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WHERE WEALTH ACCUMULATES

THE INHABITANTS, by Julius Horwitz, is a New York City social worker's report disguised as a novel. It was written to be read as truth and should be read that way. It should be read as truth especially by those who still have a tendency to think in terms of big, ideological principles and place their faith in the familiar forms of political change or reform.

New York, you may say, is not a typical American city. It is the "melting pot" where the foreign-born aggregate. It will take generations, you may say, to turn these people into "real" Americans, and there are bound to be casualties. You may say this and make other minimizing and extenuating remarks, but to do so you have to forget that in New York Harbor there stands a figure, one hundred and fifty-one feet high, a copper-sheathed image of the goddess of freedom, on whose pedestal appear the words,

> "Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses yearning to be free.
> Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me.'

New York is not a typical American city, but rather a city which set out to be the climactic expression of an American dream—a dream which failed and has now become a long drawn-out sigh of agony. New York is not this for everyone, of course. Nor are the great slum areas of the city its only face. But what is evident from books like *The Inhabitants* and from similar studies is that nobody knows what to do about New York's impotent poor. The huddled masses come, and keep coming, but they do not become free. There is a mystery here, of course, made manifest by the exceptions. Miracles of individual achievement occur. There are people who rise to distinction regardless of their childhood circumstances. Biography is not sociology, and freedom is a temper of the human spirit before it is a legislative formula for balancing order and opportunity in the social community.

But the welfare department of a great metropolitan center of population is not and cannot be concerned with exceptional cases. It was not called into being to foster exceptional individuals, but to deal with the massive reality of the hungry, the homeless, and the helpless who give the problem of public assistance its definition. One amazing thing revealed by Mr. Horwitz' book is not how poorly, but how well, the work of welfare is performed by New York's department of public assistance and its tired, over-burdened employees. If "Phillips," the case-worker who tells Mr. Horwitz' story, is at all representative of the men and women who are in daily contact with the misery and degradation of New York's impotent poor, analysts of the problem will have to look elsewhere in their fault-finding and diagnosis.

Something of what confronts the welfare worker is conveyed by Phillips' first interview with Miss Fletcher, a young woman who is "Negro, possibly Spanish, possibly white," who "held a baby wrapped in a bright white kimono." The girl was in the room of one of his clients, a TB patient recently out of prison after serving time on a narcotics charge. He is the baby's father. Phillips tells the story:

> I watched the baby hungrily sucking its milk. The baby would never know happier days.
>
> "You can feed her now," I said to the girl, "but what about six months from now, a year? You didn't always live in this room. Where do you live?"
>
> "East Harlem," she said, and she said no more, knowing I would know what she meant by East Harlem.
>
> "Where in East Harlem?" I asked. I knew East Harlem.

But I wanted to know what she had been doing in East Harlem.

"103rd Street."

"Between what avenues?"

"Lexington and Park."

Lexington and Park are fancy names in New York City. But East Harlem begins at the end of Madison Avenue, at the end of Fifth Avenue, at the absolute dead end of Park Avenue. The narcotic sellers have made it their open-air market. They've taught everyone from kids to old women to jab needles into their arms or sniff up white powder. Narcotics in East Harlem are what gin must have been in Hogarth's London. But the taking of narcotics is a lonely business. You don't see addicts lolling on the street corners of Lexington Avenue. No one on the outside could ever know what was going on in the inside of East Harlem. I had a glimpse. And I'm willing to share the glimpse with you. But later. Now I was interested in the girl, trying to figure out what brought her to Figueroa's thirty-inch cot.

"Did you live by yourself?" I asked.

"No, with my mother."

"Then why don't you go home with the baby to your mother?"

"I would like to," she said, "but she's afraid to have me in."

"Did you ask her?"

"Yes."

"And she said no?"

"Her mother's on welfare," Figueroa told me, "and her mother's afraid that her investigator will cut her off if she brings Kenny in with her."

I turned to the girl. "What's your mother doing on welfare?" I asked.

"She has no way of working."

"They won't close her case. That's no reason to close a case. Does she have a legitimate apartment or a furnished room?"

"She has four rooms. It's a railroad flat."

"That means an inside toilet and a bathroom."

"It's no good," the girl said. "I stayed at my mother's. But my mother's too frightened of being cut off and no one could convince her otherwise. And I think my having this baby this way didn't do her any good. It probably made her realize all over again who she is and what she's done."

The last line determined me to help the girl.

The thread of Mr. Horwitz' narrative is the life—and death—of this girl, but in the course of the book you meet dozens of other "clients," and you keep wondering what would have happened to these people if they had been set down in a green valley somewhere, instead of on the streets of New York. You'll never know. There are some green valleys left in the United States—places where a single family might be able to grow something besides grapes of wrath—but the signs along the highway in California don't tell about them. The signs tell you where migrants can get information about stoop labor at a dollar an hour, but there are no directions for families who are looking for homes.

Suppose you could turn time back for a hundred years and have some of these people in Saint Louis instead of New York—have them waiting to join a wagon train to take them out into the great plains, across to Oregon, or to some other fresh, clean region in the wonderful West. Would they turn out differently? Would the thousands who escape from Puerto Rico to New York be able to accept the challenge of the unsettled prairie? Would there be a light in their eyes when they peered across the Great American Desert?

There isn't anybody who can answer these questions. We don't know much about people and what makes them behave the way they do. We can't even explain the difference between the clients and the case-workers in the New York slums. Why do some kids on the streets grow up into delinquents and then into criminals, while others grow up into wise specialists in the problems of juvenile delinquency?

Bronson, an associate of Phillips' in the public assistance bureau, lets off some steam:

Bronson picked up the thick black manual on his desk. . . . "This is the damndest book. I've been

> studying this book for the past couple of weeks instead of just using it. This book, Phillips, contains the absolute minimum fixed prices necessary to maintain subsistence living in present-day New York City—which is one of the richest biggest cities in the entire history of the world, period. This book is the papa for 350,000 people right here in New York City getting assistance. And I'll bet my pay that there are tens of thousands of people right here in New York who don't even live up to the minimum standards that we lay down but who would rather eat old newspapers than apply for welfare. Do you set what I'm driving at, Phillips? We're not giving what is necessary, we're just giving what's minimum. Because those tens of thousands who live below the minimum have got what I call what's necessary for living. Do you know why I've been studying this manual? Because my actual take-home pay is below the minimum of what I would get if I went downstairs and signed an application. So it's not money. And now I become lost. . . . That's where I get lost. That's where my thinking gets stopped. And as far as I can make out, nobody else's thinking begins. Nobody who counts, that is."

So it's not, as Bronson says, money, or not money alone. But what *is* it? After you give all the explanations you can think of, there is still a crucial *x* factor that you can't fill in. The problem is not political in the ordinary sense. No matter what you could do, there would still be a lost generation involved. If you make the self-righteous response which says, implicitly, that these people won't do for themselves what self-respecting *good* people would do, you still have the problem of figuring out why so many people seem to have abandoned their self-respect.

Mixed in with the lost are thousands who still cling to the torn fabric of personal dignity, people who try to keep their rooms clean, who do their best to be self-reliant until they drop in their tracks, who fight the roaches and the rats and the dirt and turn their faces away from the human decay and the corruption. Who or what condemned them to this living death?

A phrase popular with contemporary economists is the "affluent society." By statistical analysis and comparison with the past, the expression is accurate enough. There is more wealth in our society and it is better distributed than it ever has been before. But there is also more sheer ugliness than we have ever had before, and more human waste. And there seems to be an incalculable cruelty in the means we have developed for sustaining life in its wasted condition. Another of Phillips' colleagues said to him:

> "Look, Phillips, if this girl of yours wants a clean, decent room, then tell her to start walking to find one until she falls flat on her face and then let her get up again until her feet get bloody and then keep walking until she feels like Christ carrying his cross and then, maybe, she might find a room under $15 with cooking and an inside john."

On the day when Kenny Fletcher came to see Phillips in the Service Room at the welfare agency, a woman being interviewed screamed:

> Just as I crossed the middle of the room a Negro girl stood up and screamed. I saw her screaming at the interview desk of Mrs. Nivens. She turned toward the wooden benches to scream. The people on the benches stared dumbly at her wide-open mouth. Mrs. Nivens sat quietly at her desk waiting for the girl to stop screaming. In an instant the girl did stop screaming.
>
> "Why did she scream?" Miss Fletcher asked me.
>
> "Probably because Mrs. Nivens asked her a question that she couldn't give an honest answer to."
>
> "Do people often scream here like that?"
>
> "Some do it loudly, most do it quietly. But everybody screams." . . .
>
> The Negro girl screamed again. Miss Fletcher dropped the bottle she was holding. The Negro girl broke just as the bottle broke. She stood up screaming, "I'm human! I'm human ! I'm human ! . . . can't you see I'm human !"
>
> The cry of the human being was the most commonplace cry in the Service. I heard it daily. It's the spatial cry of the beggar. Look the next time you see a beggar. The successful beggar always suggests he too is human. I don't know why we should have beggars. But beggars beg you to look on their face. Almost like the anger of a god. I knew one boy who begged on the subways. He had twisted legs and one arm chopped off. He dragged himself up in front of each passenger and stared in his face.

Why must we spend time with this book? Why do its strange and for most people unfamiliar degradations hold the reader's attention with an almost obscene fascination? Because, for one thing, to know that these degradations are commonplaces in the lives of hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of the richest city in the world is a screaming refutation of all the optimistic doctrines about "the future" on which we—the generation which has gathered to itself forty or fifty years—were brought up. It makes a flayed and quivering ruin of the "Progress" in which we were taught to believe.

The world is not generally going forward. The good life is not being realized save by the few. The dream of the nineteenth century is not coming true. We have not got the cultural or sociological formula for the development of fine, civilized human beings, and we may never have had it. It is not in our politics, or we have let it die out of our politics. It is not in any kind of politics we are willing to try, these days.

We identify the tragedy of New York as the tragedy we are able to see. But it exists not only for those who are excluded by reason of their depressed condition from the ranks of the affluent society. Paul Goodman's diagnosis in *Growing Up Absurd* remains the simplest objective account of what is the matter with almost everybody. The ends this society provides are not worth the effort it takes to reach them. And the trouble, here, is in the expectation that a society, as though it were the Great White Father, *ought* to provide people with ends. The impotent poor are the people who are either unable or unwilling to make the effort to gain ends which are not worth trying for, while the rest, from those who barely make it to the true-blue representatives of the affluent society, are mostly going through the motions. A human society is not a closed system of self-satisfaction and self-realization. It does not provide worthy ends, except in the bewildering definitions of the ideologists and the slogans of the politicians.

A good society is an admirable achievement, like a beautiful body, or like a trained voice. But a good society is not something which you design and then populate, in order to get a good life. If we think that it is, we are still in the grip of the delusion of the nineteenth-century utopian writers. People wonder how the terrible fear of the Communists is to be overcome. The fear arises not so much from the threat of a rival system of political control, as from the delusion that social arrangements can make us or break us—that we are *creatures* of the system, whatever it is.

This was the heresy of the nineteenth century, not just Marxism, which was only one of its forms. The argument about rival systems is the argument about which one of the systems can do the most for human beings. The real point is that no system can create desirable ends for human beings. A system is little more than the gross means of physical support. The argument about systems can never be sensible and it can never be settled so long as the issue between them is held to make an *ultimate* decision in human life. The ultimate decisions are not political at all.

Most Americans—that is, most Americans until quite recently in our history—have passed from childhood into youth and adult life thoroughly convinced that it is part of their natural, rightful, human heritage to be happy, and that their country is the place where they are supposed to achieve the most happiness—more, certainly, than they could have anywhere else. This, they believe, is the nature of the American system, created for them by the Founding Fathers and reconstituted and sent on its way by Abraham Lincoln. Since then it has been pushed along its upward and onward course by the political party of one's choice, protected by the FBI, embellished by the movies and television, and to be further extended by whatever is next to come from the conveyor-belt of scientific goodies. It follows that there is something un-American about poverty and unhappiness. If you are not happy in America, you are flawed somewhere in your being.

Well, it was a great, big, beautiful continent, and the people who live on it may have had reason to expect to be happy. Maybe they *were* happy, until the face of the country was all eaten up. Maybe we can say that you can feel happy so long as you are able to believe that you are really pursuing happiness, the way the Declaration of Independence says. But now, with all the labor-saving devices of technology, and the affluence that high incomes have spread all around, you don't have to pursue it any more. It's been *caught.* There is something more than a little frightening in the fact that the most rewarding work, these days, seems to be in psychotherapy, which doesn't begin to have enough practitioners to explain to all the people who have caught up with happiness why they don't feel happy. After all, they're *supposed* to be happy, aren't they? They live in America, don't they?

These are deep and unsettling questions. Were we right in expecting to be happy? It seems quite certain that the psychological unrest abroad in the land—especially the extreme anxiety of people who see a dark threat in the mildest sort of political liberalism—comes in large measure from the horrifying suspicion that Happiness is no longer the automatic endowment of the modern world. The agony in East Harlem is only one of the symptoms of this suspicion.

REVIEW
"ON BECOMING A PERSON"

WE have for review the book of this title by Carl Rogers (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961) It is a 400-page collection of papers prepared for a number of different purposes by Dr. Rogers during thirty-three years' work in psychotherapy and personal counseling, and what will be particularly interesting to those who share the psychological field with Dr. Rogers is the way in which the present volume illustrates a series of "progressive awakenings"—as should be the case during any true process of education. This is not a matter of discarding one school of thought and becoming enamored of another, but rather of the *continual* recasting of formulations and conclusions. The book is the work of a man attentive to the immediate lessons of experience rather than to the requirements of theory.

Two papers dealing with the nature of science and its relationship to subjective experience, written a year apart, are illustrative of Roger's self-aware metempsychoses. Under the subtitle, "A Changed View of Science," he explains why he later found himself dissatisfied with the earlier paper, and also shows his willingness to learn from students who question his opinions. The following is taken from the second of the two papers:

> In the year which has elapsed since the foregoing material was written, I have from time to time discussed the issues with students, colleagues and friends. To some of them I am particularly indebted for ideas which have taken root in me. Gradually I have come to believe that the most basic error in the original formulation was in the description of science.
>
> The major shortcoming was, I believe, in viewing science as something "out there," something spelled with a capital S, a "body of knowledge" existing somewhere in space and time. In common with many psychologists I thought of science as a systematized and organized collection of tentatively verified facts, and saw the methodology of science as the socially approved means of accumulating this body of knowledge and continuing its verification. It has seemed somewhat like a reservoir into which all and sundry may dip their buckets to obtain water—with a guarantee of 99% purity. When viewed in this external and impersonal fashion, it seems not unreasonable to see Science not only as discovering knowledge in lofty fashion, but as involving depersonalization, a tendency to manipulate, a denial of the basic freedom of choice which I have met experientially in therapy. I should like to view the scientific approach from a different, and I hope, a more accurate perspective.
>
> Science exists only in people. Each scientific project has its creative inception, its process, and its tentative conclusions, in a person or persons. Knowledge—even scientific knowledge—is that which is subjectively acceptable. Scientific knowledge can be communicated only to those who are subjectively ready to receive its communication.

On Becoming a Person appropriately closes with a paper titled "The Place of the Individual"—for Rogers, like A. H. Maslow and Viktor Frankl, affirms the presence of something within the human being which may be considered to be prior both in time and in importance to the physical and "behavioral" aspects of man. A well-managed utopia of the future, such as B. F. Skinner pictures in *Walden II*—in which the social scientists and psychologists manipulate everyone into "good adjustment"—seems to Rogers a fundamentally mistaken ideal. He would rather seek synthesis between growing behavioral knowledge and the assumption that the primary values of life come by way of highly individual perceptions and decisions such as could never be "managed" into existence:

> If we choose to utilize our scientific knowledge to free men, then it will demand that we live openly and frankly with the great paradox of the behavioral sciences. We will recognize that behavior, when examined scientifically, is surely best understood as determined by prior causation. This is the great fact of science. But responsible personal choice, which is the most essential element in being a person, which is the core experience in psychotherapy, which exists prior to any scientific endeavor, is an equally prominent fact in our lives. We will have to live with the realization that to deny the reality of the experience of responsible personal choice is as stultifying, as closed-minded, as to deny the

> possibility of a behavioral science. That these two important elements of our experience appear to be in contradiction has perhaps the same significance as the contradiction between the wave theory and the corpuscular theory of light, both of which can be shown to be true, even though incompatible. We cannot profitably deny our subjective life, any more than we can deny the objective description of that life.

In calling attention to *On Becoming a Person,* we should also note the appearance in *Psychology: A Study of a Science* (McGraw-Hill, 1959) of Rogers' dissertation on "A Theory of Therapy, Personality, and Interpersonal Relationships." In this paper are two statements which suggest that Rogers is something of an unassuming and informal metaphysician, whether or not he would accept the characterization. He says that it is his lot to "share with many others the belief that truth is unitary, even though we will never be able to know this unity." "Hence," he continues, "any theory, derived from almost any segment of experience, if it were complete and completely accurate, could be extended indefinitely to provide meaning for other very remote areas of experience. Tennyson expressed this in sentimental fashion in his *Flower in the Crannied Wall.* I too believe that a complete theory of the individual plant would show us 'what God and man is'."

Rogers also seems to us a perceptive interpreter of Sigmund Freud, since he distinguishes between Freud's readiness to revise his own opinions and the "iron chains of dogma" which bind the views of his "insecure disciples." While differences of opinion undoubtedly exist and may be considerably pronounced among avant-garde psychologists, we cannot help but recognize a kinship of ideas among such thinkers as Viktor Frankl, A. H. Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Erich Fromm. In relation to such matters as the interpretation of Freud and the quest for the inner self, they seem to furnish one another independently-developed confirmations.

COMMENTARY
PEOPLE AS SUBJECTS

IT is no accident, we think, but rather a convergence of long-felt hungers of the human heart, that we should find in Frontiers an expression of the quest for the subjective side of the universe or world, and in Review a discussion of a book by a modern psychologist who insists upon the prior reality of the subject-aspect of human beings.

The Frontiers article is in part the story of how modern science was born from the deliberate assumption that the universe is an object, not a subject. A mere object can be studied inch by inch, in particular, in terms of its parts, while a subject has to be understood as a whole. By turning a thing into an object, you attain the virtue of objectivity. You can ignore theological claims and insinuations. You can say with a fine flourish of intellectual independence, "Don't think, find out!" You can declare the sole validity of public truths. You can become an apostle of the gospel of Operational Truth. Contemptuous of essences and "substances," you can say, "Don't tell me what it is, but what it *does!"*

Scientific psychology, until very recently, has been faithful to this anti-subjectivist credo. Only in the past twenty years or so has anyone had the daring to point out that this kind of psychology is nothing but a catalogue of "behaviors," and knows nothing about people or *persons.* The yearning to know more about persons is now penetrating the forefront of psychological inquiry. Its earliest manifestations came from the psychotherapists, men and women who, as psychologists, were obliged to deal with the ills and needs of persons, and who have been compelled to acknowledge the reality of the subject who hides within.

There is a looming discovery in the search for the living, choosing person behind the facades of behavior, and in the search for the subjective, perhaps even the moral, being behind the forms and motions of the world of nature—the "universe," as we say. It is the discovery that reality is *consciousness.* Gropingly, hungrily, we look for what is conscious, sentient, moving toward fulfillment, in the life around us. Consciousness is the stuff of universal communion. We look about the world, longing to encounter the signs of life which is like the life in ourselves.

A point is reached in the spreading loneliness of the universe of objects when we can no longer tolerate the sense of isolation brought by our objectivity. Was the music of the spheres, we ask ourselves, only a Pythagorean romance? We begin to hear in the soft crunch of the duff on the forest floor a gentle invitation to wander further into the leafy shadows; the cloud castles in the sky—can they be, we say, no more than molecules of moisture held in fortuitous suspension? How can the golden edge of light which creates depths and heights and celestial causeways be at once so beautiful and so meaningless? The consciousness of the universe must have a face; as all life, all being, has lineaments, so the world must have its organs of perception, its moods of elation and despair, its deep, inchoate longings and its momentary triumphs.

Was Freud right? Is the direct flow of consciousness "the original archaic method by which individuals understand one another"? Are we now in the throes of a recovery from the pain of separation from one another by walls of objectivity? It is easy, of course, to lapse into the extravagance of poetic declaration, to affirm the wish as fact with the emotional certainty of a Gospel singer. But what remains impressive after all discounts have been taken is the general swaying of modern man's creatively intellectual activity toward a living touch with subjective reality, wherever it may be found. What is the Existentialist's measured despair but an honest accountant's balance sheet on the old, the "objective," way of looking at the world?

Why are the modern painters so insistent upon painting pictures which "nobody

understands," unless it be because they sense that the only currency worth exchanging, these days, is the currency of consciousness, the speech of subjective apprehension? The artist, it may be, is determined to say what he has to say in the private cipher of his own consciousness until, by some *tour de force* he cannot anticipate, the meaning will become clear. None of the routine symbolisms of compromised subjectivity will do for him. Writers, too, may be caught in the maze of their own psychological mysteries, denying the objective in a relentless rebellion against the vocabulary of self-deception. It is plain enough that these people cannot help what they are doing. They do it because they must.

For human beings, the sweep of a great despair is not unrelated to the sweep of a great awakening. Can it be that one upshot of all this searching will be that, in the works of the imagination of the future, there will never be seen again the forms and images of a codified myth? That there will be no more generalized individuals, and no more sectarian truth? That from the travail of the present we shall slowly learn how to speak to one another as subject to subject, and be restored to the great communion with the world?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

THE TELEPATHIC CHILD

Two successive issues of the *International Journal of Parapsychology* (Summer and Autumn, 1961) contain articles with material of considerable interest—evidence which leads two distinguished psychologists to affirm that telepathy in childhood is a normal occurrence. "Extra-sensory Perception in Early Childhood" (Summer issue) by Joan FitzHerbert reveals that a number of psychoanalysts, beginning with Sigmund Freud, have been forced to conclude that the characteristic non-verbal communication which goes on between mother and child reaches beyond the areas of conditioned reaction. It comes as a surprise to most people to learn that by 1933 Freud had evolved the theory that telepathy may be simply "the original archaic method by which individuals understand one another, and which has been pushed into the background in the course of phylogenetic development by the better method of communication by means of signs apprehended by the sense organs."

After a detailed study of apparent telepathic communication between mother and child in one family, Berthold E. Schwartz (Autumn *Journal of Parapsychology)* concludes by saying: "It would seem that in most instances the [telepathic] events took place when both child and parents were in a state of rapport. Little developed when there was no rapport or common meeting ground. The episodes often startled the parents and made them take notice of their daughter. The child, as far as could be determined, had no conscious awareness of the telepathic significance of the events. From the content of many of the episodes as well as the parents' surprised reactions, it can be conjectured that the infantile concepts of narcissism, omnipotence, omniscience and 'mind reading' might have kernels of truth in telepathy."

No student of child psychology doubts that unspoken communication between parents and child—particularly with the mother—is an important substratum of infant experience, but the significance of the studies in the *International Journal of Parapsychology* lies in the specificity indicated regarding "messages" conveyed. As background, Jan Ehrenwald, in his *New Dimensions in Deep Analysis,* (London, 1954) is quoted as follows:

> We must assume that there is a well-nigh unlimited two way flow of mental content passing between parent and child. At this stage (i.e., the pre-verbal), telepathy serves a compelling biological need and represents a functional link between mother and child *here* and *now,* comparable to the function of instinct which, according to current concepts forms the connecting link between successive generations in the longitudinal section of our racial history.

Dr. FitzHerbert applies these conclusions to the psychological condition which obtains when a young child is separated from his mother and established with foster parents, or in some institution such as an orphanage. She writes:

> Extra-sensory perception by the child of much of the mother's mental content would explain the extreme importance for his satisfactory psychological development of the continuous presence of one single mother-figure during his early years. One can imagine that the sudden appearance of a "mother" with a completely different mental content and a different picture of the infant would inevitably result in emotional shock and great psychological confusion in the young child. The fact that telepathy functions independently of space would presumably mean that the child continued to receive at least some material from his first mother-figure for a time, and this would add to his confusion and resentment, so that one cannot wonder that such an experience gives rise to serious emotional maladjustment.

Dr. FitzHerbert also suggests that, if telepathic communication be regarded as normal between mother and baby, one may assume the existence of some kind of psychic umbilical cord which conveys impressions, attitudes, fears and hopes—until this second "cord" is eventually severed as the infant becomes a child with

autonomous impulses. On this aspect of the subject Dr. FitzHerbert writes:

> If a free flow from the mother's mind to that of her young child does in fact normally take place, then a subsequent development of amnesia for these first few years of life would obviously be necessary. It is clear from some of the examples in the literature which I have given above that the recipient cannot afterwards distinguish between his own memories and those he has, so to speak, "picked up" from his mother, and he would therefore come to regard her experience as his own (as indeed two of Sandison's cases did). If this material were not later forgotten, it would obviously result in much intellectual and emotional confusion and raise difficult problems concerning his own identity, (as is also borne out by Sandison's account). It seems possible to suggest therefore that this is an important reason for the occurrence of the normal period of infantile amnesia.

Dr. FitzHerbert touches briefly a point which will be of interest to the growing number of reincarnationists in psychological and philosophical circles. She wonders if children are not "born into the world with some capacity to 'recognise' the more important objects and situations we are likely to encounter without having inherited any 'memory' of them." This might suggest that, agreeable to Platonic and neo-Platonic theories, much of what comes to be "known" by the child is a rediscovery, rather than a discovery—the expression of a pre-existent wisdom, so far as this birth is concerned—with pre-existence on the earth in another form a corollary idea. Every adult, in moments of introspection, has the opportunity of noting how much of what he thinks he has learned takes him back to the simple and sure knowledge of childhood. Plato's theories of preexistence and of "innate ideas" fit naturally with current speculations on telepathy, because of the Platonic implication that all human beings are continually *re-learning*, in a new context, elements of what they once saw clearly before the onslaught of puberty, adult responsibility, and conflicting intellectualisms and doctrines. Each re-learning, however, need not be regarded as a mere repetition. Rather, it would be a re-embodiment, in the psychological life of the adult, at a higher level of complexity and awareness.

Neither article in the *Journal of Parapsychology* considers the possible role of telepathic communication in the subtle and direct response which older children manifest when brought into close rapport with a teacher, friend, neighbor or relative. Nearly everyone believes that children are difficult to deceive—that neither words nor outward facial expressions are fundamental in communication, but that the underlying intent or motivation calls out the responsive chord. In the studies under discussion a scientific basis for the accuracy of impressions carried from adult to child is established. This would indicate, certainly, that the well-balanced child *cannot* be deceived by artifice, and that dissimulation is a waste of time, bringing only distrust of the Janus-faced parent or teacher—and indicating further that every child presents to the adult a mirror of his own attitudes and intentions.

It is often noted that teachers with almost opposite theories of the learning process nonetheless achieve similar and praiseworthy results. The explanation of this probably lies, not in issues of theory, but rather in the rapport established between the teacher and the child. A truly dedicated teacher, whatever his method, conveys something of his own inspiration and enthusiasm to the young. Research may some day substantiate the view that the extraordinary successes of good teachers, using poor or mediocre methods, is traceable to some kind of "telepathic communication."

FRONTIERS

The Meaning of the World

IT comes as something of a surprise—and a delight, as well—to the editors when a considerable number of readers express a liking for an article which is strongly on the "metaphysical" side, as for example, "The Question of 'Absolutes'," which appeared several weeks ago (Dec. 20). This response suggests a natural hunger for abstract thinking—a kind of thinking not common in American periodicals. It is not supposed to be "practical." Yet the hunger does exist, and we don't see that there can be much clarity on even the most practical questions if there is not some discussion of abstract issues. Mr. A. Whitney Griswold, president of Yale University, spoke to this point when he said (in a recent pamphlet):

> Plato tells us that all ideals are laid away in Heaven; they're not expected to be achieved in this world. However, I think it is very useful to discuss ideals because if you start off discussing compromises, you're talking about two-and-a-third instead of three, or one-and-a-half instead of two: you never get the full value, the fully defined concept.

It is the same with metaphysics or metaphysical abstractions, or so it seems to us. If there is not clarity concerning the primary assumptions about man and nature, how can there be clarity in ethical decision? This sort of questioning is precipitated by a paragraph in a recent letter from a reader, who says:

> We have two conflicting concepts, both unrealistic, of man in relation to the universe: one that we are rational, free, moral; the other that we are irrational, determined, and amoral. These are contradictory answers to the three problems involved in our relationship to the universe: our knowledge of it, our freedom to carry out our intentions, and our intentions toward it. Both our knowledge and our freedom are relative and both are colored by our intentions. In Western civilization, our intention is to conquer the rest of Nature to have all Good (for us), to have immediate wish fulfillment. This ideal is really the ideal of Sovereignty, and we have aped the living standards of kings and queens without realizing they were symbolic luxuries rather than healthful means to a joyful life full of adventure (both good and bad). Civilization, contrasted with culture, is a game (which is necessarily limited, arbitrary, and unnatural) and we have made the mistake of trying to turn the whole world into our play-world. The result is, of course, boredom, anxiety, frustration, and the turning of ourselves into robots to build a very shaky, ugly superstructure which we are about to blow up. The feeling that civilization has grown out of necessity is due to our being unwilling to accept our place with the other animals of the earth, to accept the bad with the good, and to use enough foresight to limit our own population when necessary (as the so-called savages do). In other words, I believe our goal should not be limited to "self-development" of human beings but should go beyond to the ecological welfare of the whole earth. This would eliminate our self-centered stifling of our own best attributes and bring us once again the beauty and variety of natural surroundings, the companionship of other animals (we have much to learn from them with respect to love, loyalty, intelligence), and the risks and satisfactions of an adventurous, healthy life.

The point of this discussion, in the words of our correspondent, is that "we cannot solve the present crisis in civilization until we dispel our delusion of grandeur." And what, briefly, is this delusion? It is that we are sovereigns and exploiters of the living community of the universe, instead of being simply members of the great family of life.

Why should this delusion produce crisis? In *Richer by Asia,* Edmond Taylor pointed out that the Eastern thinker, regarding the atom-bombing of Japanese cities against the background of his "mystic pantheistic philosophy," saw in this act "an irreverence, a blasphemy, a horror, rather than . . . merely another inhumanity of war." Further:

> The Indians would have told us [had we asked them] that our blasphemy, like the Nazi ones, arose from an idolatrous worship of the techniques of science divorced from any ethical goals, that the man-made cataclysm of Bikini was a black mass of physics as the German experiments (on human beings) were a black mass of medicine, that it was a mob insurrection against the pantheist sense of citizenship in nature, which we share with the Hindus in our hearts, but consider a childish foible.

This, you may say, is an argument out of ancient religious teachings. But to say this is the same as saying that an idea is likely to be untrue because it is ancient, or because it is religious, which is no argument at all, but simple prejudice; yet the prejudice is widespread, so we may quote from Joseph Wood Krutch, a modern humanist, whose thinking is nonetheless in the same vein:

> Might it not be that man's success as an organism is genuinely successful so long, but only so long, as it does not threaten the extinction of everything not useful to and absolutely controlled by him, so long as that success is not incompatible with the success of nature as the varied and free thing which she is, so long as, to some extent, man is prepared to share the earth with others?
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> And if by any chance that criterion is valid, then either one of two things is likely to happen. Either outraged nature will violently reassert herself and some catastrophe, perhaps the catastrophe brought about when more men are trying to live in our limited space than even their limited technology can make possible, will demonstrate the hollowness of man's success; or man himself will learn in time to set a reasonable limit to his ambitions and accept the necessity of recognizing his position as that of the most highly evolved of living creations but not one which entitles him to assume that no others have a right to live unless they contribute directly to his material welfare.

The issue raised here is the possibility that all life has its own values, and that universal ethics may have a natural ground in some recondite law of retribution which works against human beings when they exercise a ruthless imperialism against the fulfillments of other forms of life.

Our correspondent speaks of "our relationship to the universe." Now relationships depend upon the nature of the parties involved. A man's relationship with another human being is different from his relationship with a rock. A man may stand upon a rock, he may throw it, build a fireplace with it, or blow it out of his way with some dynamite. A rock is an object. Another human being is in one sense an object, but he is also a subject, which makes the relationship between two human beings moral—that is, one that involves good and evil.

Is the universe like a rock or is it like another human being? Has, in other words, the universe the quality of a subject as well as that of an object, making the relationship between man and nature a moral relationship?

This is a metaphysical question. It is also a question of the heart's hunger for universal companionship, a question of poetry and drama, a question of mystical intuitions and of the idea of universal purpose and destiny.

The gross swings of the pendulum of Western history have returned some answers to this question. Starting, say, with the Christian tradition, we were told that the world belonged to God. It was His testament, His Creation, at which we were constrained to wonder in self-abasing awe. Then, for moral reasons as well as intellectual reasons, Western rationalism *and* Western love of freedom revolted against the theocentric account of the meaning and value of the universe. God's monopoly having reached down into politics and become a bastion of injustice, Western man rejected God's meaning of the universe. The only safe way to look at the universe, the men of the seventeenth and eighteenth century declared, is as an object. If we let subjectivity or *meaning* into the object, they argued, the priests will take over again, so they held the universe to be an object and nothing more a great, big, complicated rock.

Now we are tired, sick, and fearful of that hypothesis. We want a sense of *measure* for our relationships with the universe. With Kant, we want to be able to read a secret morality in the orderly marches of the stars. It is so lonely here, with only our acquisitive selves and our acquisitive friends and enemies for companions. We want the dignity of being a part of a universal meaning. We are becoming ashamed of the isolation from meanings larger than our own purposes—an isolation which once was a

courageous break with theology, but now has the posture of arrogance.

No longer are we so "unwilling to accept our place," but what *is* our place? The people who announce that they know what our place is seem the least trustworthy of witnesses.

Can a man speak to the world and ask its meaning? Who will speak for the world?

We do not know the answer to this question, save for the idea that man is the only speaking portion of the universe that we have encountered. Other aspects of the universe show forth feelings; and there is the wonder of configuration in all its parts; but if you want to hold a dialogue, you must find another man.

Now and then you come across the work of a man who seems more able than most to articulate in speech an understanding of the feeling and movement that is in the universe. This, it might be said, is the highest calling of the human being. The study of what such men have said is the study of philosophy. Some people claim that there is a better source for truth than philosophy—in what God has revealed. But how can you elevate God and belittle man, when all that is known of God (or the Reality that some people name God) comes to us through human beings? The proposition defeats itself. How ridiculous to sponsor a competition between God and Man! A man understands the universe as he becomes the universe—as, that is, his mind embraces the universe—which is the only way in which a part can be both part and whole. So also with "God."

If you look back across the past—if you avoid the ecclesiastical versions of universal meaning and search out what recorded human wisdom you can find—you are likely to come to the conclusion that the men who have understood something of the meaning of the world and man's part in it have said what they could, in whatever tongue seemed helpful, and then resolved to wait in patience for the great mass of human beings to wear out their acquisitive drives and their impetuous egotisms. A man, you could say, has to *feel* something of the life, something of the motionless serenity as well as the ardent struggle of the universe, before he can begin to understand it. And before he can feel that life, he has to reach beyond his own feelings, his own interests and ends.

How do you get people to do this? How do you get yourself to do it?

How did Whitman become Whitman, Thoreau, Thoreau? Whence came Schweitzer's "reverence," Tolstoy's passionate concern? How, as Socrates asked, do you teach Virtue?

Where did these men get such incredible faith in man, that from disappointment to disappointment, they continued to believe that they and other men might become what they longed to be? The renewal of faith in human greatness comes as surely as the return of the tides, and it comes from the heart of the universe of which all men are children.

There have been greater, perhaps, than Whitman, Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Schweitzer—but why go to figures stylized by the conventions of religion, and thereby set apart from ourselves, when more intimate examples exist?

We shall know more of the world and its purposes when we multiply the examples of men who suffer profound frustration until they learn to speak in behalf of the world.