namely, what is most likely to lead to survival? But who are the "we" who take this for granted? The better-red-than-dead boys apparently do. On the other hand, there is what some regard as good authority for "He who loseth his life shall gain it." Probably there is no way of arbitrating between the two attitudes. But there is certainly no purely scientific solution, and the humanist is at least more acutely aware of the problem.

I must repeat the familiar charge that science can tell us how to do a bewildering (indeed, an alarming) number of things, but not which of them ought to be done; and I repeat it because I have never heard a satisfactory reply, and because it is perfectly evident that scientists themselves do not always agree in such decisions when called upon to make them. Of the medical practitioner it is sometimes said that medicine itself supplies him with an ethic. But take, for example, the case of the German doctors who used human beings as laboratory animals. They had learned the same medical science as those of their European and American fellows who found their experiments morally and even criminally shocking. At a medical congress both groups would have met on that common ground that Sir Charles regards as so important—so long as the discussion was confined to science. At a clinic they would have agreed on both diagnosis and treatment. Whatever the origin of their moral differences, it certainly did not lie in the field of the scientific knowledge that both had mastered. Their science gave them no guidance in the making of an ethical decision.

To this objection, which seems to me incontrovertible, either of two answers is usually given. One is that science, properly understood, *would* give an answer if properly attended to. The other is that "ought" implies a concept that corresponds to nothing outside the human mind and exists there only subjectively, induced by the conditioning effect of social custom; and that, therefore, we should be content to say merely that what we ought to do must be left to whatever society evolves as a result of the wise determination to devote ourselves exclusively to scientific knowledge.

Pushed into a corner those who maintain that only science is anything more than nonsense are likely to throw the question back into the face of the humanist. "Just how much progress have philosophy, metaphysics, religion and poetry ever made toward establishing 'oughts' conclusively demonstrated or widely agreed upon for long? You blame us for our failures. What are your successes?" This *tu quoque* is, to put it mildly, embarrassing—so embarrassing, in fact, that I would rather drop the subject for the moment and come back to it (if I must) a little later in this discussion.

What seems to me necessary (and lacking) to clarify any general discussion of the "case for the humanities" is some clear definition of science on the one hand and, on the other, of the subject matter that the humanist believes he alone can deal with and of the methods he uses.

Originally, ofcourse, science meant simply knowledge of any kind, and the humanities meant merely secular learning—knowledge about human affairs as contrasted with the divine, or, more simply still, the kind of thing one found in the writings of the Greeks and Romans before the Christian revelation made knowledge of the divine possible. But the meaning of the first term narrowed, and the meaning of the second grew more vague. Science came to mean a special kind of knowledge that can be acquired by certain techniques while the humanities came to mean, well, whatever is left over. What actually is left over came to seem to many less and less important if, indeed, it was important at all.

Suppose we say that science (and the definition would certainly have been accepted at a time when scientists were more modest) deals with whatever is measurable and subject to experimental verification. I cannot think of any scientific inquiry that has gone beyond that without ceasing to be completely scientific. Accept that definition, add that the subject matter of the humanities is whatever cannot be measured or verified experimentally, and it is obvious that what is left over is extensive and important.

Take, for example, the question of contentment, happiness and joy. Pope called the second "our beings' end and aim:" At least some scientists would agree that it is as fundamental as survival since, if science can tell us how to survive but not how to be happy, it is wasting its time. Yet happiness cannot be measured and the assumption that this man is happier than that cannot be experimentally verified. The difficulty may not be quite as thorny as that which involves the "ought," but it is thorny enough and important enough. Hedonists may say that what we ought to do is what will make us as individuals in our society most happy, but that still leaves happiness as one of the things that can neither be measured nor experimented with. And it is one of the things with which the literature of humanism is concerned in its own way.

The humanist does at least recognize the importance of happiness, and he does not brush it aside like the scientist whose logic is likely to run more or less thus: happiness cannot be measured, therefore it cannot be the subject of science; but since the methods of science are the only useful ones, we will just have to assume that happiness is directly proportional to something that can be measured—say income, standard of living or even horsepower available per unit of population. That this is a monstrous assumption is made abundantly clear by the introspection and direct observation dealt with in humanistic literature. And if we are not even further than we are now down the road to radical discontent and alienation in the midst of abundance, it is largely because humane letters still affect us.

So much for the kind of subject with which the humanities can and science cannot deal. What methods does the humanist, who can neither measure nor experiment, rely upon? He cannot, of course, prove anything. All that he can do is to carry conviction. He can, for example, draw a picture of a happy man and tell a story that seems to account for that man's happiness. There is no objective test for the truth or falsity of his assumptions. For his success or failure he depends upon one thing only—the extent to which he can carry conviction, and he convinces just to the extent that our own experience confirms his. Hence my own definition of the humanities would be simply this: they are that branch of inquiry concerned with the unmeasurable and the undemonstrable and dealing with it in such a way that although nothing is proved, something is, nevertheless, believed. The truths of the humanities are, in other words, those that cannot be demonstrated but can be recognized.

Thomas De Quincey's famous definition of humane literature as the literature of power, as distinguished from the literature of knowledge, is sound although sometimes misunderstood. The literature of knowledge is that which *confers* power; humane literature, that which *is* powerful. The self-sciences of psychology, sociology and history necessarily fall between two stools, and they would be both more useful and less dangerous if they always recognized the fact. So long as they deal only with what can be measured and experimentally verified, they rarely throw very much light upon the most important subjects. When, as all too often happens, they pretend to have proved something that their facts do not really prove, they can be disastrously misleading. They are most effective when they, like the novelist, carry conviction by statements whose truths we seem to recognize.

Sir Charles himself, when he expresses the opinion that scientists are better guys than humanists, is indulging in exactly the kind of loose, unsupported generalization often cited as reproachable in the man of letters. He may give random examples, but he presents no hard statistics. We may agree or not, and whether we do agree will depend upon our own experience. He is speaking as a humanist, not as a scientist.

Freud offers a more striking case in point. He was so far from establishing a science that there are by now almost as many incompatible schools of psychoanalysis as there are Christian sects. Competent physicists could not possibly disagree among themselves on fundamentals as psychoanalysts disagree. But Freud probably had as much effect upon our mental climate as any man who lived during his time, because when we read what he had to say, we experienced "the shock of recognition." What he had not actually demonstrated was recognized. We believed because our past experience had prepared us to do so.

The Lonely Crowd is, I suppose, the most widely read sociological work written in the United States during the past twenty years. Yet, as sociologists with a narrower conception of their quasi-science were quick to point out, it didn't actually prove anything. There were no measurements and no experiments weighty enough to be taken seriously. The examples of "inner-directed" and "other-directed" personalities were not selected by any controlled process of sampling but were treated merely as illustrations, much as a literary essayist might have treated them. Yet most readers did experience the shock of recognition. *The Lonely Crowd* is a contribution to "the humanities."

Scientists fear (not without reason) the power that literature has to keep alive and to propagate all sorts of notions, including the pernicious. It can decline into mere rhetorical oratory and sometimes make the worse appear the better reason. Poets, said the American novelist and paragrapher Ed Howe, are the only prophets who are always wrong. Exasperated by Alexander Pope Bernard Shaw exclaimed that "you can't make a lie true by putting it into an heroic couplet." But the unfortunate fact is that you can go a long way toward making it seem so. Said Mark Twain, "The history of the human race is strewn thick with evidence that a truth is not hard to kill; but that a lie, well told, is immortal." "Well told" is the operative phrase, and since to tell well is the special province of humane letters, they are no doubt responsible for more seemingly immortal lies than erroneous science ever has been. On the other hand, it is the great body of these same humane letters that have kept alive many supremely important concepts like those of "honor," "love,"' "duty," "the good life," et cetera, which science dismisses or at least ignores just because it has no means of dealing with them. A scientist may be and often is also a humanist, but he can be such only insofar as he recognizes the legitimacy of problems with which he cannot, as a scientist, deal. Accept science as the only legitimate concern of the human mind, and you must cease to concern yourself with anything that cannot be measured or experimented with. And a world that disregards everything thus excluded would be a world in which the human being as we know him would cease to exist.

The humanist cannot claim any success in his enterprise comparable to that which the scientist boasts of in his. He is compelled, generation after generation, to begin all over again. It is not certain that he has made any progress since the time of Plato and Aristotle or the times of Homer and Shakespeare. He may even find himself carrying less and less conviction to others, perhaps even being less and less sure himself. He never has, and he probably never will have, a method that produces results as the method of science does. But that is not because he is less intelligent and less competent. It is because the human being is more complicated than the physical world—more complicated even than the atom. But it is also at least as important to all of us; and as long as we continue to ask questions, even unanswered questions, we at least continue to recognize the reality of what the scientist tends to regard as non-existent or unimportant just because he does not know how to deal with it. Perhaps the best defense of the humanities was made by Justice Holmes when he said that science teaches us a great deal about things that are not really very important, philosophy a very little bit about those that are supremely so.

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REVIEW

JAMES JONES' COMBAT NOVEL

AS MANAS readers of long standing may recall, this Department is not among the adverse critics of the controversial Mr. Jones. *From Here To Eternity* was, we declared, a remarkable book. If the present lengthy volume, titled *The Thin Red Line*, is less comprehensive in scope than *Eternity*, it nevertheless may lay claim to being an unusual sort of "realism"—one which places no reliance upon dramatic devices. The concluding page contains a single sentence which hints at what Jones is striving for. It is in the author's last commentary on the regiment whose experiences on Guadalcanal are his subject-matter. The survivors are leaving for a rest, carrying with them a host of kaleidoscopic memories. "One day," says Mr. Jones, "one of their number would write a book about all this, but none of them would believe it, because none of them would remember it that way."

Robert Kirsch, reviewing *The Thin Red Line* for the Los Angeles *Times* (Sept. 30), is his usual percipient self in reporting on Jones' special talent:

> The real value of this book is Jones' amazing ability to forego the idea of emotion recollected in tranquility. This is precisely what he doesn't want to do. Written in retrospect, war novels have filtered out through memory and selection, the actuality—have tried to impose a point, a meaning. Jones brings us there to meet C-for-Charlie and the men who make it up in the moment of their agonies: the men are real, the words are real, death is real, imminent and immediate.
>
> Jones is . . . primitive, devoid of literary tricks; he has made himself the chronicler of the war we have tried to forget.

The opening chapter describes the island assault which, for Charlie Company, is a first baptism under fire. The Japanese bombers come over, are attacked by American fighters, and now and again the threatening big-bellied planes lose one of their number in a spectacular shoot-down. When the first bomber falls, a ragged cheer is the feeble response. But even this "our-side" sort of battle enthusiasm seems false. One soldier reflects:

> To Corporal Fife, standing tensely in the midst of the silent company headquarters, the lack of cheering only heightened his previous impression of its all being like a business. A regular business venture, not war at all. The idea was horrifying to Fife. It was weird and wacky and somehow insane. It was even immoral. It was as though a clerical, mathematical equation had been worked out, as a calculated risk: Here were two large, expensive ships and, say, twenty-five large aircraft had been sent out after them. These had been given protection as long as possible by smaller aircraft, which were less expensive than they, and then sent on alone on the theory that all or part of twenty-five large aircraft was worth all or part of two large ships. The defending fighters, working on the same principle, strove to keep the price as high as possible, their ultimate hope being to get all twenty-five large aircraft without paying all or any of either strip. And that there were men in these expensive machines which were contending with each other, was unimportant—except for the fact that they were needed to manipulate the machines. The very idea itself, and what it implied, struck a cold blade of terror into Fife's essentially defenseless vitals, a terror both of unimportance, his unimportance, and of powerlessness: his powerlessness. He had no control or sayso in any of it. Not even where it concerned himself, who was also a part of it. It was terrifying. He did not mind dying in a war, a real war,—at least, he didn't think he did—but he did not want to die in a regulated business venture.

This, of course, is World War II—the last war before the presence of the Bomb. But the reaction just described and the other perspectives which Jones suggests would hardly be different if nuclear weapons had been employed. True, there might have been less time for cogitation, but the psychological setting would remain the same. Another passage from a later chapter:

> If this were a movie, this would be the end of the show and something would be decided. In a movie or a novel they would dramatize and build to the climax of the attack. When the attack came in the film or novel, it would be satisfying. It would decide something. It would have a semblance of meaning and a semblance of an emotion. And immediately

> after it would be over. The audience could go home and think about the semblance of the meaning and feel the semblance of the emotion. Even if the hero got killed, it would still make sense.
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> Here there was no semblance of meaning. And the emotions were so many and so mixed up that they were indecipherable, could not be untangled. Nothing had been decided, nobody had learned anything. But most important of all, nothing had ended.
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> It would certainly end sometime, sure, and almost certainly—because of industrial production—end in victory. But that point in time had no connection with any individual man engaged now. *Some* men would survive, but no *one* individual man *could* survive. It was a discrepancy in methods of counting. The whole thing was too vast, too complicated, too technological for any one individual man to count in it.
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> The weight of such a proposition was deadening, almost too heavy to be borne, and Bell wanted to turn his mind away from it. The emotion which this revelation created in Bell was not one of sacrifice, resignation, acceptance, and peace. Instead, it was an irritating, chaffing emotion of helpless frustration which made him want to crawl around rubbing his flanks and back against rocks to ease the itch.

Another matter which interests Jones considerably is the deadening effect of combat—deadening to every layer of man's nature. Here, John Bell, an intelligent ex-officer now in the ranks, dimly perceives what is happening to him and to the others:

> He as the point would be the first big fat target. Irritably he glanced back to motion the others to come on and in doing so discovered something strange. He no longer cared very much. He no longer cared at all. Exhaustion, hunger, thirst, dirt, the fatigue of perpetual fear, weakness from lack of water, bruises, danger had all taken their toll of him until somewhere within the last few minutes—Bell did not know exactly when—he had ceased to feel human. So much of so many different emotions had been drained from him that his emotional reservoir was empty. He still felt fear, but even that was so dulled by emotional apathy (as distinct from physical apathy) that it was hardly more than vaguely unpleasant. He just no longer cared much about anything. And instead of impairing his ability to function, it enhanced it, this sense of no longer feeling human. When the others came up, he crawled on whistling over to himself a song called *I am An Automaton* to the tune of *God Bless America.*
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> They thought they were men. They all thought they were real people. They really did. How funny.

Well, these are the principal regions of psychological analysis in the James Jones "combat story." The author, we understand, has never himself been in a battle, which only goes to show that reflective thought may be richer in "realism" than literal experience. That this book deserves such serious appreciation is confirmed by Terry Southern's review in the *Nation* (Nov. 17, 1969):

> War novels present a curious creative problem, for no matter how "anti-war" they ostensibly are, they never wholly convey their position. The reason for this is that the worst aspect of war cannot be treated dramatically—the worst aspect being those moments when men are reduced, by pain, fear, shock, or hunger, to a level of mere survival-reflex. At these moments, men cease to exist as personalities—they are no longer distinguishable, one from another. Without personality, or human behavior, you cannot have drama—you have only identical ciphers, or animals. So that while a novel, as an antidote to chauvinistic myths of glory and adventure, may attempt to portray war truthfully, showing its horror, degradation, brutality, filth and privation, it can never quite reach full strength, because there is always that one area which is beyond dramatic treatment, and which is the worst of all. Given that inherent limitation, Jones's achievement is most certainly a remarkable one; if *The Thin Red Line* does not wholly de-glamorize war, it probably comes as near doing so as is possible.

COMMENTARY
THE PARADOX OF ENDS

IF we were asked to put a precise label on what Mr. Krutch is endeavoring to convey in this week's lead article (which appears in MANAS through the courtesy of the *American Scholar),* we should have to say that he is talking about the very essence of being human. And we would be inclined to add that any culture generally characterized by this sort of thinking would come very close to being the best of all possible cultures.

It would be, first of all, a culture absolutely free from the terrors and horrors of bureaucracy.

What is wrong with bureaucracy? Bureaucracy, as we commonly use the term, is the theory and practice of political certainty. Bureaus, no doubt, we shall always have, just as we shall always need traffic managers, production managers, and planners and directors of various sorts. In any organized society, there are countless functions which require someone to measure, count, and allot. But bureaucracy, as an administrative theory of the good and the true, is something more than these functions: it is the sovereignty of the egotism which grows out of measuring, counting, and alloting.

More largely, bureaucracy is any blind devotion to System. In this sense it includes all the theocratic religions and all the codified moralities, no matter what their origin. In psychological terms, it is the belief and expectation that by finding, developing and perfecting the correct techniques of measuring, counting and alloting, it will become possible to turn life into a Sure Thing.

The human being is a curious combination of traits. The longing for absolute certainty is plainly a quality of man. Yet the achievement of absolute certainty would be for any man the loss of his humanity. A man's absolute certainties are always the circular truths which turn back upon themselves. They are the frictionless verities which take him nowhere.

So, along with the hunger for certainty, he feels an equal compulsion to seek out uncertainty. Only in the regions of uncertainty can he still function as a human being.

The great question is this: Is this "uncertainty," of which we have a constant need, a quantitative reality in our lives, or is it a quality of our being?

If the conquest of uncertainty is something that we can look forward to—if the time will come when the last mystery is dispelled and its parts are properly catalogued and microphotographed—then the bureaucrats are right and all human energies and resources should be turned over to the specialists whose task it is to analyze and catalogue the universe.

But we know, or ought by now to know, that this is not the case. While we need systems and calculations and measurements to deal with the objective world, these do not have any effect at all on the qualitative uncertainty in our lives. Systems and calculations and measurements work, or seem to work, with finality only for the men who have ignored the qualitative uncertainty in their lives—who have been so deeply engrossed in the overcoming of objective uncertainty that they are convinced that there is no other problem before mankind.

On the other hand, if you say that the *true* issues of life are subjective, and that the philosophers and mystics have always followed the light that should be the beacon of truth for all men, you are in the position of seeming to argue that the heroic conquests of external uncertainty have been but worthless games. You turn your back on all that men have called "progress" and retire to your cell or your cave, there to complete the subjective quest.

This can hardly be the right thing to do. Total withdrawal from the skills of counting and measuring—what Mr. Krutch calls Science—and its conquests of the external seems a mockery of the wide world and the endless striving of life to make new forms. Are we so different from all of this? Life is in its way a system-builder, and are we not a part of life?

Perhaps what Mr. Krutch says of Freud and Riesman will provide a clue. Inside the shell of the scientific calculation there is the living seed of philosophic—or humanistic—encounter. The great scientists, in other words, had all an alchemistic dimension in their wonderings. They hid in their measurements, one might say, a secret hunger for the inward mystery. They thought, perhaps, by mighty strivings, to induce in the. external fabric of the world the rhythm of some new disclosures that would speak to their hearts.

So it is, in the works of these men, we feel a quality of being which is far from explicit, yet answers to the longings for an inward certainty. And lesser men suppose that the calculations they began, when completed, will reveal all.

The truths of nature, it may even be, are written in a cipher often as obscure and deceiving as the old writs of religion, yet by both analogue and parable are containers of humanistic reality.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NOTE ON DEWEY AND EDUCATION

RICHARD HOFSTADTER'S "The Child and the World," a long article appearing in *Dædalus* (Summer, 1962), examines a phase of John Dewey's thinking which we have never before seen stressed. Like other men of pioneering influence, Dewey has often been caricatured rather than honorably commemorated by his imitators. And the worst partisans among the "progressives" in education have tended to do the routinized sort of thinking which Dewey himself protested. Evidence of this—and that Dewey recognized the shortcomings of many of his disciples—is provided by Mr. Hofstadter in some quotations from one of the last things Dewey wrote (in 1952). Hofstadter summarizes:

> In his last significant statement on education, Dewey observed that "the drive of established institutions is to assimilate and distort the new into conformity with themselves," and, while commenting with some satisfaction on certain improvements introduced by progressive education, he ruefully remarked that the ideas and principles he had helped to develop had also succumbed to this process of institutionalization. "In teachers' colleges and elsewhere the ideas and principles have been converted into a fixed subject matter of ready-made rules to be taught and memorized according to certain standardized procedures." Memorization and standardized procedures once more! It did all too little good, he said, to train teachers "in the right principles the wrong way." With a hardy courage that can only inspire admiration, Dewey reminded progressive educators, once again and for the last time, that it is the right *method* of training that would form the character of teachers and not the subject matter or rules they were taught. Pursue the right methods, and the democratic society might yet be created; follow the "authoritarian principle," and education will be fit only to "pervert and destroy the foundations of a democratic society." And so the quest for a method of institutionalizing the proper anti-institutional methods goes on.

John Dewey was not the only man to realize that "a school of thought," even when hallowed by his own name, is apt to be neither a school nor a center for much thinking. What Dr. Dewey wrote in 1952 was simply a contemporary application of ideas presented in *Human Nature and Conduct*, published in 1929. Dewey then resisted systematized teaching by stressing the need for "plasticity" and for helping the young to obtain the "power to change prevailing custom." He also spoke of "insolent coercions, insinuating briberies, by which the freshness of youth can be faded and its vivid curiosities dulled."

Another effect of the institutionalization of ideas is oversimplification. In Mr. Hofstadter's opinion, Dewey's desire to see the classroom become a simulacrum of life finally became confused with another aspect of Dewey's idealism—the belief that exposure to "the good" could be expected to produce a continuing preference for it. In the progressive schoolroom, "cooperation, achievement and joy" were not tempered by exposure to their opposites of "defeat, frustration and "failure." Marietta Johnson, a founder of the Progressive Education Association, once said that "no child should ever know failure." This is debatable. Great learning is often, if not always, accompanied by great risk. Any pioneer in thought must be willing to face the fact that the idea for which he stands may be used to bury him.

At this point, we should like to quote from A. H. Maslow's paper, "The Need to Know and the Fear of Knowing." Dr. Maslow speaks of important "knowing" as that which is sought not only "spontaneously" but also "at no matter what cost." And the need to know for one's self reaches beyond the satisfaction of a pleasurable conditioning process. Maslow believes in a "cognitive capacity" which, if starved, leads to dangerous frustrations. He begins the development of this thesis by giving an example of counselling by himself which resulted in a young woman's undertaking work under extremely difficult circumstances, with the result that various neurotic symptoms in her personality structure soon disappeared. Dr. Maslow continues:

> At about this time, another bit of evidence came my way which supported this finding. E. L. Thorndike, and several of his colleagues at Teachers' College had gathered together a group of children with extremely high I.Q.'s—over 180 which is simply astronomical—for special study and education. One interesting uniformity showed up in this group. I was told by Dr. Irving Lorge that every single one of this group had spontaneously done research quite early, at no matter what cost. It was his impression that they simply could not be stopped, that their curiosity, persistent and organized, was a need, a hunger, a drive, that it pressed inexorably for expression.
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> These were the main sources that impelled me for the first time to think of the cognitive needs rather than simply of cognitive *capacities,* and to question the age-old separation of cognition from conation. I was tempted to assign a conative nature to curiosity and to understanding, an element of desire, drive or need, of a yearning, a longing, demanding satisfaction for the fullest growth of the person, a satisfaction that could be avoided only under peril of pathology and of diminution of the person.
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> As I pondered over this possibility, other considerations came to mind. The history of mankind supplies us with a satisfactory number of instances in which men looked for facts and for explanations in the face of the greatest dangers, even to life itself. There have been innumerable Galileos, whose curiosity led them into dangerous paths.

Without adequate challenge, "intellectual starvation" is bound to occur, and Dr. Maslow believes that the symptoms of such starvation are not restricted to frustrated adults. "The needs to know and to understand," he writes, "are seen in infancy and childhood nakedly and openly, perhaps even more strongly than in average adults. *Most* children are dangerously curious. As a matter of fact, the *lack* of curiosity and interest in environment means pathology." Now John Dewey was certainly anything but a dogmatist by nature, and we can well imagine that he would have been continually revising attitudes and opinions of a ritualistic nature, in any progressive school over which he might preside.

Marten Ten Hoor, in *Certainties and Uncertainties in Education* (Bode Memorial Lectures, 1955), expresses the dangers of all dogmatisms in this paragraph:

> It seems clear from all this that educational practice should never blindly and fatally commit itself to any greater or lesser dogmatism. To do this in the realm of philosophical speculation, where the purpose is only to achieve a synthetic and orderly view of the universe without any intention or hope of practical application in individual or social life, is a highly civilized occupation for the intelligence. But to translate such a dogmatism literally into rules of conduct and concrete laws and educational practice is to close the mind to the lessons of experience and, what is equally unfortunate, to the dictates of common sense. To do this means to multiply our practical uncertainties, or to decrease them. It is of course true that, generally speaking, in philosophy as well as in religion, people have a comfortable habit of forgetting or ignoring dogmatic tenets and of falling "naturally" into inconsistencies, supported by pretense and hypocrisy. But we are here concerned with dedicated and consistent, not with impulsive and occasional, philosophers.

John Dewey was a dedicated and consistent rather than an impulsive and occasional philosopher. No present-day educator should be allowed to entomb him with dogmas, whether the dogmas are honored or decried.

FRONTIERS

Socrates Rides Again

A READER of Walker Winslow's article, Factors of Survival" (Frontiers, MANAS, Nov. 28), writes in comment:

> Mr. Winslow commendably hopes "for a generation of responsible survival—one that can project itself into the future with acts and deeds that arise naturally out of a way of life and an ethic." However, it should be safe to say that at no time in history has any band of people been without its particular way of life and ethic—deeds and acts arising out of their particular way—these deeds and acts being the very stuff of "responsible survival" to that way of life and ethic.
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> Obviously, we are at a final crisis. Partial solutions will not work. We must involve ourselves instead with a *true* way of life and a *true* ethic. None of the ways of history have proven up for us. A radical new departure (although not necessarily a tumultuous one) must be taken, and a close—very close, and very clean—look at the past. We must take this look without desire to rationalize or to rebel, in order to know, to understand, what we somehow *must* get to know. . . . Be Thyself, still seems to be the clearest message for salvation yet given.
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> The means and the techniques to effect these realizations would seem to be what should *most* concern us all, and they should have the broadest possible base as part-and-parcel of our school curriculum, for a day-by-day learning process through direct experience of impartial logic and reason, as perhaps the only practical way. Certainly, our backs are against the wall and the Past shows itself bankrupt to our needs. It would seem that if History has any vital lesson for us, it is only that its paths to date have proven, in one way or another, eventually inadequate.
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>
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While the suggestions of this letter are of great generality, they are in key with some of the most serious thinking of the time, including the trend to basic self-questioning and search for the meaning of existential reality. But Miss Navratil becomes quite specific in her proposal that these pioneering activities be taken into the curriculum of the schools and made an intensive part of modern education. It is possible to give this proposal further attention.

How shall we get such exercises into the schools? What branch of education should be charged with this responsibility? If we look at existing institutions, we find that there are three possibilities. The question of the self and its meaning might find a place in the department of religion, the department of philosophy, or the department of psychology. On the whole, the chances of serious attention to the subject are slight, even in these departments, but it is at least possible.

But our correspondent is not talking about graduate studies in universities. This is not a matter of seeking out contact with Martin Buber or Paul Tillich for the religious approach to the self; Miss Navratil has not in mind a fortunate exposure to teachers of philosophy such as W. T. Stace or Paul Wienpahl; nor would courses under A. H. Maslow or Carl Rogers suffice. This proposal has for its beneficiaries the millions of school children of the country and for such purposes we cannot rely for help upon the distinguished few.

In short, the proposal is for intensive cultural devotion to the quest for a new kind of knowledge about ourselves as human beings, and for this our culture is totally unprepared. In other words, we are saying to this correspondent that there is not the slightest chance for broad institutional help in a project of this sort.

Save for a few leaders such as those mentioned above, there is not yet a dedicated interest in the psychology and philosophy of the idea of the self. This is not a "rank and file" project and it cannot become one for years to come. In evidence we offer some extracts from a recent paper by Dr. Henry A. Murray, professor of psychology in the department of social relations, Harvard University, entitled "Prospect for Psychology." We have been wanting to quote from it for several months, and now seize the opportunity.

> This paper, which was adapted from an address delivered at the International Congress of Applied Psychology held at Copenhagen in 1961 is a kind of allegory. The time is 1985. Dr. Murray casts himself as a Dante-esque character who is taken in charge by an angelic Vergil and led into an underground cavern where the spiritual powers of the universe are holding their own sort of Nuremberg Trials of the groups who are charged with responsibility for the Great Enormity—which took place six months earlier. It was—a biological, chemical and nuclear war between the U.S.S.R. and the United States . . . started inadvertently—by the push of a button during a small group's momentary panic—and concluded within a fortnight, leaving the essential structures of both countries leveled to the ground, their vital centers obliterated or paralyzed, their atmospheres polluted. Demoralized, isolated remnants of both populations, reduced to a mole-like existence underground, were now preparing amid the wreckage to defend themselves against invading forces, from China in the one case, from South America in the other.
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> "We are approaching the subterranean courthouse of posterity," announced the angel, "where those accused of responsibility for the Great Enormity—or of irresponsibility—are being tried before the gods, of whom there is a multiplicity I should say, in case you have not heard the news. On trial this evening is a host of academic psychologists of all breeds and nationalities."

It turns out that Socrates is the prosecutor. Skipping the introductory speeches and other celestial protocol, we turn to the place in the old Greek's summing up where he impales the prisoners before the bar with his "Socratic" questioning. If, he proposes, we can say that the two contesting powers might have been represented by "at least two interacting hostile personalities, each astringently attached to a contrasting set of social values or religion," there is this question to be put:

> I should like to ask what proportion of psychologists were observing and conceptualizing on the basis of two or more conflicting personalities, each operating as a directed system of beliefs, emotions, wants, and higher mental processes? Did, or did not, a goodly number of extremely intellectual psychologists, insisting on the utmost scientific rigor, shun the complexities of personality and, in search of higher pecking status, plant their minds in biology, physiology, statistics, symbolic logic, or methodology per se? And, among those academic psychologists who observed and tested persons, did or did not, a rather large percentage conceive of personality as a galaxy of abstractions in a vacuum—a mere bag of traits, a profile of scores on questionnaires, a compound of factors without referents, or, perhaps some elaborate formulation of a conflict between oedipal hate and fear of punishment—giving little indication, in any case, of how a person would proceed, and with what outcome, in a vehement transaction, let us say here, with a specified type of ideological antagonist?
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> "I have been told that a large number of more statistically oriented American psychologists—social psychologists you might call them—constructed their propositions wholly in terms of the conforming majority of the population studied. If this is true, did, or did not, the conformists who confirmed their theories (and therefore behaved lawfully in the scientific sense) become equated in the minds of these psychologists with what was functionally right and proper? Since their results relegated to limbo the responses of the better-than-average members of the population mixed with the responses of the worse-than-average, did not the publication of these results reinforce, with the authority of science, the complacence of mediocracy? Did, or did not, these psychologists conceive of any better standard of values than was provided by the relatively well adjusted, happy exemplifiers of the so-called 'dominant' culture patterns of their country?
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> "And here, divine jurists," said Socrates with special emphasis, "comes the crucial question, which my daemon is impelling me to ask, harsh though it may seem: Did the psychologists see or fail to see that the dominant majority in pretty nearly every sovereign state had been rendered obsolete, in certain critical respects, by the discovery of genocidal weapons? Suddenly the old rules of evolution had been drastically revised. Were, or were not, the psychologists aware of this? And, if aware, did they, or did they not, bring their minds and hearts to bear on the problem of specifying what kinds of personalities would be fit to govern nations of both blocs under these harrowing new conditions, as well as what kinds of men and women would be fit to support fit governments? . . .

> "In short, immortal judges, would you, or would you not, declare that quite a few psychologists—with no terminology at all to represent better-than-average personalities—added what influence they had to the general trend of denigration which reduced man's image of himself to the point of no revival, stripping it of genuine potentiality for creative change, the only ground there was for hope that people could do anything but what they actually did do? . . .
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> "I rest my case."

The foregoing by no means exhausts the juice in Dr. Murray's paper (which was printed in *Science* for May 11, 1962), but it is certainly sufficient to show why the higher echelons of education in the United States are not a resource for our correspondent's program in the schools.

We should not leave this question, however, without admitting that there are intrinsic difficulties in a program of education concerned with being and knowing yourself. What text would you use for the course? And if no text could be found, who would you get to do the teaching? Socrates and Henry Thoreau being unavailable, would you fall back on Henry Miller?

The fact of the matter is that since the decline of the high metaphysical religions, there has been no current material on being and knowing oneself. The teacher who would undertake this work would have to be incredibly ingenious in mining the ore of anecdote and biography. He would have to teach the course by giving illustrations from the lives of rare and distinguished individuals, and at the same time, to be effective, undertake a serious personal practice of what he preached.

What we are attempting to suggest is that this kind of education, this kind of teaching, is possible in modern times only in a cultural milieu which has been made rich with an atmosphere of extraordinary living by the people who make it up. It cannot be done by doctrine, supposing we had and could accept the doctrine.

So, we will not join in the cry to reform the public schools. The public schools cannot improve our culture. Our culture must improve, in the long process of time, the public schools. This means that concern with being and knowing the self is a task, now, not for the schools, but for people who see that this is the issue behind all the crises of the age.

And it means, also, that not so very much can be done for us, in such matters, by the leaders of modern thought. These leaders lead, not because they have answers, but because they are asking questions and abandoning old certainties. This practice produces a noticeable wisdom in everything that they say, but it is neither an especially communicable wisdom nor is it something that can be copied. The fact is that every man must ask his own questions, in his own terms.

Before there can be a milieu of self-study and self-search, there has to be a mood of self-questioning, which involves challenging the very basis of the society in which no such milieu exists, nor can exist, until its ways are radically changed. This sort of activity is therefore revolutionary, since it represents progressive withdrawal and alienation from many of the familiar ways and values of our society. Education in these directions is obviously impossible except on a do-it-yourself basis.