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THE CLARITY OF THE SPECIALISTS

RECENTLY a MANAS lead article (May 23) was devoted to the extreme difficulty of gaining a general perspective on the qualities and character of contemporary civilization. A pertinent comment on this situation is the recent observation of A. H. Maslow: "Historically we are in a value interregnum in which all externally given value systems have proven to be failures." And, as he adds: "The state of being without a system of values is psychopathogenic, . . . The human being needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life, a religion or religion surrogate to live by and understand by, in about the same sense that he needs sunlight, calcium or love." A value system is a general perspective, so that we need look no further for an explanation of our difficulty in understanding our own time.

In such a period, the criticism which comes from specialists often appears to have more value than anything that philosophers or essayists can think of to say. For this reason, perhaps, the series of investigations of the American Character conducted by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions has—thus far—drawn heavily for its material on distinguished specialists. In every specialist there is also a non-specialized human being possessed of philosophical intelligence, and when this intelligence is brought to bear critically on the limited and well-lighted scene of his specialty, we are made to see things that usually remain in shadow during more pretentious explorations. Take for example the opening interchanges between Donald McDonald, the interviewer, and Dr. Herbert Ratner, a professor of preventive medicine at Loyola University, in the pamphlet on *Medicine:*

> *Q Dr. Ratner, what would you say is the single most significant characteristic of the way medicine is practiced in this country today? We hear a great deal of talk about specialization and perhaps over-specialization in medicine, and the ascendancy of technology as against general practice of medicine. Are these central characteristics of American Medicine?*
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> RATNER: There are a number of striking paradoxes that characterize American medicine, and they can be attributed to our failure to develop and maintain a sound, dynamic philosophy of medicine, and to teach and to practice medicine in the light of it. I'd like to mention one or two of them. One is that though the United States is the best place in the world to have a serious illness (because with our technical talents we have developed a high level of competency in handling complicated, serious illnesses), it is one of the worst countries in the world in which to have a non-serious illness.
>
> *Q Why?*
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> RATNER: Because as actionists, who feel more comfortable doing something and having something done to us, we impose our life-saving drugs and techniques, intended for serious ailments, on minor, even trivial, illnesses—illnesses that are self-limited and that, except for occasional symptomatic relief, do better without interference from the physician. It is generally recognized that America is the most over-medicated, most over-operated, and most over-inoculated country in the world. It is also the most anxiety-ridden country with regard to health.
>
> *Q What has caused this over-anxiety? Do we have a neurosis about comfort and convenience? Are we looking for a painless existence?*
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> RATNER: To put it in its broadest perspective, we make health an end in itself. This is a sign of our materialism. We have forgotten that health is really a means that enables a person to do his work and to do it well. There is another paradox here: we are the wealthiest country in the world—yet one of the unhealthiest countries in the world. Dr. Paul Dudley White, President Eisenhower's physician, has made the allegation of unhealthiness on numerous occasions. I would agree with him about our low-level wellness in America. We are flabby, overweight, and have a lot of dental caries, fluoridation notwithstanding. Our gastrointestinal tract operates like a sputtering gas engine. We can't sleep; we can't get going when we are awake. We have neuroses; we have high blood pressure. Neither

> our hearts nor our heads last as long as they should. Coronary disease at the peak of life has hit epidemic proportions. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death (fourth between the ages of 15 and 44). We suffer from a plethora of the diseases of civilization.

You read on in this pamphlet—we'd quote almost all of it if we had the space—and you begin to realize, as the portrait of America through the eyes of a physician and educator in medicine builds up, that we have a very sick civilization. We called Dr. Ratner a specialist, but we did not mean to imply that he is a medical specialist; on the contrary, he regards the tendency to specialist practice as excessive and holds it responsible for much of what is wrong with medicine in the United States. He reads back to us from his concentrated experience in medicine a diagnosis that is broad and cultural. But unlike general statements, Dr. Ratner's diagnosis needs numerous specific comments for its enclosing unity to emerge. It is important to recognize that the kind of criticism of the practice of medicine Dr. Ratner offers is not so much criticism of a profession as it is a searching questioning of the operative assumptions of our entire civilization. He says, for example, that the reasons given by medical students for adopting medical specialties, instead of becoming general practitioners, have almost nothing to do with "genuine medical and professional reasons for specialization." He continues:

> The whole specialty craze has grown up for reasons that do not correspond to any of the real needs in medicine. And a medical system that does not correspond to objective realities and requirements is doomed to failure.
>
> We are already beginning to see in this specialist age that patients are insisting on turning a given specialist into a family physician out of their need for a personal medical adviser. They realize that they are ending up with an array of specialists [but no] single physician with a unified philosophy of medicine and the wisdom they are looking for, and no one to make the house call! . . . We have to remember that the physician is a human being with all of the strengths, weaknesses, virtues, and vices of a human being. He will tend to be materialistic and activist if the culture and society are materialistic and activist. . . .
>
> The terrible thing in this country is that although we have done a masterful job in curbing deaths from many diseases, especially the infectious diseases, we now have a nation of presumably healthy persons who cannot function well because they are full of anxieties. The most radical condemnation of our society and culture and American character is that one out of ten babies—and there are more than four million born in this country each year—will enter a mental hospital at some time in his life. A recent house-to-house count in one community indicated that one out of eight Americans suffers from a psychiatric disturbance severe enough to warrant treatment. Since the body is for the sake of the mind—it is its instrument—and since bodily health is for the sake of mental health which is the condition for the "free life," what does it profit a man to gain physical health when he loses the emotional health that permits him to enjoy and use physical health?

Obviously, Dr. Ratner wants a society which fosters the development of human beings who are not over-doctored, and who don't want to be over-doctored. He longs for human beings who are self-reliant; who, when they are mothers, will not go to a specialist who regards pregnancy as a nine-month's disease; who resist medical fussing over self-limiting diseases which go away in their natural cycle, and who keep their health because they use it constructively in the work they have to do. We have one more passage to illustrate Dr. Ratner's eloquent indignation at medical perversions now practiced as "progress":

> We can go all through medicine and find this steady conversion of normal states (as in breast feeding) to abnormal states (as in bottle feeding) and the conversion of abnormal and unusual procedures into usual procedures. So to the newborn baby we give cow's milk, which was intended for a calf whose big problem is to develop a lot of muscles because it has to stand and walk from birth. The big problem of the human newborn is not to stand and walk because it is not going to do that for many months; it is to get its brain and nervous system developed in preparation for walking, talking, and thinking. And human breast milk is perfectly attuned to this need. Furthermore, nature has given the baby a sucking reflex and an intestinal tract perfectly fitted for the specific food the baby should have at that stage of

development. Deviations lead to complications: diarrhea, constipation, milk allergies, and others.

Then there is the psychological aspect. Here we should follow the mental health experts, not the pediatricians: they say that the increased incidence of mental illness can be traced for the most part to what happens to the baby in its early years, to the lack of intimacy in the dependent baby's early relationship with its mother, formerly baby's bosom friend. We artificially separate mother from baby and then just as artificially substitute mechanical contrivances. We bring in rubber nipples and glass bottles which are ersatz compared to mother's nipples and breasts; we bring in automatic bottle holders which are far inferior to a mother's loving arms. We have now recently brought into the hospital nursery—that efficiently conducted displaced-persons concentration camp—a mechanical heart-beat to substitute for the reassuring heartbeat the baby would normally hear at its mother's bosom. It is called the Securitone—shades of Wells, Huxley, and Orwell! Recent monkey experiments suggest that we should add to these automatic contrivances a heated, soft, skin-simulating latex covering. Within this mommy dummy, the Securitone, like a musical box in a doll, could perhaps be inserted appropriately. One can now begin to visualize a parade of service men into the home to keep this mechanical contraption working.

It would seem that somewhere along the line some bright pediatrician might exclaim, "Eureka! Why don't we use the mother?"

These generalizations get home to us! They are at a level which touches the lives of practically every one of us. But it remains to be seen how wide a circulation the commercial press will give them, since they are directly and also by far-reaching implication wholly at odds with the acquisitive, technologically progressive society. Dr. Ratner knows this. Years ago, when he showed a speech he had prepared for a state medical school meeting, the dean of the school said to him: "Gee, Herb, I wish you'd not use that line. It will antagonize the drug-houses, and we are trying to build up research funds." This was the "line" the dean wanted cut: "Modern man ends up a vitamin-taking, antacid-consuming, barbiturate-sedated, aspirin-alleviated, benzedrin-stimulated, psychosomatically diseased, surgically despoiled animal; nature's highest product turns out to be a fatigued, peptic-ulcerated, tense, headachy, overstimulated, neurotic, tonsilless creature."

Dr. Ratner is a good critic. The good critics are people who stand outside the assumptions which they examine or attack, on some firm ground of their own. Sometimes, if you ask them, they will try to tell you what that ground is, and then, usually, you—and they—are disappointed. You expected some magic and you got what you thought were platitudes, or something you could classify in such a way as to say, "Of course, we know about that." So wise critics are usually reticent with respect to systematic explanation of what they believe.

Or it may be that they are not quite sure how to explain what they believe—the convictions are based upon intuitions and feelings which seem to lose their depth when verbalized. Or they can be represented by general ideas which have a rich and varied content only for the individual who holds them, remaining empty abstractions for those who have not lived out their content.

This is an aspect of the problem discussed last week by Eleanor Woods, who proposed that the failure of people to communicate effectively with words is due to the "inherently" schizophrenic character of civilization. We can easily admit that modern civilized society is indeed victimized by cultural delusions and made unresponsive to the searching intelligence of critics and reformers. But there is the further explanation (noted briefly by Miss Woods) that a simple lack of maturity—of past experience or participation in the values on which the critic relies—is also playing its part. A human society is a complex organism which might be compared to a living palimpsest of diverse intellectual and moral attitudes, along with equally complex hidden levels of the psyche. It isn't all corruption and failure, just as it isn't all innocence and gullibility. It is certain, at any rate, that no single diagnostic analogy will do to explain the present human condition.

In the first issue (October, 1961) of the new magazine, *Journal of Religion and Health*, Rollo May has a passage which may be of some use here. He says:

> In orthodox psychoanalysis there are at present several endeavors (such as that by David Rapaport) to systematize the science of psychoanalysis on the basis of drives and forces. The approach I propose is the exact opposite. We never actually have a "drive" or a "force" or a stimulus and response in human behavior. What we have, rather, is always a *man to whom the drive or force or stimulus is happening,* and who except in pathological situations, experiences this action upon him. The endeavor to understand phenomena by isolating out the simpler aspects of the behavior and making abstractions of them, such as drive and force, is useful in some aspects of science, but it is not adequate for a science of man that will help us understand human anxiety, despair, and other problems that beset the human psyche.
>
> To see the radical implication of this point, let us look at the phenomenon of human self-consciousness. The paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin has written a very stimulating book called *The Phenomenon of Man.* In this he points out that awareness is present in all forms of evolutionary life. But in man a new function arises, namely, self-consciousness. Teilhard de Chardin undertakes to demonstrate something I have always believed: that when a new function emerges the whole previous pattern, the total gestalt of the organism, changes. Thereafter the organism can be understood only in terms of the new function. That is to say, it is only a half truth to hold that the organism is to be understood in terms of the simpler elements below it on the evolutionary scale; it is just as true that every new function forms a new complexity that conditions all the simpler elements in the organism. *In this sense, the simple can be understood only in terms of the more complex.*

The principle that Dr. May lays down has a wide application. Take such expressions as "Reverence for Life" (Schweitzer), "God is Truth" (Gandhi), "All the men ever born are . . . my brothers" (Whitman). Any man can say the words, or even "preach" them, but for the complex meanings involved we have to go to the way they are lived out, or attempt to live them out ourselves. Significant scientific generalizations are objective, but significant human generalizations are objective-subjective. In consequence of this, very nearly every great human utterance has suffered rubricization and contributed to the shams of the lip-religions and other pretentious formulas.

Here, one may imagine, is a partial explanation of the endless controversy which surrounds the question of what great religious leaders actually believed, knew, and taught. It is plain from the historical record that they taught at different levels to different people. Jesus spoke in parables to the multitude, but revealed "mysteries" to his disciples. Buddhism is divided into two great groups—Hinayana and Mahayana—which represent similar separate inheritances of his teachings. Plato, when he attempted to convey ideas concerning matters beyond the immediate experience or rational grasp of his audience, used the form of the myth—quite deliberately, scholars say—to guard against the crystallization of his verbal forms into dogmas. A poet can improvise freely concerning the glories of a summer day, and no man will be trapped into formal belief by his rhetoric, although his joy in summer days to come may be increased by reading the poet. Not so with an account of the states after death, or abstractions concerning the soul. Revelations beyond the common experience of man spawn creeds and dogmas. Theories and hypotheses are another matter, but need the disciplined capacity to think abstractly without falling into habits of mere belief.

It is quite possible that some of the familiar dissatisfaction with words or ideas as the medium of communication is a still-remaining part of our inheritance of "rationalist" optimism, which made us think that all you have to do is tell a man the "truth" to get him to accept it. So far as we can see, the only way to communicate effectively with words is to chew away at questions and problems, using what impartiality one is capable of. The progress gained is seldom much more than a

somewhat subtle increment of understanding in relation to the application of simple ideas.

Some ideas are best conveyed, it may be, by acts of behavior or descriptions of acts of behavior. Take for example the following from Lillian Smith's introduction to Jim Peck's book, *Freedom Ride:*

> I have been deeply stirred [Miss Smith writes] by the sit-ins and the Freedom Rides. Here, I felt, was not another small answer but a new way of asking the old great questions. . . . Their acts are saying this: dehumanization will cease only when we learn to believe that we have no inalienable right to a proof or an answer; the time has come when we must acknowledge that small answers won't do, the North's and the South's and the world's small answers must be brushed away so that the questions, Who am I? What is death? Who is God? can be heard again. We are men; and as men we must declare our right to move freely in our search for meaning. . . .

The Freedom Riders communicated to Miss Smith, and her words certainly give an added dimension to the communication for others. She helps the reader to relate the acts of the Freedom Riders to the universal quest for meaning. Another sort of communication which began with acts is Virginia Naeve's report of her "Geneva Journey." The demand for extra copies of this issue of MANAS (May 16) is evidence of the impact of this communication.

There are also what may be called philosophical acts. One of them is recorded by Leo Tolstoy in his *My Confession.* While it may be true that the impassioned writing of the great Russian will fail to touch those who have not been approached by similar agonies, others have found it one of the most powerful levers in their personal lives. Here, again, is an illustration of the principle proposed by Dr. May—that "the simple" can be understood only in terms of the complex. Tolstoy's form of self-discovery brought a new simplicity to his life, but to understand it his reader has need to experience in himself the complex bewilderments and frustrations that haunted Tolstoy. And it still remains a fact that each man has, so to speak, to create his own simplicity out of his own complexity. Words and ideas can never be more than echoes of the achievement, but they are still a means by which we can insist that this sort of reconstruction is an inescapable life-process.

REVIEW
"THE FOX AND THE CAMELLIAS"

IGNAZIO SILONE'S latest novel, *The Fox and the Camellias* (Harper, 1961), as one reviewer has phrased it, is "beautifully fashioned." Those who know anything of Silone's own story—perhaps by reading his contribution to *The God that Failed*—are aware that he is a writer who has "seen the world." Silone sought truth in religion, in communism, but he found it in the hearts of men. This is the underlying theme of his *The Seed Beneath the Snow*, third book of his great trilogy. *Fontamara* and *Bread and Wine*, the other two, are also concerned with the world of harsh politics, but it is the men rather than their politics to whom Silone naturally responds.

The Fox and the Camellias has no specific political significance, although it is profoundly concerned with the struggle of those who cannot live as men unless they live beyond entrenched authority or defy it. One passage presents a wondering discussion of the nature of those men who cannot adjust to oppression:

> "Why does he do these things?" said the girl. "If he loves us, why does he do these dangerous, secret things?"
>
> "That's something I can't explain to you," the poor woman sighed.
>
> "Aren't you his wife?"
>
> "All I can say is that he has always been like that, he was like that even before we were married. I can't tell you the worry and anxiety it has caused me. I hoped that with time and a growing family he'd give it up, but . . ."
>
> "But why does he do it? What does he get out of it?"
>
> "Nothing. Nothing whatever. On the contrary, it costs him money and endless trouble. But he puts into it all his pride and honor."
>
> "What?"
>
> "His pride and his honor as a man. I'm afraid that life would have no meaning for him without it."
>
> Filomena's lips trembled as she spoke. Luisa felt sorry for her and did not go on. Her mother started weeping again without restraint. It was her way of accepting life and her condition as a woman. She had lived all her life under the shadow of disaster, she had expected it for many years, she seemed to have been born expecting it and at last it had come. Its full shape had not yet been revealed, but unquestionably it had come.

But Daniele, who is in some respects the constant rebel of the story, at times suffers discouragement. He needs to feel that his efforts somehow connect with the aspirations of other men like himself:

> "Miracles don't keep happening!"
>
> Agostino resented Daniele's persistent undertone of discouragement.
>
> "Well, you're a miracle to us yourself," he said, trying to bring the conversation back to a friendly level.
>
> "If we couldn't count on that kind of miracle, our slavery would be eternal," Agostino said firmly.
>
> "What I wonder is whether we're not mad," Daniele said dryly. "I can't help wondering whether there is any meaning in all this. But now I must go," he went on. "We've talked enough. I'm worried about what may have been happening at home while I've been away."

Silone apparently belongs to that rare breed of men who will remain themselves, no matter what the circumstances. Whether working in the fields of a small Italian village, hiding from Fascisti after his revolutionary phase began, or awaiting what appeared to be inevitable execution in a Spanish prison, Silone answers to Viktor Frankl's description of the "noëtic" man. This is to say that Silone's will to transcendent meaning in all experience is indomitable, and it has been this "will to meaning" which has taken him *through* religion, *through* communism, and *through* the familiar forms of violent political partisanship. Since 1950 Silone has not been associated with any political group and, while he may still be a socialist of some sort, his is almost certainly the kind of integral socialism which both the Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth implied in their teachings.

A fragment of dialogue in *The Fox and the Camellias* hints at the gradual transformation of Silone the firebrand into Silone the man of nonviolence—but, as we have said, he is still the same Silone. What has changed about him is simply what has been added by way of progressive awakenings. In one chapter, Daniele proposes for a revolutionary contact a man who is not thought well of by his compatriots:

> "Franz," Daniele said. "He's a reliable fellow."
>
> "You mean the carpenter at Minusio? I think he is ridiculous. Don't you? He's not a man, he's a big baby. Do you know what they call him?"
>
> "He's an admirable, conscientious, dependable man."
>
> "They call him Agnus Dei! It seems that he's been in prison several times as a conscientious objector. Don't you think him ridiculous?"
>
> "He's a brave, warmhearted man, believe me," Daniele insisted.
>
> "And on top of it he has reconciled Karl Marx and Jesus Christ," Agostino concluded with a laugh.

A *Harper's* reviewer has discussed suggestively the puzzle of the title of this book:

> The spell of this novel derives from the luminous and sometimes comical tenderness with which its people are drawn: a realism enriched by humane wisdom. Does the title refer to the fox that has been harassing the neighbor's chicken coops and the Festival of Camellias which marks the high point of the local rites of spring? Or does it express the triumph of the innocent over the predator? The reader may take his choice. What matters here is the perfect control and perfect freedom of a work of art—like the plain apples and plain peaches Cézanne set on a plain table and painted with such power in the clear light.

But the best commentary on any of Silone's current writings is provided in his own words, in an interview with Kenneth Allsop, printed in *Encounter* for March:

> I do not consider myself to be an anti-Fascist writer. Fascism was painful, but it was banal and superficial, and a passing phase. My criticism of Italian society goes deeper than Fascism. The reality I try to depict is something which existed long before Fascism and which has outlasted it.
>
> I know that the question has been asked if I have changed my mind about Fascism because the main sacrificial act in *The Fox and the Camellias* is performed by the Fascist, and some reviewers wondered if I was suggesting that, after all, Fascism may not be all bad. That is a misreading of my intentions. Judgment of Fascism is different from judgment of a Fascist. I haven't modified my opinion about Fascism as a system, but when I look at a Fascist I must, of course, see him as a human being and see him with pity and compassion. It is not a matter of changing one's mind, simply that now Italian Fascism can be seen in perspective as a detail in the whole panorama of totalitarian systems running mass society. After all, Fascism can emerge in many different forms, can call itself Democracy and still exercise mass domination of the proletariat.

COMMENTARY
IN PURSUIT OF "MATURITY"

LIKE other magazines which are mostly staff-written, MANAS has "runs" on subjects which the editors find it difficult to drop until they have been worked over with reasonable thoroughness. One such subject which had a cycle of discussion in these pages a few years ago is "the differences among men."

This is not a popular question. The dominant ideology of our time is founded on an equalitarian ethic. The only admissible differences among human beings, according to the "vulgar" version of this ethic, are differences which result from confining environments, which are soon to be corrected by reform or revolution.

Any discussion of differences for which are proposed deeper origins than the modifications of environment is taken as evidence that you believe in some doctrine of the superior rights and privileges of an aristocratic elite who are by natural endowment entitled to power over others.

It is true enough that the worst tyrannies in human history have been founded on assumptions of this sort. But sufficient attention has not been given to the question of whether the offense lay in the assumption of human distinction, or in the claiming of political and economic power because of that presumed distinction. At any rate, the neglect of the differences among men, for fear of losing the liberal audience, is probably the greatest single mistake of modern sociology and social psychology.

The problem of the sociologists, if they are to be taken seriously, and not regarded as ethically neutral practitioners of "objective science," is the problem of how to make the world better. One of the first things they ought to do, then, is to make studies of human beings who are already better, and, eventually, to adopt some hypothesis as the basis for investigating the question of how they got that way. So far, we know of only one man—A. H. Maslow—who is striking out unequivocally in this direction. And Dr. Maslow is a psychologist, not a sociologist.

This proposition rests, of course, on the assumption that making the world better is to be accomplished by developing better people. If you think you make people better simply by manipulating their environment, you should become a Communist. If you think people are good enough the way they are, you should join the Radical Right.

But if you think the world and its qualities are very little more than the people in it and their qualities, the question of how better people come into existence becomes paramount. This was the problem set more than two thousand years ago by Socrates, when he asked how virtue could be taught. We know of no significant change in the basic character of this problem, although the scenery in which the problem presents itself has changed enormously.

The twin factors of heredity and environment are not adequate to explain the divergences of human character in any given population. And since divergences of character are extremely important to understand, we frequently indulge in these pages an interest in transcendental theories involving a *tertium quid* in human beings—a soul, an ego, or a migrating Leibnizian monad—some unit which has a history and an individuality. These ideas are found in the religions and philosophies of the past, in the form of dogmas, doctrines, and metaphysical speculations. We feel that they need investigation, if only to help break up the stultifying effects of a limiting humanism. These things, it seems to us, are not impossible, while probability, in such matters, is far too often measured by whether or not one is able to fit an idea into the pattern of familiar assumptions. So we shall continue with such explorations.

The question of "differences" arises with renewed vigor in the problem implied by Miss Woods in her article, "Are Ideas Effective?", in MANAS for June 20. She spoke of the distinguished individual as "abnormal" in the

context of our culture. This week's lead article repeats the problem by speaking of the "maturity" of the few who actually *feel* the impact of valid ideas and reorder their lives according to the best ideas they can find. The production of "maturity" is certainly an educational mystery, although, with the help of people like Dr. Maslow, David Riesman, and Carl Rogers, we are beginning to arrive at categories of definition. That is, we are learning to recognize maturity when it appears, almost at random, in the population.

Obviously, we need to be cautious in formulating *theories* of the production of maturity. In time, "Maturity" could possibly become as hot a sectarian issue as "Salvation" was in the sixteenth century. There are some advantages, however, in setting the argument about the good of man in terms of the question of maturity. Maturity is self-defining in the same way that democracy is politically self-defining. If you substitute the clichés of a sectarian viewpoint for the fact of maturity, the presence of the cliches is *prima facie* evidence of fraud. Fraud in claims about the one true way to salvation is more difficult to expose.

Another reassuring aspect of the proposal that "maturity" be made the criterion of human excellence lies in the fact that the truly mature man is likely, in the twentieth century, to turn away from activities involving war and violence. He is likely to regard other human beings as ends in themselves. Calling a mature man "superior" will endow him with no special rights or privileges before other men—least of all power over them. So, at last, it is reasonably safe to talk about the "superior" man without fearing that someone will make politics out of what you say. The superior man, in the twentieth century, is very close to being an anarchist in political philosophy, and perhaps even closer to being an anarcho-pacifist. But these labels, of course, make no one superior. The seminal value is the Maturity—which has the prime virtue of endless self-definition within the framework of changing circumstances and the flow of events.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE GOALS OF EDUCATION

ONE seldom encounters a professor of educational administration who is more concerned with matters of philosophy than with efficiency. It is pleasant, therefore, to report on the introduction contributed by Dr. Emery Stoops, professor of educational administration at the University of Southern California, to *The Goals of Education* by Frederick Mayer, a professor of humanities. This book is pure philosophy, and Dr. Stoops calls its central theme "a diagnosis of the problems of the past" and "a prescription for a more constructive future not only for this nation but for mankind." Here is a general statement by Prof. Mayer:

> The main problem of education is not intellectual, it is the problem of human existence. How should we live? How should we look upon society? How should we act? What should be our aspirations? What should be our final goals? What is to be our vocation? These are the perennial problems of education, which fails unless it is applied to the realm of actuality and unless it creates lasting changes in man's behavior.
>
> Real education, then, belongs to the future; most of our education is a form of tribal conditioning, a pilgrimage in routine and premature adjustment. When education stirs our innermost feelings and loyalties, when it awakens us from the slumber of lethargy, when it brings individuals together through understanding and compassion, it becomes our foremost hope for lasting greatness.
>
> In *Brothers Karamazov* we read: "Everyone is really responsible to all men for all and everything." This ideal should be the motto for the educated man of our time who can find himself only by transcending a feeling of futility and only by seeing the bonds which unite him to his neighbor and to the universe.

Dr. Mayer compares the educational philosophy of Greece with that of Rome, drawing an uncomfortable parallel between the dominant viewpoint of our time and that of Rome before the disintegration of its inadequately-based culture:

> Rome, like the United States, developed a utilitarian system of education. It adopted ideas from other nations; it distrusted original speculation. The dilemmas of Rome should be of concern to us today. Not that we compare in every way to the Romans, not that the parallels are complete: not that we, like the Romans, are condemned to inevitable decline. Our dilemmas are deeper and more far-reaching. We too believe in the cult of practicality: we too are intoxicated by power; we too worship bigness. We too are faced by what Toynbee calls an internal proletariat. We too underestimate the powers of reason and we distrust original thinkers. Such a spirit endangered the greatness of Rome; it is almost fatal in our time. For the basic conflict of our time is not in technology but in the realm of ideas and ideals. We externalize what, in reality, is a subjective civil war in our civilization. To ignore the power of ideas, is to be seduced by the web of immediacy; it is to be a slave to a false sense of practicality, it is to confuse between appearance and reality.

Dr. Mayer, it appears, is very much a Platonist—or perhaps a Pythagorean—since he relates self-sacrifice, self-restraint and asceticism to the problem of education. All this may seem far afield from practicalities of curriculum, but, as Joseph Wood Krutch recently remarked, "we are not sure what we are free *for."* Dr. Mayer's book is not a protest against the increasing tempo of scientific training for American youngsters in competition with the Russians, but it insists that education is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is no surprise, therefore, to discover that Prof. Mayer has considerable sympathy for Eastern philosophy and religion, and finds in Buddhist and Hindu thought sources of the views on "the goals of education" of men like Emerson, Thoreau and Alcott. On the relation of asceticism to education, Dr. Mayer writes:

> Our great thinkers, like Thoreau and Emerson, who were influenced by Buddha, recommended a simple life. They realized that a man could have material wealth and be poor, that he could have all the comforts of life and still be insecure, that he could have social approval and still be desperately afraid, that he could have extensive knowledge and still lack wisdom, that he could have formal education and still lack enlightenment. As modern advertising becomes more powerful, our desires are constantly being

stimulated; thus we are subject today to hidden persuaders which govern our choices not only in business and industry, but also in our way of life.

Buddha was extremely modern, for the great teacher is one who has an abundance of sympathy. He identifies himself with others, with perennial ideas and with real wisdom. Students know at once the teacher who is sympathetic and warm and they reject the instructor who is cold and condescending. Without a sense of compassion, so eloquently expressed by Buddha, education is only a form of classification and leads to the imitation of the past. In this way, it contributes to the culture lag and it creates inadequate human relations.

Dr. Mayer turns naturally to appreciation of the philosophy of nonviolence. He feels that education which neglects study of the psychological components of war—and their antidotes—is an outdated education:

War has not only external manifestations, it has more subtle symptoms. Delinquency and crime represent a war against society, or more precisely, society in a state of internal schizophrenia. Violence is a constant feature of modern life; we have only to look at the headlines of our newspapers, and we obtain a thrill from sadism.

Violence and war never solve problems; they only make them more acute.. They create new dilemmas and new paradoxes. Thus World War I was fought by some to make the world safe for democracy; in our time democracy is less safe than ever. Every major war has resulted in more dictatorship and more totalitarianism and has created new seeds for conflict. Political change is certainly more desirable than change through war, but it offers no magic formula.

Dr. Mayer has clear concerns which many would call religious, but which we, along with the author, would prefer to term philosophic:

Buddha and Gandhi are the prophets of peace. They remind us that education is vain if it makes us dissatisfied and restless, if it develops an internal civil war. They teach us not to be seduced by externality and not to become serfs to circumstances. They teach us that genuine freedom depends on our transcendence of our own ego and on our relationship to the universe. They indicate that education can never be divorced from its moral responsibilities, for the teacher is the true liberator in man's perennial search for the good life.

When teachers write with this clarity and maturity about the needs of modern education, why should we not say to ourselves that we live in an age of rising vision? There are many discouragements, these days, but the encouragements are growing all the time.

FRONTIERS

Education for Change

THE breakdown of the human sense of connection between past and future which is the subject of Hannah Arendt's book discussed in last week's Review—has obviously disastrous consequences for education. The portion of Miss Arendt's book devoted to the crisis in education was discussed in "Children . . . and Ourselves" for May 16. We now have, in the British magazine, *Contemporary 1ssues* (April-May), an article by Alan Dutcher which explores the educational situation for indications of what must be done to join the present with the future.

Mr. Dutcher begins with an analysis of the motives and fruits of mass education. Mass education, he points out, is inescapably a part of the technological production line. Originally, it was aimed to meet the needs of a scarcity economy; today, when scarcity is no longer a problem in the industrially advanced societies, mass education remains geared for more and more commodity production. This aimless advance in a wholly unnecessary direction, Dutcher says, is a major factor in the corruption of education:

> Mass education is the training of the labor force not alone in the techniques for the manipulation of people and things and people as things; it is, as a consequence of the foregoing the manipulation of self: the imposition of "proper" self-discipline, of "proper" attitudes toward work and present society. Modern education is, therefore, almost entirely organized on "factory" principles. This is so familiar, it is assumed to be somehow "natural." Pedagogically, the division of labor manifests itself as the restriction of education in time (the so-called "educable period"—youth) and place (the educational institution). It is exhibited in the regulation of interest by objective time—certain pieces of work must be completed at certain times; when bells ring, students are supposed to shift their interests (subject-matter).
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> A further reflection of factory principles is to be discovered in the schools' emphasis on quantity production, mensuration, showing a "profit," so to speak. Thus the overwhelming pressure for the meeting of formal requirements: tests, marks, the *accumulation* of units and credits and degrees, and the concomitant overlooking of these trappings. Ph.D. theses, for example, are almost never read, and contribute virtually nothing to the sum of human knowledge. At the lower levels, pupils are promoted, may indeed graduate from twelve years of schooling without a knowledge of reading, the barest knowledge of writing, inability to spell, count, and so forth. The general emphasis is on pure output, on the abstract production of papers, graduates, research, on the numbers promoted, on means before, indeed in lieu of ends, insofar as the latter are not simply quantitative. All of these constitute not simply accidental features of modern education, but its very essence; its perfect adaptation to the present social order. Finally, we have witnessed in the last decade, the introduction of the latest "factory" tendency in the modern school; the attempt to regulate all aspects of the adolescent's life through the equivalent of security checks on and loyalty oaths for students, and through the use of a permanent, cumulative, secret dossier for each and every student. The dossier, which contains "confidential" information on the character, attitudes, opinions, and "outside activities' of the student is available on demand by the F.B.I., and may serve as the basis for employment references.
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> Mass education, then, trains for mass existence: specialized skill, general vulgarity and incapacity. Moreover, since modern western civilization rests squarely on waste-production, the masses are literally trained to waste their lives: trained from birth to consume noxious waste products, to expend an otherwise surplus of time in wasteful activity, and to produce goods not for satisfaction but for sale, not for pleasure but for mere occupation. Mass production, requiring as it does mass consumption, ensures that the schools train children in "desirable" patterns of living. This is the real content of the so-called Life Adjustment curriculum. Life Adjustment trains in the consumption of mass ideologies and mass goods. The comparative, historical and thus at least implicitly critical side of education is increasingly de-emphasized to the benefit of trivial "how-to" courses designed to train in techniques for the manipulation rather than the criticism of the *status quo.*

Mr. Dutcher follows this general indictment of mass education with more particular criticisms. His purpose, apparently, is to show that there is not much use in looking for exceptions, and he

fulfills it. The conclusion to which he is leading is this:

> Education either actively opposes the values of the mass society, either actively molds cultivated individuals or it is not functioning properly. It necessarily stands in antagonistic relation to commercial values, production for its own sake and the rest of the "ethic" of modern capitalism. This inevitably means that education must largely survive outside the official institution. In periods of major social change, it always has. *Education for the change* has always had to take place outside the regular channels. The agents of social change have, in effect, created their own unofficial education, the content of which is preparation for the new society: the demonstration of the need for the change, hence its rationality, and concurrently, the demonstration of the irrationality, the contingency, of the existent. The problem is to show that what follows change will not be worse than what preceded, that the world will not perish with the disappearance of its present form. Genuine education today has a revolutionary content. This is not to say that mass education cannot be enlightening—it can, in limited and limiting ways, and on issues of secondary generality.

This says in a very few words something that greatly needs saying. You see so much criticism of public education programs, righteously calling upon them to do things that it has become quite impossible for them to do. The fundamental reforms, the pioneering efforts for the future, the radical departures from the status quo—these will never be undertaken by institutions *representing* the status quo. It is really quite difficult to take seriously critics who do not or will not recognize this fact. A man who wants to do something fundamental in education will have to do it himself, and pick up the tab himself, and do it because *this is what is important for him to do.* No great and good change in education began with the vote of a board of trustees or with a large appropriation from a legislature. The changes came from men and women teaching boys and girls. Everything else came later.

One of the very worst things about the mass society is its indoctrination of everyone in the belief that nothing can be done except by the state. This turns all efforts for good into a political enterprise, which is something like turning a sensitively conceived script over to a television producer with instructions to retain the original quality of the drama. It can't be done. In education, every actual participant must understand what is at issue in the educational process. As we practice it in the mass society, the political activity subverts the educational activity.

It is a great pity that, at the political level, almost the sole champions of the qualities of self-reliance, originality, and personal resourcefulness have been the people who talk about "free enterprise" and "private property," as though they were the only ones who recognized the importance of such things—and as though they really knew what self-reliance and originality *mean.* The economic interpretation of these qualities has vulgarized our understanding of them and taken away from the liberals almost the very heart and high inspiration of the liberal philosophy. It is an asinine and puerile reading of liberalism to propose that the good life is not possible unless its most sensitive and delicate elements are forced through the coarsening processes of the welfare state. Economic justice is a value, but if economic justice means the submission of education to the endless dilutions of mediocrity, then the liberal imagination has meekly surrendered to dogmas of political reform and to equalitarian slogans which care nothing for the true quality of human beings. A political or educational philosophy which is content to satisfy only utilitarian objectives is a philosophy which has quantitative norms for qualitative values and will produce nothing but an anti-human result.

Recognizing the many difficulties encountered by the single person or single pair of parents who want to attempt some do-it-yourself education, Mr. Dutcher proposes that such people band together to form some kind of *community.* "This," he says, "is the only social form on a level with the needs of the times." He continues:

> Here we may very sketchily consider the content of *education for the change.* It must be as all-sided

> as the re-structuring for which it prepares. The new education investigates and *criticizes* every department of the existing order. The criticism is preeminently social and political: that is, raising the social basis of technical and individual problems to the level of general cognition is the aim, the demonstration not that every individual problem, for example, is the fault of the obsolete society, and will vanish with it, but rather that individual problems, tragedies, delights, expressions can only be fully realized with the explosion of the mass society, *with the genesis of the individual.* Vulgarity alone imagines that all problems are social. The truth is, rather, that the social problem is the basis of so much *needless* suffering, that it must be done away with before the full range of genuinely individual needs and frustrations, of genuinely useful technological innovation can be given expression. . . .

Contemporary Issues, the magazine in which Mr. Dutcher's article appears, is a journal of radical political criticism. As usual, the social and cultural criticism in this and similar organs is so plainly superior to corresponding comment in more orthodox sources that it is almost a waste of time to read the latter. While readers may not share the political emphasis of the discussions in *Contemporary Issues*, the principles set forth are lucid and their application clear. One year (four issues) of this quarterly may be subscribed to for $1.80. The English address is 78 Summerlee Ave., London, N.2; in the United States, P.O. Box 2357, Church Street Station, New York 8, N.Y.