VOLUME XV, NO. 35
AUGUST 29, 1962

SCIENCE AND POLITICS

THE expectation that science is going to make the world better—if not perfect, much better than it has been—is a dream that dies hard. There is a sense in which this dream ought not to die at all, but before it can be renewed we may have to obtain a clearer understanding of what "science" is, and a less naive version of what we mean by "better."

In such an undertaking, a lot depends on the generalizations you start out with. For example, you could begin with a statement from Albert Einstein, which sets the problem, and which practically everyone would agree with, but which does not help much toward finding answers. In an address at the California Institute of Technology, he said:

> Why does this magnificent applied science, which saves work and makes life easier, bring us so little happiness? The simple answer runs: Because we have not yet learned to make sensible use of it.

On the other hand, Francis Bacon gave a definition of science which seems to isolate important considerations. "The empire of things," he said in *Novum Organum*, "depends wholly on the arts and sciences," adding that "we cannot command nature except by obeying her." One could say that Bacon's idea of science is implicit in the terms of Einstein's question, but the proposition that science is the key to the empire of *things*, if correct, throws an immediate light on what science can do for man. It is important that the services of science not be misrepresented.

Yet the champions of science and often exemplars of its best practice have maintained that science has ends which range far beyond a grubby materialism. It sets out to provide "knowledge of things as they are," and the things it produces are mere by-products of this quest. Science is concerned with the nature and order of the world. Here the moral or humanitarian overtones of scientific enterprise have an irresistible appeal. The history of science is rich with these qualities, and rich, also, in majestic anticipations of how the world is to be led to a splendid future by scientific means. As the atomic physicist, Karl Compton, said, speaking of the social implications of scientific discovery: "In recent times, modern science has developed to give mankind, for the first time in the history of the human race, a way of securing a more abundant life which does not simply consist in taking away from someone else." In a more rhetorical style, John Burroughs declared: "Science has done more for the development of Western civilization in one hundred years than Christianity did in eighteen hundred years." Another aspect of the benefits attributed to science was stressed by Thomas Jefferson:

> The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God.

As you leaf through quotations about science from eminent men, you soon discover that the distinguished moralists of history have usually sought to hang their fervor on some convenient hook of "objective" justification. You begin to wonder, sooner or later, just how much importance lies in the identity of the hook. Science was indeed a tool for the liberation of men's minds, as well as the grand vizier of the Empire of Things; but is its liberating quality solely the possession of Science, or is the association of science with mental liberation an accident of history? This is a way of asking whether the questing hunger for knowledge that animates human beings (some of the time) ought to be made identical with what we call "Science," or considered separately and apart. Is it in man, or in the scientific institution? Various answers

may be returned to this question. The differences among them will depend mostly on how science is defined and do not matter very much so long as you know what is really intended. You know, for example, what Israel Zangwill means when he says:

> Science as the maid-of-all-work is a success, Science as an interpreter of the mystery of the Universe is a dismal failure. Even her immense practical boons only serve to amplify our senses and increase our speed: they cannot increase our happiness. Giants suffer as well as dwarfs, and the soul may sit lonely and sad, surrounded by mechanical miracles.

Since there are so many ways of defining science, a man may either agree vigorously with Zangwill, or oppose him with high indignation, and have "reason" on his side in both instances. Asking what science is has a close resemblance to asking what Christianity is. Is it the ideal profession you inquire about, or the historical practice? What or who "represents" Science?

One man thinks of science as the agent of modern comforts and conveniences, and as a source of power that can be put to endless uses. Another man thinks of quiet searchers of the heavens, charting the extent of space. Still another recalls Josiah Royce's saying that "the mystic is the only pure empiricist," and argues that it is incorrect to limit science to the external world, while his opponent insists that science is concerned only with matters that can be given a public exposure, for common verification.

We don't intend to offer any settlement of these issues, but have laid them out as a modest preparation for looking at the relation between science and politics. First, however, some formal statements by Will Durant (in *The Story of Philosophy)* may give a little preliminary order:

> Philosophy accepts the hard and hazardous task of dealing with problems not yet open to the methods of science—problems like good and evil, beauty and ugliness, order and freedom; so soon as a field of inquiry yields knowledge susceptible of exact formulation it is called science. . . . Philosophy is a hypothetical interpretation of the unknown (as in metaphysics), or of the inexactly known (as in ethics or political philosophy); it is the front trench of the siege of truth.

Well, we now have some open-at-both-ends definitions of science, and enough comment on the role of science to show the spectrum of opinion as to its value and effects. What about politics?

"Political theory," observed the writer of our Gandhi series in MANAS, "which does not start from a theory of human nature tends to become either pretentious or trivial." It needs to be based upon some kind of metaphysic. This idea is well put by A. A. Berle in a recent paper:

> Modern statecraft rests on a publicly accepted body of philosophical premises derived from or through religion or its equivalent. These premises set up a value system that alone makes management possible. . . . [The administrator] can in a well-developed civilization, accept pluralism, that is, the fact that there may be many differing, though overlapping conceptions of the good society, the good life, and universal order. But if ever the society in which he works conceives that the only reality is anarchy, individual, social, and universal, he and the state with him are lost. His only recourse then is to use such force as he can mobilize, as long as he can hold it together.

It is not difficult to extract from existing political systems the general premises concerning man's nature on which they are based. The Declaration of Independence, for example, is a primary statement about man for the purposes of constitutional democracy. The Nazis had another view of man, and the Communists have still another. Ancient political societies, as Aristotle pointed out, often took the view that the political existence of the individual was his only existence, exhausting his being. This seems to be more or less the Communist view, today.

How, then, does science enter into relations with politics? As hired hand or as respected mentor? As sociological philosopher or as a contractor retained to do difficult jobs?

A few years ago, there would have been little difficulty in obtaining an answer to this question. Back in the days when Robert Lynd's *Science for What?* was a popular text, the consensus among progressive thinkers was plain enough: Science will tell us what to do next. In the 1930's, the reader of Teachers' College magazine, *The Social Frontier*, was given to understand quite clearly that science was to become the foundation of all human progress. This was to be brought about by instituting certain changes in science itself, as explained by John Dewey in *Freedom and Culture:*

> The present need is recognition by scientific men of social responsibility for contagious diffusion of the scientific attitude: a task not to be accomplished without abandoning once and for all the belief that science is set apart from all other social interests as if possessed of a peculiar holiness. . . . Denial in the name of science of the existence of any such things as moral facts may mark a transitional stage thoughtlessly taken to be final. . . . Anything that obscures the fundamentally moral nature of the social problem is harmful, no matter whether it proceeds from the side of physiological or psychological theory. Any doctrine that eliminates or even obscures the function of choice of values . . . weakens personal responsibility for judgment and for action. . . . A culture which permits science to destroy traditional values but which distrusts its power to create new ones is a culture which is destroying itself.

Well, that was the assignment given by Dewey to the scientists, but they could hardly accept it. Did you ever try to engage a psychologist in a conversation about a "moral fact"? We speak of Dewey's time, rather than the present, but the word "moral" still makes most psychologists uncomfortable, just as words such as "truth" and "right" and "wrong" make the logical positivists uncomfortable. The scientists (most of them) will build you an atom bomb, they will plan a Dew-Line to defend you against the bombs of other nations, and organize a shelter program, but they *won't* tell you how to steer the ship of state on the basis of moral decision.

The "magnificent applied science" Dr. Einstein spoke of can be had from the scientists; or, if you go to psychologists who have a subconscious yearning to work on Madison Avenue, you may be able to get a psychological warfare program; but if you want them to participate in the metaphysic of the traditional political philosophy of the United States, they are no more competent than anyone else, and will be the first to tell you so. They may be less competent than a lot of other people not trained as scientists, mainly because they are occupationally conditioned to withdraw from a direct attack on moral problems. They want the moral problems denatured for them—objectified, and rendered morally neutral—before they will wheel into action.

All that we have said thus far becomes a way of asking whether or not it is possible to create a true functional relationship between the technical certainties ("exact formulations") of science and the metaphysical propositions, theories, and *stances* which lie behind politics, giving it its moral validity or justification.

This question is not easily answered.

Science has two plain relationships with the entire region of moral inquiry. The first relationship is intuitive, growing out of the fact that scientists are men who have in common with all other men a quality of perception usually identified as moral sensibility. They despise cruelty and injustice, they long for kindness and good for mankind. They have an inclination to turn their abilities to constructive ends. (Just as there are other tendencies in all men, scientists have other tendencies also, but we are now trying to exhibit the fact of moral longings in scientists.) Often the moral perception of scientists is heightened by the intellectual disciplines they possess, to the point of generating universal respect and admiration. The ends of these men are often said to be the ends of science. This is a humanistic definition of science, and it may be the one we should ultimately adopt.

The other relationship of science to moral inquiry is a relationship of rejection.

"Philosophy," as Will Durant said, "accepts the hard and hazardous task of dealing with problems not yet open to the methods of science—problems like good and evil. . . ." How can science, *qua* science, have a relationship to matter not yet open to its methods?

You could say that science may be able to *begin* such a relationship, if it can redefine its methods in a way that will make it possible for science to "take hold" of a moral issue. How this might be done remains to be seen. However, there are already lines of connection between science and morals which have resulted from the accumulation of evidence concerning behavior which has manifestly bad effects. Psychiatry, for example, obtains a backdoor entrance into the moral field when it makes judgments about the effects of certain types of religious beliefs on the human *psyche.* Bacteriology offers a manifest criticism of Hindu religion when it presents an analysis of the germs of infectious disease floating in the waters of the holy Ganges in which the pious bathe and which they sometimes drink. The penologist may bring devastating criticism, founded on scientific research, to bear on the "moral" ideas of the political community in connection with the control or reduction of crime. Science, in other words, may be an effective critic of prevailing moral ideas. But as we admit this, we should take care to note that its criticism applies to certain practical consequences, in objective human behavior, of the moral ideas held by men, and is not a direct philosophical evaluation of the metaphysical or ethical judgments in which the "moral" practices or *"mores"* originated, or of which they are perversions.

What we are trying to suggest, here, is that the empirical methods of scientific criticism, while often fatal to the naive assumptions of institutional religion, are unable to supply affirmative principles of the good as guides to human behavior. A certain difficulty in accepting this comment may arise from a kind of subjective merger in scientific thought between science as criticism of behavior founded on traditional "morality" and the moral ardor of the human being who practices science. The intuitive moralist in the scientist smuggles in the assumptions which his discipline cannot provide. There is nothing wrong with this, except the fact that it tends to prevent an honest admission by the scientist that he needs also to think as a philosopher and even as a metaphysician if he is to deal objectively and dispassionately with the problems of politics.

Letter from **AFRICA**

LOME.—Two finely-drawn pictures of moral and spiritual dilemma in the midst of African social break-up were presented to me today. I'm not at all sure that I can recreate on paper the sense of urgency and bafflement of the originals, but in both cases the authors were men of such sincerity and sympathy that it seems worth trying.

I was talking in the first instance to an Israeli diplomatic officer about African agricultural development. Actually, he is a professional soldier, a colonel whose military experience has included some responsibilities typical of that activity, as well as long experience in the resettlement of Jews from all over the world on the desert waste of southern Israel. He began by describing the Agricultural Pioneer Youth training projects the Israeli sponsor here, but we progressed quickly to motives, causes, purposes. Since independence, the Republic of Togo had installed a compulsory education system covering about seven years of schooling, bringing problems in almost devastating measure.

There is no industry in Togo, and there are almost no prospects of industrial development. Agriculture must be fostered. To this day, the tomatoes we eat in the hotel are flown in each week from Paris. After their seven-year school period, the young find themselves unfit for their villages, and their villages are equally unfit for them. Listen to a seventeen-year-old: "Why can't I go back to my village? Don't you understand,—I'm different, now, but the village hasn't changed at all. I don't believe in magic, any more, in the spirits my parents still live with. But the minute I go back, and act different, the witch doctor is after me. If I win, now, he loses his job. If he wins, he throws the juju at me, nobody in the village will even talk to me any more. I can't get a house, I can't get any land to work, I'm an outcast in my own village. Pretty soon, either I have to get out or I'll have to go back and believe the old stuff again. Lots of people stay, and forget all we learned in school. The family pressure is terrible, for if I don't keep quiet I'll make my family outcasts, too. No; I can't go back."

So agriculture stagnates and the crop of frustrated and unemployed young people in the cities grows and grows. The program sponsored by the Israeli is a thrilling, courageous and imaginative attempt to meet these problems.

In the second instance I was talking to a German Lutheran missionary who lives in an up-country village. The occasion?—well, it was a diplomatic reception given in Lome for a German Cardinal, here to consecrate the first Togolese Archbishop. The room was full of red skull caps, purple capes, and white dinner jackets—but never mind that. The Catholic community is important in the South, the Moslem strong in the North; animists are a majority of the total population; Protestantism is numerically insignificant.

But listen to this remarkable Lutheran pastor: "The people are torn. They don't know what to do or what to believe. The old society has pretty well disintegrated under the pressures of education, a new communications network, radio, visitors. They see each of the competing systems as part of this disintegration, this mess, and they tend to try to use each one for what they can get out of it.

"We have communities in which almost no girl of eighteen has not had a baby, in which large numbers of people have been divorced two or three times. These people are technically under church discipline; they are church members; but they are not at all the stable, purposeful and useful people that Christians ought to be. They are free for the future: their souls are in the care of the church; but they are not free in the present: they live with spiritual confusion, unfaith, and in the very conscious presence of spirits and devils, which they propitiate in private while they pursue superficial Christian ways in public.

"In many cases the solid, successful, useful families in the community are the polygamists. They retain the old system, and have not themselves broken down in the face of great social change."

"The basic mistake," he concluded, "was the Church's original unconditional rejection of polygamy in this area, its insistence upon monogamy as the only Christian condition. It's too late, now, to correct that mistake."

The basic sympathetic warmth of these two men is patent. The honesty of this pastor and his clearheaded comments make him, to me, a really remarkable person. I don't think these quotations, necessarily partial and incomplete, do violence to their basic views. Millions of people, in Africa and elsewhere, must be going through this sort of purgatory on earth. Any sensitive observer must feel numb at the prospect of bearing any slightest degree of responsibility, educational, religious, social, political, or economic, for the future of this part of the world.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
QUOTES FROM NOVELS

JUAN JOSE AREVALO'S *The Shark and the Sardines* makes it apparent that the military personnel of the U.S. armed forces have seldom known what they were doing when they were doing it—at least in Latin America. And "protection of United States interests" in foreign lands has been supported by wondrously muddled reasons.

In any case, it is interesting to explore the dilemma of the man who, engaged in the armed support of his country's foreign policy, lacks a geopolitical myth. He cannot, for instance, feel that he knows "the wave of the future" and how to ride it. Wherever he exists, abroad, the man without a myth—such as the nineteenth-century myth of the British Empire, the myth of Nazi domination, and the present myth of international communism—is only an Obedient Servant.

Two recent novels contain material relevant to this view of U.S. "interventionism." In an otherwise quite ordinary pocket-book story of violence and disillusion, Edward Harper's *Janine*, we encounter a conversation between a former Nazi supporter and an American adventurer. The American, Jordan, finds himself unable to explain the foreign policy of his country to Europeans:

> That a country could fight a war without defining most concretely its self-interest was a fact they could not and would not believe. It was simpler to give them geopolitical myth. And he did. Anyway, it was better that way. Jordan was reasonably sure that the only reason the United States had managed to maintain its world position in the postwar years was because of this basic misunderstanding.
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> In the confused, fumbling foreign policy which sought popularity above all else, the continental had read devious Machiavellian schemes cleverly concealed behind an impenetrable cloak of idealism. True, he had not been able to find the American self-interest very often, but that simply proved Yankee shrewdness. Most of the time the subtle thinkers of the old world, the Sartres, the Aragons, the Laskis, had managed to dream up a plausible myth.
>
> Had the true nature of the American mind, its naivete, its total contempt for concepts of power, been known, the cold war and the West would long since have been lost. And now another danger, perhaps an even greater one, was approaching. It had finally dawned on the European that what he had taken for cleverness was stupidity, what he had believed a leaf from von Clausewitz' book was from Norman Vincent Peale's.

Mr. Harper is trying to make a rather subtle point here—one which is neither flattering nor particularly unflattering. When the warrior is actually engaged in military action, he can function well because he must, yet the sense of hollowness which sometimes invades his entire being comes because he does not know how to integrate what he is doing with the concept of a Better Future. In a novel of World War II, *Roll Back the Sky* by Ward Taylor, "Captain Richardson" finds that he can bomb the enemy most effectively when he blots out thought entirely—especially any concern with the future or its relationship to the destruction he is accomplishing. Of course, without a myth of the better future that may presumably be achieved through victory, one does not really have an enemy,—but in actual modern warfare the concept of enemy *should* be outdated. Here Richardson starts to think about the Japanese he has killed and is going to kill, but pulls himself up short:

> Don't hate them. Don't bother to hate them. Hate is an emotion, and emotions upset the central nervous system, make your heart beat faster and your forehead grow damp, make your hands tremble. Don't let your hands tremble; you need to feel controls delicately and precisely with your hands. Your mind must be clear and detached and efficient. You need to decide quickly, act surely. So you may kill better. You can't afford to hate, your purpose is to kill.
>
> Kill the fighting men, on the ground and on the sea and in the air. Kill them before they kill you. Kill them so you can get to the others, the men who till the fields and work in the factories and in the offices. Kill the young men and the old men, the halt and the blind.

> But do it methodically and matter-of-factly and without worrying about it. It's nothing to worry about. Don't let it mix you up. You know that the killing instinct or whatever you call it is a universal instinct and everybody has it in one way or another and in one degree or another, depending upon time and circumstance and education and hunger and sexual drive and thirst and a thousand other factors all jumbled up so neither you nor anyone else will ever sort them out. . . .
>
> Don't try to weasel out of it by saying you don't actually kill anybody, personally, because you only fly the airplane and never in your life pulled a single trigger in battle, you kill them just as surely with your mind and hands flying the airplane, or with your lathe back in the shop making gun barrels, or even if you just grow the vegetables that feed the men who pull the triggers, or nurse the babies who will grow up to be the people who do the paperwork of war. So fly your airplane and kill and run your lathe and kill, and grow your vegetables and kill, and nurse your baby and kill.
>
> Decision is not difficult, because the choices are so few. You can fly and fight and kill. You can fly and fight and kill and be killed. You can fly and not fight and be killed anyway. Just don't think about it. Don't think about the past because that might divert you too much from the present, and don't for Jesus Christ's sake be stupid enough to try to think about the future.

This is "realism." But, as Peter Ustinov points out in his ironic novel, *The Loser*, most people everywhere today have seen too many "third-rate thrillers" not to sense something phony about the preparation-for-further-war atmosphere. In this case it is a European who reflects:

> Perhaps, he now thought, he had just been a microcosm of a world addled by a desperate malady, a little fragment of that sickness and fever of war. He greeted the news of war with relief, and left to behave like a patriot. Now he was a hero. He suddenly found himself invaded by the surprising thought that he didn't really care. He had never admitted it before and now, however shocking it was, he felt a great relief.
>
> Men were fools, and they would never learn. The faces they pulled when they believed the moment to call for gravity! They were the same faces they pulled as they caught sight of themselves in a mirror, a look of man to man, of inherent honesty, of straightness—of vanity, the look of men conducting a brief love affair with themselves as they leave the barber's shop. And they put plumes on their heads, to declare their rank in the ladder in incentives, stars on their caps, and exploding grenades, crossed swords, piled rifles, acorns, laurel clusters, washing-lines of medals on their chests, filigrees of braid. Like African tribal chiefs, they exalt themselves away from their naked origins and assume what grandeur they can while life lasts.

Such passages as these illustrate something more than the practical futility of a war conducted in the belief that one can "win." These are testaments to the fact that the *conception* of victory and the *conception* of an "enemy" are complete dead ends.

COMMENTARY
ALL THE WAY

BACK in 1937, a distinguished biologist, Dr. Edwin Grant Conklin, chose "Science and Ethics" as the subject of his address as retiring president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Much of what he said would bear repeating, since his talk was impressive evidence of the capacity of scientists to speak as philosophers. Here, however, we should like to recall his brief discussion of the behavior of scientists in relation to freedom of thought:

> In spite of a few notable exceptions it must be confessed that scientists did not win the freedom they have generally enjoyed, and they have not been conspicuous in defending this freedom when it has been threatened. Perhaps they have lacked that confidence in absolute truth and that emotional exaltation that have led martyrs and heroes to welcome persecution and death in defense of their faith. Today as in former times it is the religious leaders who are most courageous in resisting tyranny. It was not science but religion and ethics that led Socrates to say to his accusers, "I will obey the god, rather than you." It was not science but religious conviction that led Milton to utter his noble defense of intellectual liberty, "Whoever knew truth put to the worst in a free and open encounter. . . ." The spirit of science does not cultivate such heroism in the maintenance of freedom. . . .

It is necessary to make a considered assent to Dr. Conklin's judgment. In fact, there is a close relation between what he says and the point of this week's lead article: that science is an excellent critic, but a poor guide in relation to the issues of moral decision.

But don't we *need* people like that, who won't let themselves be "carried away"? The question is a fair one. We do need people with measure and deliberation in their lives, but isn't this a quality that works best as a *human* trait rather than some kind of "professional" virtue? Dr. Conklin very nearly says that scientists suffer from an occupational inhibition against joining the struggle for freedom and truth.

There is something wrong with arguing that we need poets and preachers to urge us on, and cautious scientists to hold us back. If the world is to be made better, it will be done by whole men, and not by some kind of compromise setting emotional enthusiasm against rational reserve.

At root, the trouble of the scientists seems to be their characteristic neglect of the values of subjective reality—where we really live as human beings, and where we find our reasons for "going the whole way" in behalf of the Good. Is it anti- or non-scientific to participate in this kind of wholeness? Or can the scientific disciplines find expression in relation to man's inner life? If not, the scientists will have to acknowledge their inability to make much more than a technical contribution to the political process.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
LISTENING AND LEARNING

THERE is little doubt that automation is coming to the classroom. "Teaching machines" are not only in existence but in use, and there are frequent articles concerning the effectiveness of a variety of "teaching" devices in such magazines as the *American School Board Journal, Fortune,* the *American Behavioral Sciences,* etc. Advocates of the machines are not, of course, convinced that the sort of instruction that can be done in this way is the only instruction needed. They wish to save the teacher's time; many aspects of instruction are already nearly mechanical in any case. However, one thing a machine cannot do is *listen*—which introduces a subject of immeasurable importance.

An article by Prof. Nelle Morton in the *International Journal of Religious Education* (July, 1960) touches on the importance of listening. Prof. Morton writes:

> Adults caught in a monotonous routine of days often become dulled to the voices of their children. Parents and teachers—alike preoccupied with duties to be performed even while rationalizing them as "part of the job" or "for the sake of their families"—by-pass opportunities for creative renewal through the approaches of a child.
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> What does it mean to listen to a child, or to any person, for that matter? When we listen, we extend to a person the courtesy of being attentive and receptive while he talks. We listen when we consider him important enough to be worth the rearrangement of our thoughts, or risk changing our direction, or maybe altering our affections to make room for his intrusions. One has to be secure enough to afford listening—even to a child. For listening is more than being quiet in order to hear the sound of words, or to give another a chance to express himself. Listening includes respecting another person as a human being and receiving in trust the gift of himself that he offers.
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> If listening involves the acceptance in trust of another person, then it would follow that children need listeners in order to become persons. Children can never be sure of themselves or accept themselves until someone listens to them. A baby may cry out from hunger, or whimper from discomfort, but in the very physical act of being fed and changed, he is assured that he has been heard and that he matters to someone. Listening to a child, then, is more than receiving his articulation at face value. Listening tunes the inner, sensitive ear of the adult to the child's struggle to become, to know himself in relation to his world.
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> Older children also need listeners—sympathetic listeners in order to be themselves. But if they have not been listened to with some sense of respect when they are younger, they soon learn to tailor their real questions and responses to adult approval and expectancy.

A short time ago a high school senior asked us to recommend a college (preferably small) which would afford wide opportunity for free intellectual exploration. We found ourselves unable to take the responsibility for naming any particular institution. Instead, we endeavored to point out that a true "learning situation" in any institution is largely a matter of spontaneous rapport between teachers and students. The biggest university in the world may *conceivably* hold opportunities for stimulation and freedom far beyond those of a small college, if the right students and the right professors are able to get together at the right time.

The professor who becomes a gateway to wisdom for the student—especially by way of a tutorial or reading seminar—must be a professor who knows how to listen. Any intellectual type can "instruct," but the teacher who learns the mind of the student through listening is able to be of the greatest help. And such men, we think, are where you find them—although small colleges may sometimes attract more than their share of real teachers.

Another phase of the subject of listening—listening considered as a true discipline—is treated by Dominick Barbara in *Psychologia* (No. 4, 1961). Dr. Barbara says:

> Listening is an art. To be well performed, it requires more than just letting sound waves enter

passively into ears. Good listening is an alive process demanding alert and active participation.

If listening is an art, then it requires knowledge and effort. It is in essence a mental skill that can be developed primarily through training and practice. If we are to learn to know how to listen well, we must proceed as we would in learning any other art such as music, painting, architecture or acting. That is, if we are to become good listeners, we must first attempt to inquire about all the basic essentials of productive listening, and second, we must do a great deal of practicing until we can master its workings.

The art of listening is not something we can acquire through "do-it-yourself" shortcuts. It requires constant practicing and thinking. The good listener, as Nichols and Stevens so aptly put it [in *Are You Listening?*], "listens between the lines. He constantly applies his spare thinking to what is being said." The good listener, while he is attentive to what is being said, is also aware of the total facts at hand, with both their verbal connotations and their nonverbal implications.

First of all, the practice of an art requires *discipline*. It is essential, according to Fromm, "that discipline should not be practiced like a rule imposed on oneself from the outside but that it becomes an expression of one's own will; that it is felt as pleasant, and that one slowly accustoms oneself to a kind of behavior which one would eventually miss, if one stopped practicing it." [*The Art of Loving*.] In desiring to be good listeners, it is imperative that we "be in the mood" to want to listen and at the same time consider some of its more challenging aspects. We might even set aside certain times of our daily life for serious listening, in contrast to the vast amount of superficial listening that goes on when we chit-chat about the weather, talk about social doings or ramble on during a coffee break.

Concentration is a second prerequisite of good listening. So many of us in our Western Culture have difficulty in concentrating. We take a peculiar pride in doing many things at once, such as watching television, reading a book, talking, smoking, eating and drinking. This lack of concentration is also prevalent among us because of our fear of being alone with ourselves. To sit still, to be silent and to concentrate on something specific for any length of time is impossible for most people.

For listening to be effective as an art, we must be active participants in its whole process. This means not only "doing something" with our ears, but responding holistically—both with our hearing capacity and our inner perceptions. It also entails being fully attentive and awake, alert at every minute to screen out inner prejudices, condemnations or preconceived notions. It further encompasses being active in thought and feeling, with one's eyes and ears, to avoid inner inertia, and to be open and receptive to others. The capacity to listen demands a state of zest, enhanced vitality, aliveness and the firm desire to commune with others. With all this in hand, we can now grow healthily as human beings, tend to influence others with meaning and arrive at mutual and truthful communication.

FRONTIERS

Gandhi's View of Man and History

III—THE INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

GANDHI'S view of human nature is dependent on his interpretation of history as well as his view of cosmic evolution.

> Life is an inspiration. Its mission is to strive after perfection, which is realization.[76]

He believed in the power of the spirit of man to shape its environment to some extent and thus affect the course of history. He explicitly rejected the Marxist interpretation of history. He could not agree that our ideologies, ethical standards and values are altogether a product of our material environment.[77]

> The Marxist regards thought, as it were, as a secretion of the brain and the mind, a reflex of the material environment. I cannot accept that. . . . If I have an awareness of that living principle within me, no one can fetter my mind. The body might be destroyed, the spirit will proclaim its freedom. This to me is not a theory; it is a fact of experience.[78]

When Gandhi said that he did not believe that it is *Prakriti* (matter) which originates and governs the thought-processes of *Purusha* (spirit),[79] he was clearly enunciating a faith and a belief that are not susceptible to proof any more than is the opposite view.

Gandhi was convinced that what was good in Marxism was not original or exclusive to it, and what was exclusive to it was not necessarily good.[80]

> My quarrel with the Marxists is that even if the paradise of material satisfactions, which they envisage as their final goal, were realised on earth, it would not bring mankind either contentment or peace. But I was wondering whether we cannot take the best out of Marxism and turn it to account for the realisation of our social aims.[81]

He believed that what had made the teaching of Marx dynamic was that he regarded mankind as a whole, and transcending class divisions identified himself with the cause of the poor, oppressed toilers of the world. "But in that he is not alone. Others besides him have done the same."[82] While conceding the vision and dynamism of Marx, Gandhi explicitly rejected his reductionism.

> I do not consider economic factors to be the source of all the evils in the world. Nor is it correct to trace the origin of all wars to economic causes. What were the causes of the last war? (1914) Insignificances. . . . Was not Helen the cause of the Trojan War? But why go so far? The Rajput wars which belong to modern history, had never their origin in economic causes.[83] 3

Gandhi's criticism of the Marxist interpretation of history was more just than profound, but he put his finger on the basic weakness of Marxism.

> These people have concentrated their study on the depths of degradation to which human nature can descend. What use have they for the study of the heights to which human nature could rise? That study is being made by me.[84]

The virtue of Gandhi's view of history lay for him in its being dynamic, hopeful and universal, but "ultimately it is the Unseen Power that governs the course of events—even in the minds of men who made those events."[85] Although he had a transcendentalist view of history, he could not, like Newman, ask "When was the face of human society . . . other than evil?"[86] To Newman—

> the whole visible course of things, nations, empires, states politics, professions, trades, society, pursuits of all kinds . . .come of evil; they hold of evil, and they are instruments of evil; they have in them the nature of evil, they are the progeny of sinful Adam, they have in them the infection of Adam's fall; they never would have been as we see them but for Adam's fall.[87]

Gandhi could not possibly regard the whole world as a "confederacy of evil." On the other hand, he was a theological teleologist[88] who believed that just as God has a purpose for the universe as a unit, God has a purpose for every particle of life, too—for man as well as the ant.[89] Gandhi wanted the lesson of humility to be learnt from the futile wars and crumbling empires of

history. Man is nothing when he sets himself up against the stream of life and the divine purpose of the universe.

> Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner in St. Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman . . . Let us contemplate such examples and be humble.[90]

And yet the role of the individual was central to Gandhi's view of history. "Supposing Hitler were to die today, it would alter the whole course of current history,"[91] he declared during his detention at Poona in 1942.

Gandhi really wavered between a cyclical theory of historical development current among the ancient Greeks and Hindus, and the Augustinian conception of history as a kind of drama whose central plot has already been divinely conceived prior to its enactment by human beings. His view of history comes close to that of Herder, who thought that history teaches us to act according to God's eternal laws, that this earth is an inn for travellers, but also that "nothing in nature stands still; everything exerts itself and pushes on,"[92] and man is unique because, as essentially the most perfect of beings, he is also the most perfectible. Gandhi would not have gone as far as Pasternak, who said that "there are no nations, but only persons,"[93] but he refused to believe, as Hegel did, that human societies and nations have a character or soul even as the individual has. History is not a cataclysmic affair and its internal dynamic is not one of self-perpetuating conflict. Nor did Gandhi argue that everything is inherently and inevitably progressive, that no event is wasted as it contributes somehow to the realisation of perfection. He believed that historical events constitute not merely a meaningful pattern, but also conform to causal laws discoverable by men. No doubt he believed that "human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality,"[94] but it is in relation to the mind of man, and not in the field of knowledge or the realm of morals or in the sphere of social relations, that we must look for the key to progress. Of course, the fact that mankind persists shows that "the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, the centripetal force greater than centrifugal."[95]

Our real source of hope lies in the progressive awareness by human beings of the need to replace brute force by deliberate non-violence, coercion by consent, paternalism by self -dependence.

> History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. . . . History, then, is a record of an interruption in the course of nature. Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.[96]

The secular trend of improvement in mental awareness applies only to *Kali Yuga,* the age of darkness that began 5,000 years ago, an age which must be fitted into a larger cyclical span. Human history is for Gandhi neither a unilinear trend of progress nor a static picture of eternal recurrence, but rather a spiral-like movement that is determined by the power of spirit over matter within the limits of the course plotted out by *Karma,* the compensatory law of ethical causation. There is a divine guarantee that good shall ultimately triumph over evil, but he explicitly rejected the unilinear view of human progress, individual or collective.

> Life is not one straight road. There are so many complexities in it. It is not like a train which, once started, keeps on running.[97]

Although Gandhi, like Kant, believed that the end and purpose of human life is to achieve moral autonomy and freedom under self-imposed laws, he did not share Kant's basically unilinear conception of history in which mankind marches by slow degrees but inexorably towards an infinite end.

Gandhi did not base his confidence in the perfectibility of man either on human reason or on the progress of knowledge. He could not, like Helvetius, believe that "ignorance is always compelled before the immense power of the imperceptible progress of enlightenment."[98] Like Turgot, he implicitly repudiated the notion of

mechanical progression; evil and error are necessary for the realization of progress and "the entire mass of humanity, by alternations of calm and agitation, good and evil, proceeds continuously, if slowly, towards a greater perfection."[99] In 1922, Gandhi wrote: "History is more a record of wonderful revolutions than of so-called ordered progress."[100] But he could not go so far as Turgot and regard "the tumultuous, dangerous passions" as a principle of action, and consequently of progress. Nor could he believe, like Condorcet and others, in any law of automatic progress which would necessarily guarantee that the future of humanity would be immeasurably brighter than the past. He was a teleologist to the extent that he regarded the cosmic and the historical process as a course of events through which the true nature of man's perfection is destined to be realized, but this is secured by the triumph of spirit over matter in nature rather than by any independent historical law of social progress. Of course, if most human souls or monads progress from life to life more than they regress, then, assuming that new monads are not always coming into the world, society must make progress, though *there is no law of social progress, i.e.,* there is no tendency for an earlier social order to generate a *higher* social order out of itself. Society improves only because most of the souls that it includes continually make some progress. And yet, Gandhi did not pretend that the whole course of history and of evolution has reached its end station in our own time, still less did he hold, like Comte and Marx, that the present happens to fall into a unique category in the succession of ages.

It might be argued that, if Gandhi believed in a cosmic and historical process through which man's nature is perfected, he did implicitly believe in a law of social progress. There could, however, logically be a doctrine of perfectibility (*i.e.,* a doctrine asserting not only that man is capable of improvement but tends to improve) unconnected with a law of social progress. It could be held (though unplausibly) that, on the whole, individuals tend to get better as they get older, *or* (and more plausibly) that they live many lives and on the whole tend to get better the more lives they have lived. The first alternative, though logically possible, is implausible because we have plenty of evidence that it is not true; the second alternative could be held without fear of contradiction because it is unverifiable. Whoever adopts it cannot be proved wrong by a simple appeal to the facts. It is true that Gandhi did not believe merely that man is capable of improvement or merely that as a matter of fact he has improved, but also that there is an inherent tendency to improve. In so far as this tendency reveals itself through an historical process, we could say that there is an implied law of social progress. This very notion, however, is logically unsound. It is odd to talk of the collective progress of societies with the same ethical significance that belongs to the idea of individual self-improvement. Even Saint-Simon and Marx did not formulate precisely a law of social progress They never made a clear and self-consistent statement whose truth could be tested by an appeal to the facts.

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(*To Be Continued*)

NOTES

[76] *Harijan,* June, 1935.
[77] Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandi—the Last Pahse,* volume 2, p. 137
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] Sushila Nayyar, *Bapu Ki Karavas Kahani* (Hindu), p. 152
[80] Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandi—the Last Phase,* volume 2, p. 139
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] Sushila, Nayyar, *Bapu Ki Karavas Kahani* (Hindu), p. 155
[84] *Ibid,* P. 152
[85] Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi—the Last Phase,* volume 2, p. 138
[86] *Parochial and Plain Sermons,* v, p. 172
[87] *Ibid.*

[88] He was not a teleologist in the sense that man can *know* the purpose of every creature or ascribe ends *a priori* to all human being.
[89] Shukla, *Conversations with Gandhi*, p. 28 (November, 1933).
[90] *Young India*, October, 1924
[91] Pyarelal, *Mahtma Gandhi—the Last Phase*, volume 2, p. 138.
[92] *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, translated by T. Churchill, 1800, p. 467.
[93] *Dr. Zhivago*, translated by Max Hayward, p. 117.
[94] *Young India*, September, 1926.
[95] *Ibid.*, November, 1931.
[96] *Hind Swaraj*, p. 130.
[97] Shukla, *Conversations with Gandhi*, p. 9 (September, 1933)
[98] *De L'Esprit*, 1758, volume I, p. 170-1.
[99] *Oeuvres*, volume I, p. 277.
[100] *Young India*, February, 1922.