

POLITICS AND THE MORAL EMOTIONS

A REVIEWER in the *Nation*, discussing contemporary poetry, found reason to quote Theophile Gautier:

To be of one's own time—nothing seems easier and nothing is more difficult. One can go straight through one's age without seeing it, and this is what has happened to many eminent minds.

The reviewer, Hayden Carruth, himself a poet, uses Gautier to convict his fellow poets of a neglect of the nuclear agonies of the age. They do not, he says, "attack known injustices and stupidities," of which "the bomb, our monstrous, inescapable, political absurdity, [is] the place to begin." We are not qualified to pass on Mr. Carruth's judgment of his contemporaries. He may be quite right, although we easily think of one modern poet, Kenneth Patchen, who has addressed himself to just these anti-human horrors. Nor can we evaluate Mr. Carruth's explanation for this neglect, which is that American poetry "is stupefied by a massive neurosis—terror, suppression, spasmodic hysteria." In these matters he may have sensed exactly what is wrong. We have quoted him, not to reproach the poets, but to borrow the passage from Gautier; and not to adopt Gautier's conclusion, but to reverse it.

The one positive thing that can be said about this time—our time—is that we *are* seeing it as we go through it. And it is precisely because we do see what is happening to us (not entirely, of course, but in crucial aspects) that we experience so much psychological pain. Mr. Carruth believes that "the supreme political fact of our lives is the atomic bomb." We would add that the supreme psychological fact of our lives is our heightened and sharpened self-consciousness. And this, we propose, is a fact of prior significance.

No earlier age ever attempted the full-scale self-analysis that is being practiced today by

writers and specialists of every sort. The men who are living "at the height of the times" are all "therapists" of one sort or another—either professional or lay. They are not in pursuit of great, objective goals, but turn away from what pass for "goals" in our lives to the reasons we pursue them.

Another *Nation* writer makes this point in connection with the modern theatre. Since Ibsen, Lionel Abel suggests (*Nation*, April 27), the theatre has been in retreat from politics:

What Ibsen's plays lack, and what makes them essentially nonpolitical and ultimately middle class, is something that has been called "the consciousness of the forum." This kind of consciousness, which presupposes a wider collective unit than the family, has to be expressed in any truly political play; moreover, this kind of consciousness cannot be analyzed in Freudian or psychological terms. And it is this "consciousness of the forum" which society now lacks, it was supposed to be supplied in our time by the proletariat. Nowadays, members of the proletariat are very probably in the process of being psychoanalyzed. But a "consciousness of the forum" is surely present among the American Negroes; it is imposed upon them by their situation. Even if American Negroes would prefer to understand their feelings in terms of psychoanalytical—I almost said bourgeois—notions, I think history will not permit them such a luxury. They have to think—and are thinking, in fact—in much more political terms. The Negroes have to act upon the whites and on themselves, and this is something quite different from going to a doctor to be cured of one's irrational drives. While American whites have been lying on the couch, American Negroes have been asked by history—theirs and ours—to stand up.

The Negro, in short, is having his long-delayed eighteenth-century revolution, while the white man suffers from an unexplained *malaise* of complex origins.

The glory and the limitation of the eighteenth-century revolution was its unequivocal morality—

the Rights of Man. This is what Our Forefathers fought for. The deprived were to become undeprived. The strength and resolve of the individual were to become his access to the Good Life, not privileges fortuitously awarded by birth or accident of political power. This was the credo of the eighteenth century, evolved from the political principles of Equality and Freedom.

In the twentieth century, we are afflicted by a suspicion that the credo, if not the principles which support it, have become an anachronism. But how can we abandon principles which are so manifestly good? The force of this question becomes irresistible when we look at the Communist world, which *did* abandon the credo, and redefined the principles so that Equality has only an economic meaning and Freedom means no more than what the Communist State finds it convenient to say that it means.

The upshot of these developments is that the West, for all its ingenuity and intellectual and scientific progress, does not know how to relate its traditional morality to credible human purposes and workable political techniques. The fiasco of the recent attempt by the Government of the United States to arrive at some popular version of "national goals" is sufficient illustration of the dilemma.

This is the great, the extraordinary, weakness of the age. What, in contrast, is its strength? Our strength, as we have suggested, lies in a capacity for self-analysis. An article in the April *Newsletter* of the Council for Correspondence exploits this capacity in behalf of the objective of world peace.

The writer, Irving Louis Horowitz, is chairman of the department of sociology and anthropology at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He is author of the just-published (Ballantine) paperback, *The War Game*, noted in MANAS for May 15. In this article, Mr. Horowitz argues against the use of "moral principles" as the basis for effective peacemaking. His analysis is so searching, his argument so

apparently sound, that we quote him at length. He begins:

There is a persistent current of opinion amongst a number of men researching the problem of war and peace that the fundamental flaw in the present negotiation process is a breakdown in moral principles. This was forcefully brought to my attention by a keen scholar and research psychologist at the University of Michigan. In my book, *The War Game*, I had taken issue with Robert Gordis' position that there is an immediate need to close the breach between politics and ethics if we are to gain a true understanding of Soviet Russia. I argued that there is a far more immediate need to close the rupture between concrete politics and abstract policy-making.

My mid-western critic countered by stating that "morality is not some non-negotiable set of strategies, but rather a goal direction which gives meaning and point to many different kinds of specific actions." In a follow-up report, he indicated that the peace researchers were suffering from too little moral concern and too much policy concern. Since this problem has general implications for future strategies of the disarmament approach to world peace, and since I do not maintain that my own discussion of the matter in my "Morals, Missiles and Militarism" chapter settles the issue by any stretch of the imagination, I should like to reiterate and at the same time clarify my belief in the priority of political open-mindedness over moral principles.

To begin with, morals are only effective when embodied in a set of operational political guides, rather than the other way about. . . . The fault with a morally centered policy is that when we descend from the lofty heights of peace platitudes about the goodness of man and the rightness of cause, the minute one forces moral judgments upon social interests, the very intrusion of such an interest-ideological complex tends to burden and obscure the practice of the political arts, which must be specific as to the content of settlement.

Morality has become another word for unconditional: for the cold warriors, "victory" without conditions; for the peace warriors, "pacifism" without conditions. What is entailed is a surrender of reason, of decision-making within a concrete political setting. The cry for morality is a call for an ideologically-centered policy. The fact that our American policy elite call our ideology a morality, while our Soviet counterpart call their moral principles an ideology,

does not alter the drift toward totalism, toward a fanatical vision of the future.

Mr. Horowitz is so very right in so many important respects that it takes considerable determination to quarrel with him at all. The last sentence quoted above is just about perfect as a psychological characterization of the main contenders in the Cold War. Mr. Horowitz may not have read Avery Craven's *The Coming of the Civil War*, but this is a work that supports his analysis to the hilt. Craven shows that so long as the issue of slavery was kept from being moral-political, there was some hope of solving the South's great problem without recourse to armed struggle. But when the Northern moralists insisted upon self-righteous denunciations of the Southern planters, the Southerners themselves abandoned all self-doubts and constructed an elaborate apologetic for their way of life, founded upon the model of Athenian democracy, which was also a slave society. Indeed, it is Craven's central thesis that "morality," offensive and defensive, produced the Civil War.

In order to do Mr. Horowitz complete justice, it becomes necessary to review the steps *he* would like to see taken in behalf of peace. He has six related proposals for tension reduction and "tactical initiatives":

(1) a shift from policy based on the morality of anti-communism to a policy based upon common survival and popular right of free choice in matters of social systems (2) a recognition that the policy of deterrence is at best a halfway house to a disarmament policy, and at worst, a halfway house moving in the opposite direction toward full armaments and a first-strike posture; (3) an attempt to refocus and rechannelize energies toward the problems of underdevelopment, development, and overdevelopment, and away from inherited postures of either promilitarism or antimilitarism; (4) the development of a method of show-down postponement to replace the precarious notion of instantaneous retaliation; (5) the introduction of some mechanism for ensuring the "circulation and replenishment of elites" to insure a political responsiveness of decision-makers; (6) to juridically secure the concept of "veto-groups," and following

this, to work out a pattern of departmental interdependence at the government level to replace the present drift toward departmental "autonomy" in which branches of the administration compete with and contradict one another, thereby increasing the possibilities of an endless number of political miscalculations and military calamities.

Admittedly, such political-organizational proposals do not have the attractiveness of a universalist ethical doctrine of peace, but neither do they have the deficits of such ethical absolutes. The call for morality is too frequently a disguised form of displeasure with the creaky machinery of the negotiation process. It is, to be blunt, a fanciful and embroidered impulse toward fanaticism. Given the present preponderant fanaticism of the political right *vis-a-vis* the articulate left, a restoration of a morally centered policy approach could only have dire international consequences. The more rigidly moral commitments are fixed, the narrower is the range for political settlement. Peace researchers ought not to forget that it is precisely grandiose poses which characterize the propaganda barrage intended to obscure functional similarities between the United States and the Soviet Union.

We needed this lengthy statement of Mr. Horowitz's views to get at what he means. What he calls "morality" is morality which has degenerated into ideology and, in this form, been made into the hard and brittle weapon of self-righteousness. Is there any other kind of morality?

Part of the trouble in communication with the word "morality" comes from its double meaning. People with scientific training look less kindly on the term than the rest of us. A sociologist is likely to take the word in its etymological meaning (derived from the Latin for manners; habit, custom—*mores*) and, from his objective stance ostensibly *outside* the foibles and illusions of an age, to point to the follies people commit themselves to in the name of "morality." Mr. Horowitz has certainly done this. Another way of reading the term is to stay *inside* its meaning—as a human being and, as we say, a *moral* agent—and to argue that morality supplies meta-pragmatic principles of human conduct. On the latter view, you could say that such idealistic

morality is derived from some source in ethical philosophy, some theory of meaning in human life and some theory of the good in human behavior. In any event, it would be very difficult to deny that morality, in this sense, is a deeply rooted form of motivation in human beings and not likely to be done away with by logical analysis, however closely reasoned.

One might propose, for example, that in some sense of the term Mr. Horowitz is himself a moralist. That is, he has become *engaged* in one phase of the struggle for human good—in the argument about world peace and how to get it. Like the rest of us, he has motivations and, as with the rest of us, some of them are grounded in ethical convictions. This, we think, goes without saying. He wants us to have a good morality instead of a bad or self-destructive one. "The more rigidly moral commitments are fixed, the narrower is the range of political negotiation; while the more wide-open moral postures are, the wider the range for political settlements." So, Mr. Horowitz wants "more wide-open moral postures."

Let us turn to another phase of the question, and of his article. "Morals," he says, "are only effective when embodied in a set of operational political guides."

This is a capsule preface to the explanation of every great revolution in history. By turning his statement about, and adding to it, we get the following: "When the moral impulses of large numbers of human beings can no longer find expression through the existing channels or patterns of political life, the result is an accumulation of moral indignation and stress which finally bursts out in an irresistible demand for change." These psycho-socio-moral explosions are seldom characterized by sweet reasonableness—at least, they have not been in the past. (The Gandhian Revolution—the Gandhian conception of non-violent social and moral change, conceived as a projected political transformation—is an attempt to replace the

violence of such waves of moral emotion and to give them an ethical-rational ground.)

We should however note at this point that the correspondence between the moral sense of human beings and the socio-political vehicles for its expression and satisfaction is never perfect and more commonly quite bad. This failure of political forms to accommodate the moral life of man is the foundation of anarchist philosophy—the background reality of the proposition of Jefferson, and others, that the best government is the least government.

It is necessary to stipulate this inadequacy of political forms as the common lot of all politically organized mankind and the chief practical problem of the philosophy of law. For this reason, Mr. Horowitz tells us nothing new when he observes that morals need "a set of operational political guides" if they are to be effective. The real question, which he does not examine, is whether his "six related proposals for tension reduction" will really work as channels for the slowly awakening moral longings of our world and time.

This is the other side of the question. It concerns the moral emotions which are not frozen into a set of ideological slogans, but are watering the soil of revolutionary behavior. We have before us the April 26 issue of the London *Peace News*. Page one has the main heading, "Greek March Success," with the sub-heading, "2000 arrested for defying government ban." The first paragraphs of the story read:

The Greek march from Marathon to Athens, organized by the Bertrand Russell Youth Committee of 100, was banned by the Greek Government. It was nevertheless one of the most successful demonstrations of its kind held in Europe in recent years. It was the first significant act against the repressive Greek Government since the Civil War ended in 1950, and was supported by all political parties except the Government.

For the Greek Government it came at a particularly delicate time, shortly after the Paris Conference for the Amnesty of Political Prisoners in Greece, and at the very time that Mr. Livingston

Merchant, President Kennedy's plenipotentiary, was in Greece offering proposals for a multilateral nuclear force.

The British delegation was arrested and deported, and 2,000 Greek people were arrested, some with great violence.

Pat Pottle, of the Committee for 100, who went to Greece as Bertrand Russell's personal representative to the March, tells what happened after he was arrested:

I was then taken to the head of the Athens police; they treat this man like a god. I've never seen people so scared. These men that had all been shouting at us and screaming at us suddenly go dead quiet when this man enters the room and they kind of stand at attention. Anyway, his first words were that I was a Communist, and he told me to go to Moscow, so I explained that we had had demonstrations in Moscow, that I had been arrested at the Russian Embassy twice, and that we had had a sit-in at the Russian Embassy. Then he told me I was a fascist. So I told him this was strange coming from a government that, in my opinion, uses fascist methods. So then he told me that we were against the free world. So I told him not to even mention the free world to me. If he wanted to speak about the free world to go and speak to his thousand political prisoners and ask them what they thought of the free world. At this stage he just blew up; he went absolutely mad and started screaming. He then said they were going to deport us.

Page seven of this issue of *Peace News* is devoted to a round-up report on the Easter Marches throughout the Western World. The headings give the number of the participants: Germany, 23,000; Switzerland, 1,000; Belgium, 8,000; Austria, 1,600; Denmark, 1,000; Netherlands, 1,500; Australia, 3,500; New Zealand, 800; with further reports on activities in Canada, Italy, France, and the U.S.A. It is an interesting coincidence that in the April 27 issue of the *Nation*, a reviewer of two books on politics from England titles his essay, "The Fear of Passion," and remarks the almost total withdrawal of modern statesmen from "passionate devotion to a cause, passion governed by recognition of the ethic of responsibility." This writer, J. H. Grainger, concludes:

We have all become very good at diagnosis and there is now a formidable consensus that in highly developed countries politics will become more and more esoteric, and that, as the discourse narrows, it will spill over only very infrequently into society. Political choice will no longer engage the heart and the mind. . . . In these conditions political heroism of the old desperate kind seems as little likely to flourish as the military virtues. But it is improbable that all the discontents of political man have been articulated, that all tensions will be absorbed by the new political sociology. There is a whole miscellany of grievances which have not yet become political because there is as yet no language to express and illumine them. . . .

Here other phases of the self-consciousness of the age are explored. We are by no means sure that Mr. Horowitz should be labeled as a practitioner of this "new political sociology," but he ought, we think, to give some attention to the moral emotions which are gathering strength around the world. The politics of tomorrow will have to reckon with them.

REVIEW

A LONG WAY TO GO

JUSTICE WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS is said to be an incurable optimist in private life. As a Justice of the United States Supreme Court, however, Mr. Douglas has always made it clear that we cannot have a free society until we learn how to analyze and uproot the psychological obstacles to freedom. Issues of "civil rights" are of crucial significance, not only for those who are deprived, but also because the men who do the depriving are failing to educate themselves toward maturity. According to Douglas, civil liberties need guarding, especially today, in certain largely-ignored areas. In a speech before the National Civil Liberties Clearing House, he said:

The power of the bureaucracy is crushing. Only the expert can find his way. One not flanked by lawyers has little chance to enjoy his rights. The lone individual without a spokesman loses his rights by default. That problem promises to get more serious.

Arrests for investigation are still common in some areas of the country. The persons arrested are not sons and daughters of the upper or middle classes. They come from the lower strata or from minority groups who do not know how to protect themselves and who do not have the prestige, courage or resources to vindicate their rights through suits for false arrest.

Being poor and looking for a job is a crime in many of our localities. . . . vagrants, whose only crime is poverty, are convicted by the thousands and no bar association committee concerns itself with the matter.

Some cities—and I speak principally of Northern ones—have a widening river of hate . . . we know that when racial bias is indoctrinated into the police or when the police are allowed to treat a Negro or a member of another minority as a second-class citizen, the river of hate widens.

The privilege of circulating dubious propaganda is assumed by many who occupy positions of staunch respectability in the American community. Among these are the authors and distributors of textbooks for schools. Some texts, according to Douglas, "proclaim Protestantism

over Catholicism and Christianity over Judaism by failing to describe the history of religious liberty in a fair way [and] many texts subtly downgrade the Negroes in favor of the whites." On this uncomfortable subject, the paralyzing bias of the "false basis of race" is made evident by a report in the April issue of *Contact*. The following paragraphs, which were printed alone on an editorial page, are arresting:

In Kansas City, where everything is up to date, except cognizance of United States Supreme Court rulings, a Negro couple, Hugh and Lela Shanks, refused to register their children in a segregated school, whereupon they were arrested, tried, convicted, and fined for abetting truancy. One of the area's most widely known radio-TV personalities, on first learning of the case, announced that he would interview the couple, but after some reflection failed to keep his appointment. The most influential paper in that part of the midwest, the *Kansas City Star*, maintained almost total silence. Discretion, cowardice or apathy? Take your pick. Lela Shanks now is teaching her children, and those of several courageous neighbors, at home. "Every time the door bell rings," she says, "the children ask a little more matter-of-factly each day: 'Is it the police?'" And she continues, "One morning as we recited the pledge of allegiance, my eleven-year-old said, 'I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with blank and blank for blank.' When I scolded her, she said, 'Well, that couldn't mean us.' I told her, some day this would all be a memory and she would know it meant her from a living experience."

What good is school anyway? What are American children learning? Professor Urie Bronfenbrenner showed some photographs of Russian highways to a group of school children in Ithaca, New York. One child wanted to know why there were trees alongside the roads, so the other members of the class were asked what they thought was the reason. One answered: "So that people won't be able to see what's going on beyond the road." Another said: "It's to make work for prisoners." When the professor asked why there were trees alongside many American highways, the children replied that they were for shade, or were to keep the dust down.

What is the progress of such orientation? A poll of student attitudes in sixteen universities showed that

a majority regard Communism as a greater danger than nuclear war. A preference for death is implicit.

In Prof. Frederick Mayer's *New Directions for the American University*, a good deal of hardheaded and blunt criticism accompanies the author's optimism. Concerning the university of his acquaintance and its community, Dr. Mayer has this to say:

As long as we separate the college from the community, we live in an unreal ivory tower and we add to the culture lag of our time. This reminds me of a small college with excellent scholastic standards. The professors are competent and the students usually do well in big Eastern graduate schools. The curriculum of this college is dominated by traditionalism and the cult of specialization.

This college is in a community where severe racial tensions prevail. Mexicans are part of a minority group and are not accepted in polite society. The town is divided into two parts: One Caucasian, the other Negro and Mexican. Yet the college only admits six Negro students and five of Mexican origin. There is no overt discrimination against them, but many doors are closed to them.

The deadly sin of higher education is smugness. As in religion self-righteousness is an obstacle to genuine growth.

The new conception of the university is as a genuine community center where pressing social problems are solved in a cooperative way. The idea is that there is a need not merely to reflect life, but to improve it for the common man. Knowledge thus leaves the ivory tower and enters the market-place.

Education cannot ignore questions of "civil rights" unless we consider the task of education to be simply that of transmitting technical information. Martin Daniel makes this point in a recent issue of the British magazine *Anarchy* (November, 1962). Discussing "a charter for the unfree child," he says: "When a girl of 17, kind, charming, well-educated, can tell me without a trace of shame that the proximity of a Negro makes her shudder, it is clear that her education has failed." It is also the anarchist view that the unfortunate environmental pressures which so frequently surround our minorities are related to neurotically punitive attitudes on the part of

society in general—in this case, a punishment is exacted simply because a person or a group appears to be "different." When we tolerate any form of group prejudice or ethnic discrimination, in other words, we are in effect assenting to the *punishment* of a minority group.

COMMENTARY

CAPTIVES OF "WAR MORALITY"?

THE quotations from Irving Louis Horowitz in this week's lead touch the very nerve of the problem of war and peace. Mr. Horowitz seems to be saying that the chief barrier to peace is the self-righteous emotion of the rival contenders in the Cold War. A portion of his argument runs:

The recent book by Emmet John Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power*, forcefully illumines the point that those who urge a morally-centered policy, often do so at the expense of a politically centered policy. In this connection, Hughes' description of the rigid and irrelevant moralizing of the late John Foster Dulles makes clear that it is not a question of "our" morality versus "their" morality, but an absolutist notion of morality itself which is, and has been, so damaging to political settlements. "Through all the years ruled by the taut doctrines of John Foster Dulles, the national policy had decreed an almost religious kind of commitment to a moralistic definition of the relations between nations. By the terms of this orthodoxy, the promise of salvation lay in a kind of political excommunication of Soviet power. The means of grace, moreover, were assured: the political weakness of Soviet power was ultimately guaranteed by its moral wickedness." This is precisely the sense in which the late Joseph Stalin was also a "moral" man. Indeed, the present conflict between the Soviet and Chinese Communist Parties can be summed up as a conflict between political pragmatism (of a Marxian variety) and moral communism (of a Lenin-Stalin variety).

What will bother some—perhaps many—of Mr. Horowitz's readers is that he seems to be discounting the very feelings for which we made the "supreme sacrifice" of going to war earlier in this century; that is, our devotion to the moral verities and freedoms we resolved to protect from ultimate disaster. By proposing that peace-making be pursued without "commitment to a moralistic definition of the relations between nations," he seems to be asking the reader to accept a curious switch in the motivations of national policy: For the terrible and morally shocking act of war, we find it necessary to have the most righteous of moral intentions; yet, when

it comes to the civilized and humane purposes of peace, he would have us forget those intentions and turn to the morally indifferent techniques of "politics."

The very "objectivity" of this writer will lose at least part of his audience for him. How many people, it may be asked, are now psychologically capable of abstraction from conventional moral attitudes in relation to the problems of war and peace? It may be said that Mr. Horowitz is not really writing for the great mass of citizens, but for those who address themselves "realistically" to the techniques of national policy. Another "realism," however, obliges us to recognize that a peace program of any sort must gain the sympathies of the people at large, if it is to have any lasting success. One wonders how Mr. Horowitz might go about I revising his book to appeal to this audience.

He would have to begin, it seems to us, with some general considerations of how modern world wars come about, and then show the effect of the psychology of war-making on the psychology of peace-making. A paragraph from Norman Angell's *Peace and the Plain Man* would make a good text for launching such an analysis:

Governments become the prisoners of their own propaganda. They produce a certain type of mind or flow of emotions for the purposes of war. But that flow cannot be turned off like a tap when the war is over, . . . The peace comes, and then governments are compelled to make a peace they don't want to make, because the state of mind produced during the war clamours for that kind of peace. And then that kind of peace makes more war. Our governments and rulers and leaders become prisoners of their own Frankenstein monsters in another sense: they end by believing their own propaganda.

What are the chances for Mr. Horowitz to gain acceptance of the following item in his argument:

The "American Way" and the "Communist Victory" have few moral differences. They are, after all, both extensions of Enlightenment and Christian rationalism despite their once irreconcilable opposition. In the realm of instrumentalities very sharp differences do obtain; the question of how much individual expression for desired ends, etc. But the dialectic of the *Anarch* on the one side and *Behemoth* on the other is hardly unique or limited to the great powers. Nor is it an opposition which can be settled by moralistic demands for doctrinal purity or for unconditional victories. The days of pure ideologies and total military solutions are finished. Either that or we are finished.

We have no doubt of the strong element of truth in this analysis. What Mr. Horowitz says is informed by a knowledge of history and animated by broad humanitarian regard. But if a writer wants to gain support for this kind of social and political intelligence, he will have to start at the beginning of a process of fundamental re-education. He will have not only to show the follies of nationalism and national self-righteousness, but also to engage the moral feelings of his readers for the welfare of the *family of man*, while exposing the falsities in propaganda which exploits partisan morality for nationally self-interested ends. He will have to explain, in short, how he got to where he stands.

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

INTRODUCTION TO TAOISM

[In search of an inviting yet clearly defined approach to the relation of education to religion, we come to one basic idea—that the human mind, whether of a child or an adult, can learn nothing new, discover nothing worth knowing, if the experience of religion is sectarian. One may *believe*, of course, but that is an entirely different matter.

To explore man's inner need for a feeling of transcendence, and of the permanence of the self or soul, does not, however, require a theological point of departure. One can turn to the scriptures that have moved countless people according to rote and find that they also move him, but through his spontaneous reaction.

Great scriptures are in one sense like the music of the poetry which has reached into the hearts of so many that it has blended into the common human heritage. If these scriptures are approached without notice of any sectarian position, they may be found to say much of both psychology and philosophy, as well as of religion. This sort of "comparative religion" can be natural to all men, and, through parents, to all children.]

THE great scriptures are all imbued with a special kind of magic. In studying *The Bhagavad-Gita*, one comes to see something of what is meant by the term "mystery religion." Certainly, many of the metaphors and symbols employed may seem confusing at first glance, only later yielding a germinal idea or perception. In *The Dhammapada*, we find ourselves engaged in gradually weaving our own web of psychological and ethical philosophy, as correlations between the Buddha's various sayings begin to establish themselves in our minds. As many distinguished teachers of mankind have made clear, a man reaches full stature only when he can stand alone, when his beliefs and "religion" come from that mysterious temple housing his private intuitions.

This, clearly and certainly, is the language and the appeal of Lao-tse and the *Tao Te King*. This book, even more than *The Bhagavad-Gita*, defies

systematic study. For Lao-tse, whether he discusses Tao as a "moral principle" or reflects on the implications of Tao for the field of law and government, is simply meditating upon the Oneness of all life. And this Oneness, for Lao-tse, means not only the kinship among all men, which humanist doctrine teaches, but represents also an "immutable principle" upon which systematized speculation is unrewarding. The intent is to reach a plane of intuitive perception which affords a panoramic perspective on all systems of morality and philosophy—so that Lao-tse might be regarded as both "irreligious" and a true mystic.

In the first section of the *Tao Te King*, we find two brief paragraphs which express the essentials of all transcendental philosophy:

The mightiest manifestations of active force flow solely from Tao. Tao in itself is vague, impalpable,—how impalpable, how vague! Yet within it there is Form. How vague, how impalpable! Yet within it there is Substance. How profound, how obscure! Yet within it there is a Vital Principle. This principle is the Quintessence of Reality, and out of it comes truth.

From of old until now, its name has never passed away. It watches over the beginning of all things. How do I know this about the beginning of things? Through Tao.

The transcendentalism of Emerson, Thoreau, and Bronson Alcott is fundamentally Taoist. Emerson, in particular, seems to write on all subjects from a Taoist perspective. Emerson saw that the quintessence of reality is always "incalculable"—that is, always a higher perception to be striven for, no matter what heights of enlightenment have hitherto been attained. In Emerson's essay on "Circles," he expresses this idea beautifully by saying that "our life is an apprenticeship to the truth, that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on midnoon, and under every deep a lower deep opens." When Emerson later remarks that "there are no fixtures in nature—the universe is fluid and volatile," he is

but repeating the first proposition of the *Tao Te King*. Here we have a point of view which at once shows the public attainment of "absolute truth" by mortal man to be an impossibility, and from this we derive protection against the extravagant claims of religions.

There is reason to think that Emerson found much of his "Taoist perspective" in *The Bhagavad-Gita*, and here we come to the first of many opportunities to draw correlations between the *Gita* and the book of *Tao*.

First, the *Tao Te King*:

All-pervading is the Great Tao. It can be at once on the right hand and on the left. All things depend on it for life, and it rejects them not. Its task accomplished, it takes no credit. It loves and nourishes all things, but does not act as master. It is ever free from desire. We may call it small. All things return to it, yet it does not act as master. We may call it great.

Tao lies hid and cannot be named, yet it has the power of transmuting and perfecting all things.

Tao produced Unity; Unity produced Duality, Duality produced Trinity, and Trinity produced all existing objects. These myriad objects leave darkness behind them and embrace the light, being harmonised by the breath of Vacancy.

Tao produces all things, its Virtue nourishes them; its Nature gives them form; its Force perfects them.

Turning to chapters nine and ten of the *Gita*, we discover the same account of that absolute principle which pervades and energizes all forms, but which is not contained by them:

All this universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form; all things exist in me, but I do not exist in them. Nor are all things in me; behold this my divine mystery: myself causing things to exist and supporting them all but dwelling not in them.

The deluded despise me in human form, being unacquainted with my real nature as Lord of all things. They are of vain hopes, deluded in action, in reason and in knowledge, inclining to demoniac and deceitful principles. But those great of soul, partaking of the godlike nature, knowing me to be the

imperishable principle of all things, worship me, diverted to nothing else.

I am the origin of all; all things proceed from me; believing me to be thus, the wise gifted with spiritual wisdom worship me; their very hearts and minds are in me; enlightening one another and constantly speaking of me. . . .

So, before the student proceeds to think about Lao-tse's many lesser paradoxes, it is well to understand that all these are reflections of the greatest paradox of all—the fact that man wins true individuality only to the extent that he is willing to relinquish his definitions of self—to see that beyond his personality, beyond any values which he may attain, is "the Tao."

Confucius, whose generation overlapped the life of Lao-tse, once said of the older philosopher: "I have just seen Lao-tse. Can it be said, he is as difficult to understand as the dragon? He teaches the vitality of Tao. His doctrine appears to lead one to aspire after self-effacement and obscurity." Confucius became the architect of the classical tradition of China, but Lao-tse was in no sense a moralist. Lao-tse not only believed that the best government is the least government; he also believed that the man who governs himself with least recourse to doctrinal forms or moral codes comes the closest to self-realization. To discover why Lao-tse so taught and why he was much more than simply a forerunner of Western "anarchism," we have only to turn to the memorable first passages of the *Tao Te King*:

The Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao; the name which can be uttered is not its eternal name. Without a name, it is the Beginning of Heaven and Earth with a name, it is the Mother of all things. Only one who is eternally free from earthly passions can apprehend its spiritual essence; he who is ever dogged by passions can see no more than its outer form. These two things, the spiritual and the material, though we call them by different names, in their origin are one and the same. This sameness is a mystery,—the mystery of mysteries. It is the gate of all spirituality.

FRONTIERS

Psychotherapy: Is it Becoming Something Else?

Is psychotherapy properly a medical specialty, or is it in fact a package of cultural compensations for a number of serious lacks or flaws in modern society?

This question could be said to be prompted by more than one sort of confrontation. For example, the psychoanalyst (Erich Fromm) or the psychiatrist (Charles B. Thompson) with wide experience of psychological and emotional disorders may be led to generalize about the causes of these ills in terms of attitudes which are common to practically everyone in Western society. The psychically sick, from this point of view, are often those who try to respond indiscriminately—uncritically or naïvely—to stimuli which are characteristically present in all branches of society, yet are in logical and moral conflict with one another. The tough-minded person may be able to "handle" these contradictions by a calculated balance of self-interests; the sophisticated deal with them by withdrawal, cynicism, and usually with some practical hypocrisy added; the strong and the wise resist by an inner discrimination and selection of channels of consistent behavior; but the simple conformist—the person who seeks to please the mentors of the market place—this individual is exceedingly vulnerable.

There are other, less easily discovered factors in mental health, no doubt, but the massive influence of the cultural conditionings of society at large can hardly be denied.

Another prompting to questions about the role of psychotherapy comes from the sort of "maturity" therapists themselves are giving evidence of—typified, perhaps, in the transitions recounted by Ira Progoff in his book, *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology*. A practical understanding of how people actually "get well" has led to a notable rejection by therapists of any sort of authoritarian role. (Strong "authority" may have a legitimate place in the treatment of patients who are helplessly psychotic, but it is generally acknowledged that mental health is possible only for the one who learns

to manage his own psychological affairs.) With this avoidance of authority comes a wondering about how self-reliance may get itself established in the life of the individual.

This, it turns out, is something more than a "psychological" question, so that the therapist finds himself spreading out, investigating philosophy and religion, looking at particular aspects of the educational process, and, as a result, studying the broad relationship of his profession to the society in which all these puzzles occur. Is he, the therapist, trying to bear the burdens of other groups—people who have somehow lost track of how to do their jobs—or whose jobs have grown too big and too complicated for anyone to do? Is the therapist saddled with responsibility for the casualties of multiple failures which are social as well as individual? If so, what should he, as a conscientious member of the community, be doing about it? He can't exactly "complain" about such a situation; after all, to whom can he apply for help?

An article by Herbert Fingarette in the Fall 1962 *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* helps to illustrate the sort of thinking that is characteristic of these developments. His title, for example, "On the Relation Between Moral Guilt and Guilt in Neurosis," is suggestive of the idea that there is a kind of guilt which "ought" to be felt, as well as the kind of guilt feelings which make you sick. In fact, it might be argued that the failure to feel the guilt which ought to be felt is itself a symptom of sickness. Dr. Fingarette says early in his paper:

I shall argue that, with exceptions that cannot concern us here, *all* guilt with which the psychotherapist deals should properly be taken as *real* guilt. To see how this is so is to see how the therapeutic relation is a human encounter moving amid genuinely moral issues. Yet, if I am right, we should also see that the therapist does have a specifiable professional role which is appropriate to his training, a role with bounds which there are no systematic grounds for overstepping. . . .

The distinctive characteristic of the neurotic's guilt is not its unreality but, briefly put, its unacknowledged *source* in infantile, irrational, immoral commitments which are deeply but surreptitiously at the roots of his being. . . . in

psychotherapy, the lesson the patient must learn is that he cannot excuse himself, he cannot divest himself of responsibility by allocating such matters to the class of mere "bugbears generated in the cavern of the unconscious." This would be an evasion, and the neurotic's fundamental moral crisis has its source in just such evasions, his task is to achieve integrity. As a prelude to achieving integrity, the patient must consciously *real-ize* the extent to which, for example, he *really* wants to be a child, or really harbors within himself murderous impulses toward his father. The first step in insight therapy is to accept these impulses as one's own, not to classify them as unconscious and therefore alien.

An impressive feature of Dr. Fingarette's discussion is that you can *understand* it without being a specialist. The meaning of this kind of therapy is a part of the classical dialogue about the human condition. Further, it restores the concept of "morality" to this phase of life, but does so without raising any theological ghosts. Morality, in these relationships, is based upon the need to be honest with one's self. The concluding portion of Dr. Fingarette's paper is concerned with the role of the psychotherapist:

The special pathos of the neurotic's fate is that the source of the guilt is not understood, its legitimacy often doubly obscured by displacement to venial sins, misdemeanors, nonsense-acts. The only illusion involved in connection with the neurotic's guilt is the self-deception of the neurotic as to the *occasion* of his guilt.

This view of the matter clarifies the difference between the psychotherapist and the spiritual adviser or the wise and good friend. It is true that the psychotherapist is never just a technician dealing with mere "feelings," mere pseudo guilt. He is always a person in an encounter with another human being who is bearing a genuinely human burden. The therapist is concerned, generally, with the failures of the person to achieve or to maintain integrity. I have not here attempted to discuss his role in helping those who have never yet achieved an adult integrity. I have concerned myself here with neurotic failures. In connection with these, the therapist's role *can* be delimited. His professional concern is with these failures insofar as they rely on systematic, purposeful self-deception, either with regard to the realities of the "external" world or the realities of the "inner" world. The psychotherapist is an expert—insofar as

one can be "expert" in human affairs—on the conditions, the motives, and the devices associated with *self-deceptive evasion* of the world in which one has one's being. His professional and humane art has relevance here. Outside this area, that is, in the arena where the person is self-aware, that person may or may not need help of some kind—we all do at times—but, if he does, it is not the professional help of the psychotherapist.

One is driven to wonder, by such comments, what would happen to the therapist's function in a society which was able to develop general cultural awareness of the meaning of integrity—which is to say, a thorough-going subjective morality to take the place of the notions of good and evil that shape the common attitudes of people today. It seems reasonable to think that in such a society, the need for psychotherapy would grow less and less, instead of more and more, as in the present. On the other hand, we may get from the psychotherapists of our time something that we have not been able to get from anyone else—the beginnings of an authentic philosophy of life which has self-validating principles. The reasoning to support this expectation goes something like this:

Integrity, whatever its "moral" meaning, is for the psychologist a synonym of mental or emotional health. It may be found, as analytical thinking proceeds on this principle, that there are certain leading ideas about the nature of man and about the good life of human beings which are seen in practice to support mental health, while other ideas attack it. This would be a form of pragmatic verification of philosophical ideas. Actually, Buddhism rests most of its claim to attention on this kind of validation, so that the evolution of psychotherapy in this direction would be a stage in the development of a great philosophical tradition. For modern man, the social outcome of psychotherapeutic practice might well be to accomplish a functional merger of morals and medicine, philosophy and psychology, with the result that we would have the basis for a cultural unity that the Western world has never been able to achieve in the past, except by totalitarian means.