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QUESTIONS ABOUT ENDS

LAST spring (issue of May 16), we examined the question, "What Is Materialism?", using the letter of a reader as the point of departure. We now have another letter from that reader, who says:

> You discussed the philosophy of materialism in a way that was fresh and illuminating to me. At the same time, I feel as if the very common usage of "materialism," as contrasted with "spiritual values," which probably covers a lot of loose thinking, was not adequately examined. My impression is that today a "materialistic outlook" means to most people the assumption that the most important things in life are a good salary and an "assured future"—in other words, the assurance that a man and his family can live in affluence now and in the foreseeable future. How old is this idea? How widespread? What are its defects? How can it be replaced by a more satisfying and fairly balanced view of the meaning of life?

These are really loaded questions—loaded in the sense that they involve consideration of very nearly all the complex moral and intellectual issues of human life. It is possible, of course, to by-pass these issues and to look at the questions in terms of the moral ideas which have shaped human ideals and counsels of perfection throughout all the known historical past. One can develop acceptable platitudes in this way, but platitudes do not really help us in our present situation. Our questioner is seeking some kind of leverage—some educational tool which has the capacity to *lift* the level of human ends to a higher plateau of awareness and conception of the good life. Moral exhortation has never worked for purposes of this sort.

We might begin by looking at the last question asked by our correspondent: "How can it [materialism] be replaced by a more satisfying and fairly balanced view of the meaning of life?" Why, for one thing, should this question be asked at all? What prompts human beings to seek a better life?

A conceivable answer would be to say that there is some kind of principle of longing in all men, some hunger for what we call the good, that we recognize in ourselves and others. You cannot give an adequate account of human beings without speaking of this longing. It is an *essential* part of being human. You could add that the quest for the good is but one of the facets or aspects of the unrealized goals of human beings. Broadly speaking, a man might be defined as an intelligent being whose ends are as yet unfulfilled. You could say that description of those ends is the problem of philosophy, and that the means to reach them, once they have been defined, is the task of science.

What do we begin with, in philosophy? We begin with ethical intuitions. We have pain when others suffer. Usually, the formulation of the meaning of our ethical intuitions starts out with a postulate of the ultimate unity of all beings. All men, we say, are brothers. We are parts of one another. The key idea, then, in ethical philosophy, is the idea of the self. So far, so good.

Our ethical intuitions declare that we are in some sense the same as our fellows. But they do not tell us in what sense we are different. If we were not in some sense different, we would not need a *perception* of unity. Let us say, then, that our intuition of unity is a supra-rational spiritual cognition, a primary, radical experience in consciousness. We must then add that our perception of differences, by means of which we make definitions of individuality, is an intellectual cognition, requiring the comparative and analytical faculties of the mind. From the exercise of these faculties we get all our theories of the nature of man.

The "theories" of the nature of man are of two sorts. First there are the assumptions each

individual has made about himself—usually unexamined assumptions—which determine his ends and the means he uses in pursuing those ends. These assumptions constitute the individual's "philosophy of life." He takes these assumptions from his inner, psychological drives, from his parents, from his culture, and all together they create his empirical individuality.

The other sort of theory of the nature of man represents efforts by reflective men to give a disciplined account of the meaning of human life. This class of theories includes all the religions and philosophies and even the political systems the world has known.

Both classes of theories exhibit endless variety and differences. There are as many disagreements as there are agreements concerning the nature of man, in both classes. Further, while you can look at the individual and his theory of the self, in isolation from the complex of assumptions which constitute his culture, this is usually an unrealistic procedure. The individual is not just an individual; he is an individual who has relationships with a group, and his individuality is qualified by those relationships and by popular assumptions about those relationships.

For example, the problem of Arjuna, in the *Bhagavad-Gita,* is represented by the conflict between the instruction he obtains from Krishna, his spiritual teacher (who is symbolic of Arjuna's self-knowledge or intuitive perception), and the dictates of custom and the moral traditions of his society. Arjuna begins by arguing that he ought not to violate the duties and obligations he owes to his community. Krishna rejoins by pointing out that there are other duties and obligations which are closer to the true nature of things, and that these have a greater claim on Arjuna's allegiance. He says, in effect, that Arjuna can conform to the *mores* of his time, if he chooses, but that he can not in this way fulfill his spiritual destiny. He invites Arjuna to break with orthodoxy, with the shell of moral injunction, and take his spiritual ideas *directly,* from immediate perception of the nature of being, instead of following the second-hand, cultural versions of duty and the good. This perilous decision precipitates the spiritual crisis of Arjuna's life. The resulting dialogue he holds with himself (who is also Krishna) is an attempt to assemble the basic issues of human decision.

Using the *Gita* as a classical setting of the problem helps us to see its extraordinary complexity. The good and the true, it seems, are not simple, easily definable affairs. What is right for a man to do depends as much upon his capacity to understand what he is doing, as it does upon its fixed or objective qualities.

A similar situation is present in the drama of the Garden of Eden. Adam is not supposed to taste the forbidden fruit. The good life of the obedient creature depends upon conforming to this rule. He eats, and loses the conformist's good life, but he gains the capacity to distinguish between good and evil. His "sin" becomes a creative act which launches him upon another kind of life. William Blake suggests something like this. In a Pendle Hill pamphlet, Harold Goddard remarks:

> Why did Milton, without intending to, make Satan a sublime and magnificent figure, and God in comparison a pale and ineffectual one? Blake's answer is the profoundest comment ever made on *Paradise Lost.* "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it."

Here, in effect, you have another great division in ideas of the self, which might break down into philosophies of the once-born and of the twice-born men. The once-born are those who insist upon a simple, unequivocal doctrine of right and wrong, good and evil, while the twice-born have discovered that morality is inevitably a system which changes with the light one sees by.

Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria,* has another way of getting at this distinction. He begins by noting that the primary intuitions of geometry are capable of being represented by

constructions, which makes them subject to objective verification. Turning to philosophy, he observes:

> But here an important distinction presents itself. Philosophy is employed on objects of the *inner* sense, and can not, like geometry, appropriate to every construction a correspondent *outward* intuition. Nevertheless philosophy, if it is to arrive at evidence, must proceed from the most original construction, and the question then is, what is the most original construction or first productive act for the inner sense. The answer to this question depends on the direction which is given to the inner sense. But in philosophy the inner sense can not have its direction determined by any outward object. . . . It is demanded, then, whether there be found any means in philosophy to determine the direction of the inner sense, as in mathematics it is determinable by its specific image or outward picture. Now the inner sense has its direction determined for the greater part only by an act of freedom. One man's consciousness extends only to the pleasant or unpleasant sensations caused in him by external impressions; another enlarges his inner sense to a consciousness of forms and quantity; a third in addition to the image is conscious of the conception or notion of the thing; a fourth attains to a notion of his notions—he reflects on his own reflections; and thus we may say without impropriety, that the one possesses more or less inner sense than the other. This more or less betrays already, that philosophy in its first principles must have a practical or moral, as well as a theoretical or speculative side. This difference in degree does not exist in mathematics. . . . To an Esquimaux or New Zealander our most popular philosophy would be wholly unintelligible. The sense, the inward organ, for it is not yet born in him. So is there many a one among us, yes, and some who think themselves philosophers too, to whom the philosophic organ is entirely wanting. To such a man philosophy is a mere play of words and notions, like a theory of music to the deaf, or like the geometry of light to the blind. The connection of the parts and their logical dependencies may be seen and remembered: but the whole is groundless and hollow, unsustained by living contact, unaccompanied with any realizing intuition which exists by and in the act that affirms its existence, which is known, because it is, and is because it is known. . . . The postulate of philosophy and at the same time the test of philosophic capacity, is no other than the heaven-descended KNOW THYSELF! And this at once practically and speculatively. For as philosophy is neither a science of the reason or understanding only, nor merely a science of morals, but the science of BEING altogether, its primary ground can be neither merely speculative nor merely practical, but both in one.

Coleridge cuts the Gordian knot by declaring that some have the philosophic organ developed, while others lack it. Every serious study of man has to meet this problem. Jesus dealt with it when he told his disciples that while he revealed mysteries to them, he spoke to the multitudes outside in simple parables. And Krishna explained to Arjuna that he could be given secrets because he no longer found fault with his teacher. In the third discourse of the Gita Krishna speaks at some length on the question of the special duties of the twice-born and the differences in the motives of men. Of the enlightened individual, he says:

> . . . the man who only taketh delight in the Self within, is satisfied with that alone, hath no selfish interest in action. He hath no interest either in that which is done or that which is not done; and there is not, in all things which have been created, any object upon which he may place dependence. Therefore perform thou that which thou hast to do, at all times unmindful of the event, for the man who doeth that which he hath to do, without attachment to the result, obtaineth the Supreme. . . . Even if the good of mankind only is considered by thee, the performance of thy duty will be plain, for whatever is practiced by the most excellent men, that is also practiced by others. The world follows whatever example they set.

Krishna then takes himself as an example of one who has personally no further need of action:

> There is nothing, O son of Pritha, in the three regions of the universe which it is necessary for me to perform, nor anything possible to obtain which I have not obtained; and yet I am constantly in action. If I were not indefatigable in action, all men would presently follow my example, O son of Pritha. If I did not perform actions these creatures would perish, I should be the cause of the confusion of castes, and should have slain all these creatures. O son of Bharata, as the ignorant perform the duties of life from the hope of reward, so the wise man, from the wish to bring the world to duty and benefit mankind, should perform his actions without motives of interest. He should not create confusion in the understandings of the ignorant, who are inclined to

outward works, but by being himself engaged in action should cause them to act also.

Here, quite evidently, is a kind of "double standard" in the matter of right action and the foundations of morality. The wise act in behalf of the good of all, the ignorant, out of self-interest. Unlike, however, the familiar exploitation of the double standard by the sophisticated and urbane members of our culture, knowledge of the double standard in antique religion simply doubled the obligations of the twice-born or initiated members of society—the wise.

Very nearly all the ancient societies accepted the idea of graded responsibilities according to individual development. The mystery religions of ancient Greece differentiated between the duties of the *mystae* and those of the *epoptae;* this idea survived in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, emerging in various gnostic heresies, such as the Bogomiles of the Eastern Empire, the Cathari of Italy, and the Albigenses of southern France. All these groups distinguished between the duties and responsibilities of the *Innocentia* and the *Perfecti*. And of all the offenders against Christian orthodoxy, no one was more fiercely persecuted by the defenders of the "true faith" than these representatives of ancient secret doctrines. Roman Christianity was, after all, an ultimate corruption of the hierarchical idea, and could hardly tolerate the presence of people who still preserved the true educational relationships that may exist between the once-born and the twice-born.

It is not surprising—indeed, it was very much to be expected—that when the European intelligence awoke from the long night of ignorance and theological domination, it cast off as total anathema any form of the old teaching of differentiated degrees of philosophic understanding, with corresponding degrees of social responsibility. Now came extraordinary emphasis—with all the ardor of fresh philosophical discovery—upon another great truth: the common ground of the being of all men and their absolute *equality* in this. It was a revolutionary return to a primary intuition of man's spiritual nature, expressed in the demand for constitutional admission of the rights of all men and provision for the equal exercise of human freedom. This was the truth about the nature of man which had been forgotten, or obscured and covered up by social systems which rested their power upon the fact of the differences among men.

It should be of peculiar interest to the men of the present generation that not two hundred years have passed since the equalitarian revolutions, and already the doctrine of human equality has been made into a rigid political dogma enforced with police techniques so uncompromisingly brutal that the modern world stands rent into divided camps, angered, fearful, and ready to suffer unimaginable destruction as preferable to any sort of political compromise. From another point of view, it might be said that the willingness of so many to embrace the political dogmas of communism is shocking evidence of the depth of the corruption of Western religion and morals. What other explanation is there for the acceptance of Communism as the lesser of two evils?

Our purpose in outlining these developments, however briefly, has been to show the complexity of the frame of common human experience, in relation to the questions raised by our correspondent. There are the private ideas of individuals concerning the fulfillments they seek, and how to get them, and there are the public ideas in the form of religions and ideological systems, and there are the pressures and biases to which individuals are subject in trying to think afresh on this most difficult subject. Further, there are the complications introduced by hypocrisy, vanity, and all the devices of self-deception found in the resources of human nature. And on top of all this there is the virtually complete breakdown of religious or spiritual authority in our time.

It is this loss of authority which is probably the most dramatic difference between the moral

environment of the present and that of the past. "Once upon a time," the entire culture was pervaded by uniform doctrines of the meaning of things. Morality and moral decision were no more complicated than the geometrical propositions spoken of by Coleridge. If you wanted to know what to do, you went to the institution or official in charge of that department of human activity, and he told you, or looked it up for you.

Today, however, we are all in the hazardous condition of Adam. We have eaten the forbidden fruit. We have been initiated into individual knowledge of good and evil and suffer the agony of having to make our own decisions. When Luther declared that every man is his own priest, he took a large bite out of the apple. When we formed sciences of sociology and devised special studies of human motivation, we began chewing up more of the fruit. We have abolished traditional moral instruction and have decided to make up our own morality. We did this for two reasons: first, because we had nothing but contempt for the false institutions which had been lying to us about "morality" for several hundred years; and second, we thought we were "ready," and knew enough to establish new moral principles. There is a third possibility: That we ought to have been ready, and needed to do this kind of thinking for ourselves.

When it comes to trying to answer directly the questions raised by our correspondent, we have no hope of avoiding either dogma or over-simplification unless we employ some scheme of analysis like Coleridge's. It is a patent fact that some men's sense of reality arises from the region of simple physiological experience. It may be, as we say, strictly from hunger. Or in other cases it may be strictly from appetite. A wide gamut of values is needed to include all of the things that men think of as "real" or worth striving for.

The question of how men will overcome their "materialism" is not so much a problem of finding the right instruction for them, as it is one of understanding how men wear out their old ideas of "reality" and exchange them for better ideas. Do we know how this works? Are we wise enough to presume upon such operations?

It is true enough that we ought to do *something.* But let us remember that the common run of mankind have been driven from pillar to post by their betters, preached at, imprisoned for small offenses, transported, worked to death, exploited, cajoled into wars, betrayed by spurious peace, for unnumbered thousands of years. All in the name of "right instruction."

There is only one premise that we may begin with, with some certainty. It is that the intuition of man's spiritual being bursts out in the most unlikely individuals and must be supposed to be latent in everyone who wears a human form. In past ages, the daily labors of simple people were seen as somehow related to the universal processes of life. "Resignation" had not then the meaning of weakness and submission, but of a recognition that the work one finds before him is in some sense part of the universal processes of growth and development. No one has put this more beautifully than Richard Hertz, in *Man on a Rock:*

> Chinese peasants, moving into the mountains every morning to gather tea, sang a hymn in honor of their enterprise which they compared to a pilgrimage to the Western paradise. The Volga boatmen "accepted the universe," and the women of Madagascar acted, when they cultivated the rice-fields, like bayaderes trying to please a god.
>
> Miguel Covarrubias, in his book on Bali, describes the branjars, or cooperative societies as we would call them in our dry idiom; they watched the magic of work unfold with proper art and majesty in their Indonesian eden, when night fell they sent the arpeggios of their tireless orchestras through fragrant vales. . . .
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> The medieval fraternities of workers in Flanders and Lyons toiling in the frozen music of crepuscular cities, rolled the stone from the tomb of their narrow space; their triumph over the refractory material of the world was not mere routine but was understood by them in its vast metaphysical connotations.

> Work interpreted as spiritual discipline gave these people a superhuman patience, detached from results.

This mood of being a part of universal processes in their souls took away the "materialism" of the activity of daily acquisition and the satisfaction of common needs. "Materialism," surely, has nothing to do with matter, but is only a kind of attachment of the mind to things which happen to be made of matter. Other-worldliness, as an upper-story worldliness, is hardly an improvement over material acquisitiveness. It is still a preoccupation with personal ends.

We have now to recreate a sense of unity with the universal processes of life, without help from simple, emotional belief in ancestral religion. Since the days of organized group faiths and hierarchically controlled societies are over, the intuitions of individuals and private philosophies compatible with them will have to take their place. By these means, perhaps, we shall make a better world—a world that is immune to the institutional corruptions of the past, although a world that will not come into being without great struggle, much individual sacrifice, and the widespread existential pain which attends the birth of a new civilization.

REVIEW
CONCERNING COMFORT QUOTIENTS

IN contrast to the generally bad writing on television these days, there is a great amount of good writing in paperback books. Some of these books have appeared in hard covers, but most could scarcely have done so had they not been backed up by the income derived from soft covered editions. Many of these well-written books are known as "originals"—books done for soft cover appearance only. Their writers have no illusions about producing literature; they settle for being "pros" in a market place that can be fairly lucrative if you keep your production up. That these soft-cover originals can compete with those perennials on the best-seller lists which eventually hit the paperback stands speaks well for their quality.

When I say good writing, in this context, I don't mean profound writing or writing that will move one through a human experience that can never be duplicated. That kind of writing is rare in any kind of book and few writers in any generation are able to produce it. What I mean is writing that does produce plausible characters in settings we can recognize even if the plots of the books strain our credulity a little. Some of this writing has social comment, making sure that it doesn't get in the way of the story. As a rule one senses that these writers are men of good will.

Of course, the thing that sets paperback writing aside from TV writing is the lack of restrictions. Since there are no sponsors—for cigarettes, let's say—the characters can chew tobacco, roll their own, or even smoke opium if such be their whim; nor does the writer have to avoid injuring the feelings of Southerners who are potential customers. And the AMA can't successfully protest if the writer chooses to have a doctor as a villain. So long as his story is good, the paperback writer can have a John Bircher for a villain. I would say that there is more freedom in paperback book writing at this time than in any other form of the mass media—provided you have a good story, a topical subject of general interest, or timeless material. Meanwhile, the chance of a great hard-back missing paperback distribution is remote. The inveterate paperback reader can fail to acquire good taste in literature only through some ingrained flaw in his own character.

After this long preamble I come at last to the subject of this review. It is a book called *The Pawnbroker,* by Edward Lewis Wallant, originally published by Harcourt, Brace & World and issued in paperback by McFadden Books, an offshoot of the old Bernarr MacFadden publishing empire which circulated some of the most sensational trash ever seen in America. A first novel, *The Pawnbroker* is not without flaws, but these come not so much from any attempt at slickness, or an overt misuse of talent, as from a young or new writer's eagerness to keep his reader with him on a good level. Whatever these flaws may be, *The Pawnbroker* seems to me to be a book that stands out from the current crop. It has a fidelity that is notably lacking in most current writing.

The Pawnbroker isn't a quotable book, which in this case is to its credit, since it is a book of living people. Sol Nazerman, its leading character, is a Jewish pawnbroker of middle age who has gone through the worst of the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, losing both his wife and child. He isn't bitter. It might be said that he is beyond bitterness; he allows himself no feeling at all about himself or others. The setting for this part of his life is his shop in under-privileged Harlem where horror and suffering of all sorts take place before eyes he has made as opaque as his whole emotional system. In life, he outdoes a hundred-fold the traditional picture of the cold-blooded pawnbroker. All that he really wants is a little quiet and peace, even if it is in hell, and his life comes pretty near to being that with the middle-class, pseudo-intellectual family of the sister with whom he lives. It is their conceit that he runs a "gift shop," something more in keeping with their own pretensions and

expectations of a brother who formerly taught in a European University.

On the side, perhaps because of a remaining survival of responsibility, he keeps a woman and her father who were in the concentration camp with him and he goes to see her once each week. Jesus Ortiz, his helper, is a young Negro whose family may have once come from one of the Spanish-speaking islands but who is now thoroughly Harlemized. Jesus wants to become a pawnbroker, for he thinks that is where the money and power is. He'd like to admire Sol, if the pawnbroker would let him, and he does wheedle Sol out of lessons in the business. At times Sol spontaneously gives Jesus Ortiz lessons that are more scholarly than apt, but always keeps his distance from his helper, as with everyone else, and does his best to make the young man hate him even if there are occasional defects in this effort.

These circumstances, plus a nephew who wants to be an artist, and is almost as much of an outcast as Sol, set the stage for the story. Against this background move dozens of characters from Harlem and a few from the periphery of Sol's Jewish contacts. What is remarkable about this phase of the story is that these random characters are so meticulously and warmly drawn that each in himself could have become a major character in almost any other writer's book. Character with a capital C is the big omission in American writing. Let an authentic character wander into the average story and he takes over. Not so with Mr. Wallant's work. People however colorful, are kept to their exact place in his story. His desire was to tell the story, not to become the Dickens of Harlem. For that reason the emotions the reader feels about these people are real. Certainly we would have been more kindly to them than Sol was, but Wallant's skill is such that Sol still isn't the villain. The hero may be Wallant, for the restraint he has shown may have meant the difference between a Book of the Month Club success and the fine book he has produced.

This book is still on the stands and I hope that many who read this review will buy it, if only to have in their hand an example of what honesty in writing means. For that reason I don't want to reveal the end here. Jesus Ortiz, Sol's helper, does decide to become an accomplice in robbing the pawnbroker, but while struggling with the decision he goes to a movie. What happens there is eminently quotable:

> He sat through the familiar violence of a Western, numb with boredom. But they showed a newsreel of an atom bomb test, and he sat forward in his seat, his eyes shining morbidly at the immense flood of light and the climbing, spreading growth of thick smoke. "Nothin' bigger than that," he said to himself. "A person like a little bitty ant thing!" And he felt a feverish exultation at the thought, as though it vindicated anything he wanted to do.

Sol finds in his own way that "No man is an island," but without cloying sentimentality, and without joining anything but the human race.

For contrast to *The Pawnbroker*, I think that the recent success, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Popular Library), offers a good example. Atticus Finch, this book's leading adult character, had he been a real life person, would have most certainly have been a candidate of the *Reader's Digest's* department, "My Most Unforgettable Character." To her credit, the author, Harper Lee, muted the most bizarre accoutrements of character we are used to in Southern gentlemen, even the good ones. The fact that she laved almost everything in a small Southern town with the innocence of little children also took the curse off things. (As an antidote to innocent children of this sort, read Richard Hughes' *Innocent Voyage*, a tale just as plausible, in which pirates capture some children and are corrupted by them.)

The point I am making, in the main, is that Miss Lee, in contrast to Mr. Wallant, skillful as she is, couldn't introduce characters who had a little color without milking them for a few more good lines. But she seemed at least to recognize that color based on folksy ignorance has to be used semi-sparingly in what we call the serious

among the popular books. In short, Miss Lee's book is temperate in the overdone character department, so far as Southern books go.

The difference between the Wallant and Harper Lee books seems to me to reside in what might be called their comfort quotients. For example, when I had finished reading *The Pawnbroker* I couldn't say that I was more comfortable; perhaps I was more disturbed. Nevertheless I felt emotionally enriched because of the segment of life that the book had allowed me to experience and respond to. It called for a questioning of attitudes and some strong judgments on my part. At the end I felt that Harlem would keep on going just as it was. Whatever guilt I might feel over inequalities that exist there wasn't at all relieved. If anything, it was sharpened.

To Kill a Mockingbird, however, is a fowl of different color. There is a race problem in that book that almost ends up in a lynching. The children "endure" being called "nigger lovers" because their father has been chosen by the court to defend the Negro who was about to be lynched. And the children, who are the heroes of the story, even prevent the lynching and are at least partially responsible for killing the "poor white" who tried to inspire the crime. Their father, the good humanist attorney, remains their idol until the end. And what an end! No one is left uncomfortable. The children will grow up and put an end to racial injustice and if they don't there'll always be an Atticus—their father—to defend the downtrodden. No residual guilt here.

Finish a book like this and you wonder what Martin Luther King is making all the fuss about. That's what wins Pulitzer Prizes. Gregory Peck will star in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and we'll all feel even better about our Southern situation.

These two books won't markedly change the general run of paperbacks. They are just examples of what can appear among books that are written for entertainment.

WALKER WINSLOW

Los Angeles, Calif.

COMMENTARY
WHAT ELSE CAN THEY DO?

THE thought may come to some readers of this week's Frontiers that work for peace is a fine thing and ought to be done, but does it really need to involve such odd behavior as picketing and the like?

What is generally overlooked by questions of this sort is the situation described by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas in his recent Los Angeles address. We are living in a time, he said, when "no debate takes place even on crucial issues." When the channels of the mass media are all clogged and choked with saccharine sales talk and the equally saccharine entertainment created to serve as settings for the sales talk—how do you get through to the people with searching discussion of the issues of war and peace?

When Albert Schweitzer wanted to talk to the people of the United States and of the world about the folly of nuclear testing, the big networks cut him off with a few sentences, explaining that they believed his whole talk would be "boring" to the listeners.

The next time you see a picket with a sign exclaiming against the insanity of nuclear war, it might be well to remember that here is a person who is trying to break through a conspiracy of silence. And to remember Justice Douglas' question:

> Is foreign policy—the key to life and death for all forms of life in this nuclear age—beyond the bounds of debate? If so, how can we, the people, ever free ourselves from military domination and assert our sovereign civilian prerogative over all affairs of state—over war as well as over peace?

Is anyone so foolish as to suppose that the managers of our society, however well-intentioned, are really sure of what they are doing? Isn't the most likely explanation of the conspiracy of silence that they *don't* know what they are doing?

And isn't the suppression of free discussion an almost infallible formula for producing hysteria among a people who are continually being told to "think for themselves," yet are denied the means for impartial examination of public issues?

Picketers, vigilers, marchers, and leafleters for peace are simply people who are trying to break this deadly, antidemocratic silence and to get attention for issues which are "the key to life and death for all forms of life in this nuclear age."

What else can they do? A young man sitting in prison for an act of civil disobedience is also a young man with something to say, and no means to say it. What if, in the course of a few months or years, he should turn out to have been right?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTES

ONE of our best "borrowed" features in recent months was the series of paragraphs from Dorothy Lee's article, "Autonomous Motivation," which first appeared in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. In a concluding sentence, however, Dr. Lee said something which puzzled us. She remarked that "the strong invitation to the individual to collaborate in creating his situation—in this case his educational situation—has been progressively eliminated from the schools in this century." But what about "joint planning" between teacher and pupils? Ever since the influence of the Progressives began to be felt, this approach has been on the increase.

We questioned Dr. Lee on this point, and she replied:

> What do I mean about collaboration in the school situation? You are justified in pointing out to me that this has in fact been going on. But to what extent? One-thousandth? No, this is silly, it is not a thing that can be counted or measured. But most teachers do not invite, nor incite to, collaboration; and most cannot, or are too intimidated to, defeat the textbook, which offers the prefabricated and premasticated to the student; I don't say predigested, only because the student is not expected nor desired to make the material his own, a part of his experience.
>
> I think a seminar gives the teacher an opportunity to invite collaboration, more than that, to generate collaboration. I'm afraid many of my colleagues do not see eye-to-eye with me on this; they lecture during the so-called seminar, or they ask their students to present finished, other-excluding papers for the criticism or the admiration of the rest of the students. And they think of seminars as reserved for graduate students, or at most seniors. I taught my own most exciting seminars to freshmen; I had to say it this way, because what other forms, what other words, does English offer me? I did not teach, certainly not in a transitive sense. I generated collaboration, I suggested discipline and supported and encouraged them through it; I opened up the wealth of beckoning knowledge which they needed to expand their fund, their inventory, of raw materials. That is all I did. And a friend of mine last year had a seminar of this sort for tenth-year high school students, a terrific seminar, without credit; outside hours. Without trust, without interest and respect—not as a principle, as an unquestioned actuality—it does not work; one waits for the student to fumble through his thinking, not with patience, but with absorption, with excited anticipation, on tiptoe for the next move with all one's senses and capacities alert. You lose track of time and position and purpose, I guess you are filled with humility and respect, but you don't know it; you (plural) just are. This is what I had in mind.

There are certainly two kinds of "collaboration." The variety with which the parents, teachers and children of our time are most familiar involves specific classroom "planning." But Dr. Lee, clearly, is talking about something entirely different—about what takes place when a youngster's mind strikes sparks or ignites with the fire of inspiration gained by contact with an older mind. This is the central process in education, although not a "process" at all in the usual sense. The sensitivity of the teacher is demonstrated by an eagerness to regard each contact with a pupil as a new experience, since there can be no true "meeting of minds" unless the teacher, as well as the student, is in a permanent mood of discovery. The transcendentalists of the last century endeavored to encourage this spirit, for they were Socratic in attitude.

Such collaboration, in our opinion, is not likely to take place except in the minds of teachers and pupils who are aware that no knowledge worth having can come except by way of the exploration of a "mystery," and it seems that the loss of this sense of mystery reveals the basic lack among the *conventional* progressive educators. If the child is to think freely, if he is truly "collaborating" in the life of the mind, he needs encouragement to go back and think as if he were the first person who ever thought. The factual scientific orientation, on the other hand, tends to promote reliance upon complexes of carefully compiled information.

It is curious how difficult it is to find the right words to characterize the joint activity Dr. Lee describes in her letter. She speaks, for example, of the "humility and respect" felt by the one who has the role of teacher, yet notes that this is an unconscious reaction. The point, here, is that humility, in the ordinary sense of the word, requires you to think of yourself, whereas, in the presence of the excitement of awakening minds, you can't possibly be thinking about yourself. This sort of observation helps to take the matter out of the context of an "educational relationship" and turns it into a consideration of basic attitudes toward other people. It is difficult to imagine, for example, that a good teacher could ever have any kind of patronizing feelings toward others, whether young or old. The teacher who really teaches is a person who is naturally joyous whenever he is in direct connect with the mind of another, experiencing the flow of being in this way.

There is an original reality about any mind—the mind of a child as well as that of a mature intelligence. Mind is like fire—a little fire is just as much fire as a great blaze, with the same wonderful properties and potentialities. Wherever the fire burns, surprising riches may be encountered, and endless novelty. To experience the glow of another's mind is to be in a sense at one with it, and this wipes out the differentiations of status. Is noticing this a cause of "humility"? Rather it seems a moment of touching the root of the common life of human intelligence, which frees us of the confining sense of personal identity. Perhaps this is humility in its best sense, but it is also a feeling which has the grandeur of universal experience.

FRONTIERS

Action for Peace

[As even those who read only the daily newspapers are beginning to recognize, grass roots activity in behalf of peace is gaining public notice in many parts of the United States. Peace walks, vigils, picketing, leafleting, and acts of civil disobedience occur with such frequency that they are giving the impression of unbroken continuity to the general public. These things are being done with a minimum of over-all planning and national coordination. There is of course some communication between groups and individuals, but the spontaneity and independent inspiration of many of these demonstrations is quite apparent, giving them a quality of individual moral conviction which has become quite rare in the United States. The stirring of this quality is a major contribution by the peace movement to contemporary American culture.

We have at hand two accounts of peace activity. The first is a letter from Richard Groff, author of the MANAS pamphlet on Thoreau. Mr. Groff tells about a leafleting project he undertook as an individual.

The second is a contribution by Beverly Henry, wife of Bill Henry, a veteran civil disobedient of the New England sector of the Peace Movement. Mrs. Henry discusses the work of Polaris Action, in New London, Connecticut, where for more than two years pacifists have been attempting to dramatize the anti-human character of the Polaris submarines manufactured by the Electric Boat Company. The quotation from Mrs. Henry is reprinted from the *Polaris Action Bulletin* for Aug. 13, published by the New England Committee for Non-Violent Action, P.O. Box 589, New London, Conn.]

MOST of us have an understandable reluctance to participate in public demonstrations of any sort. It is not thought dignified to attract unnecessary attention to one's person, and we tend to suspect the motives of the exhibitionist. If anyone has a message to communicate, we say, he should present it in a less sensational way, and not poke it into unwilling eyes and ears. Besides, the human body should serve higher uses than as a rack upon which to hang advertisements.

With serious questions of conscience, however, a new factor enters the equation, and men of principle who would be among the last to put on a sandwich sign advertising Joe's Diner sometimes take up a sign reading "NO TESTS EAST OR WEST" and join a picket or vigil line. As if to say, *only for a cause of such urgency, and because I see no better way to communicate, do I permit my body to be so used; for the idea itself is more important than the "dignity" of the one who advocates it.*

What is this "dignity" we are at such pains to preserve? Has it a real existence? When is it used as a cloak for our timidity? Dignity is, literally, *worth.* And the worth of a man may well be what he believes in deeply enough to stand for.

Even experienced peace demonstrators, although willing to take part in a project at a distance, or in a city, sometimes hesitate to demonstrate in their own community. While anonymous, they readily carry signs for strangers to see, yet are embarrassed to show their true colors to neighbors. Curious how we will set about changing the world in Philadelphia or Washington, but not down the street!

A further hurdle for the demonstrator may be his need to have the support of a group. Not even vigorous protesters against social ills are immune to certain aspects-of herd psychology. Out in the rain of injustice some prefer to huddle together for security under the umbrella of some (comparatively) respectable organization.

It was while planning to distribute peace leaflets in my neighborhood on Hiroshima Day that I wrestled with these questions. I drafted a leaflet, had it printed, and passed out 300 copies mostly from door-to-door, over the displeasure of a civic official who tried to discourage the distribution by citing an anti-litter ordinance. (The "Litter" problem after a nuclear war didn't seem to interest him.)

The visible response to my appeal was not encouraging. Although nearly everyone I spoke to remembered the Hiroshima bombing, few seemed at all interested in the question of peace.

Except for a few positive responses and more negative ones, about all I could arouse was apathy. After one woman refused my literature I said, "Then you're not interested in peace?" With a cool glance at my sheaf of leaflets and my armband reading "PEACE," she answered, "Of course I am. But not *that* kind." I do not know whether to conclude merely that this is a poor way to reach the man in the street with the peace message, or that possibly he cannot be reached to any meaningful extent. However that may be, one does what one can.

The concern for peace seems to be spreading in ever-widening circles, like ripples from a stone thrown into a pond, with always a greater "growing edge." If individually we have caught something of the vision of the Good from those more aware of it than ourselves, must we not provide the opportunity for others, perhaps less aware than we are, to catch something of it from us? Indeed, except for direct inspiration, does the vision of the Good know another way to come to the mind of man?

RICHARD GROFF

Boyertown, Pennsylvania

We are often asked, "Are you making any progress?" I wonder at the meaning of the word "progress" in the context of the Peace Movement. Certainly, unilateral disarmament has not yet been accepted by governments as an alternative to war, nor does it seem that we are moving closer to multilateral agreements for disarmament.

One might then surmise that we have not progressed, and in the sense described, we have not.

Yet, on August 7, I received a phone call from an Electric Boat Company employee telling me that he had just resigned. In the five hours I spent talking with him the evening before, I discovered, among other things, that he has a Ph.D. in engineering.

A few days before, an EB worker approached me asking if we took "a collection." Utterly shocked, I attempted to clarify his question by restating it in the form of, "You mean, do we accept contributions?" He reached into his pocket and brought forth a 50-cent contribution.

During the Hiroshima vigil at the War Memorial, three young men appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, and joined us. They live in New London.

And I am so pleasantly surprised with the increasing friendliness that the EB workers and guards show each time we "visit" them . . . a considerable change of response from the first time I leafleted, a year and a half ago.

Would you call this progress? Whatever it is, it is to us the little encouragement which helps us to continue.

BEVERLY HENRY

New London, Connecticut