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THE UTOPIAN BASIS OF PEACE

THE implication of this title is that peace, while desirable, is unobtainable by the means habitually used by modern nations to gain this end. Various kinds of evidence may be offered to support this view. The evidence is collected in dozens of books which have been published in the past ten years. Most people who examine this evidence with care and impartiality find it persuasive. However, such persuasions have had little practical effect on the policies of the great powers, which are continuing to behave as if there were no alternative to traditional methods of establishing or seeking national security—and peace, today as throughout the recent past, is defined in terms of nineteenth-century meanings of national security.

Meanwhile, the body of evidence grows. Publication in 1910 of Norman Angell's book, *The Great Illusion*, might be taken as the starting-point in our time of the serious collection of this evidence—a process which, a half century later, has now reached a high plateau of intellectual and moral impressiveness. Speaking from a stance on this plateau, and with the support of much research and scholarship, Walter Millis and James Real begin their forthcoming study, *The Abolition of War* (to be published by Macmillan next spring), with the words: "It is the contention of this book that the world has reached a point, no doubt for the first time in history, at which it is possible to think and talk seriously about the abolition of organized war."

What does this mean? The obvious meaning of the statement is that by now enough indisputable facts are available to make an irrefutable case against the use of the war system for the purposes it has been made to serve in the past. A second and possibly more important meaning is that there are also enough people who recognize the logical force of these facts to create a forum for serious thinking and talking about the abolition of war. As these authors say, "The demilitarization of the world and the abolition of war is at least beginning to enter the realm of practical statecraft and constructive discussion."

What sort of people are pursuing these discussions? In general, the approach to the idea of world peace has two poles. One is represented by those who are broadly called "pacifists"—people who speak from deep and transcendent conviction that a moral law exists and will support peaceful relations among the peoples of the world if they will turn away from war and reject violence as the base principle of conflict resolution. The other approach makes emphasis on being "practical"—on insisting that the war system will not work any more and that its abandonment is the mandate of minimum sanity. It should be added that many pacifists try to be "practical" in their arguments, while few of those who oppose the war system on rational and historical grounds see any point in denying the possibility of a moral law which is on the side of peace.

Perhaps you could say that the rational analysis of any human problem makes its chief contribution in exposing, identifying and defining the elements or factors on which intelligent decision ought to depend. It clarifies and, so to speak, *exhausts* the alternatives of action. When this has been accomplished, the way is open for the flow of energy in a positive direction. At this point it ought to be noted or admitted that, rising in part from rational analysis, the great movements of history such as the Buddhist reform in Asia, the Protestant Reform in Europe, the Puritan Revolution in England, and to some degree both the French and the American Revolutions were all acts of high faith, moved by the uplifting strength of moral convictions concerning the roots of meaning in human life.

Turning from this brief general account of the problem to the painful and ominous particulars of the present, we have a short statement prepared by the Friends Committee on National Legislation concerning the Cuban crisis. Commenting on President Kennedy's decision to blockade Cuba and to search vessels suspected of carrying offensive weapons, this statement said:

> The president made his decision within the framework of the assumptions of power politics, cold war, and military strategy. . . . But the world has entered the nuclear age and the old methods of blockade, war, force and bluff are dangerously outmoded. Political moves in Berlin and Cuba can result in the death of millions of innocent men, women and children throughout the world, and the end of human civilization as we know it.

An ironic side-effect seems related to this decision:

> The bankruptcy of present U.S. policy is shown by the fact that the physical existence of the United States now depends upon the rationality and reasonableness of the leaders in Moscow and, to some extent, Havana, for as President Kennedy has said, "U.S. citizens are living daily on the bull's-eye of Soviet missiles located inside the U.S.S.R., or in submarines."

The appropriateness of the word "bankruptcy" in this context depends upon what you think about the continuing use of the war system itself. If you think that military threats must be countered with even more menacing gestures, you will probably reject the word as having the wrong implication, desperate though the situation is acknowledged to be. Reduced to simplest terms, the argument for the war system is that no nation can survive in the power struggle of the modern world without being able to demonstrate that it has the strength to put a sudden and violent end to any aggressive moves which threaten its security.

This argument rests on the proposition that the policy of nations is absolutely determined by self-interest. It asserts that the only effective restraint upon nations animated by self-interest is the one produced by fear. If a prospective enemy can be made to feel *sure* that a given act of hostility or aggression will only bring destruction to himself, he will not act aggressively. On the basis of this argument, for example, it is said that were it not for the balance of terror maintained through the possession of nuclear weapons by both sides, half a dozen wars might have broken out in the past ten years, with fighting over Cuba right now.

This argument will no doubt continue to possess validity for some of its proponents right up until the moment that nuclear war breaks out.

The alternative argument is that back in the days when the balance-of-terror policy was more accurately described as a balance-of-power policy, it worked fairly well, but that even then the participating nations kept on testing one another, probing for soft spots, seeking strategic advantage, until, finally, after the pressure of these methods built up to a crisis, war broke out to see which one had made the best calculation of risks. The same kind of probing and testing goes on today, with the same kind of pressure building up.

The Friends Legislative Committee statement called this policy "bankrupt" precisely because, today, no nation can afford a war of settlement. The destructive potentials of armaments in past wars were at least loosely measurable, and for this reason there remained an element of rational control in the balance-of-power program. But today the potential of destruction in nuclear weapons is beyond rational measure. We use words to describe what we think would happen to countries subject to nuclear attack, but we know in our hearts that the consequences are really unimaginable. Thus the very tools of the balance-of-terror policy are irrational. The attempt to represent them in any equation which calculates risks for the determination of military strategy gives the discussion of national defense a wild, nightmarish quality which is profoundly repugnant to most human beings who recognize what is happening.

Here is the reason for the sudden multiplication of the ranks of those who are

called "nuclear pacifists." As rational men, they can no longer use the terms of balance-of-power theory. The terms have themselves exploded into uncontrollable values. And the expression, "balance of terror," is exposed as an inept attempt to manacle some lingering shreds of meaning to destructive devices which are inherently defiant of meaning.

Balance-of-terror policy in the Cold War has turned the confrontation of the United States and Soviet Russia into a deadly psychological game. The United States, as the Friends Committee statement and various other observers have pointed out, is in the position of having to estimate the "tolerances" in Soviet policy and to try to stretch them to their hypothetical limit, but never to reach the breaking point. Each nation has to make this sort of decision about its opponent, from day to day, from crisis to crisis, and to do this with full knowledge that a serious mistake or miscalculation may send nuclear missiles flying through the air in both directions. It is the insanity of this psychological game, quite apart from the identity of the contestants, that has changed the character of the great debate about war and peace. One by one, thoughtful men are moving out of the old arena, where the issue was "Who is right?" or "Where does justice lie?", and into a forum of discussion which starts out with the common premise: *"Anyone* who plays this game is crazy."

This new forum is, we may say, a place of sanity, but it has one serious defect. It seems to have no exit into the field of action except through old and familiar doors of national policy. Those avenues of action do not work very well for a man overtaken by sanity. Nearly all the street signs say the wrong thing and too often conduct the inexperienced into hearing of death-camp type loudspeakers which fill the air with the blare of patriotic anthems. This is the limbo of uninspected, intensely-voiced, partisan emotional values in which men find refuge from a suspense that has become too difficult to bear.

In these precincts of ruin's origin—ruin, on any hypothesis—one meets no Martin Luther, no Madame Roland, no Thomas Paine. Here the residues of hate, the lees of fear and the angers of frustration keep on collecting, and here the men whose profession is self-righteousness loiter to find material for their editorials and their denunciations of the sane anywhere in the world.

We now come to the utopian basis for peace. It seems quite clear that the ground of peace is not relationships between nations, that the motive from which understanding can grow is not national self-interest. The national identity is an identity forged in righteous war. The qualities of thinking which discover the absolute folly of war do not belong to any national identity, but to human identity. The logic of peace is now defiant of the logic of national identity, is indeed subversive of what many men regard as the essence of national identity. The logic of peace is the logic of the human community. We find it extremely difficult to give voice to the logic of peace because we do not know what the human community is. The façades of our political institutions do not permit any serious encounter with the qualities, form, and substance of a truly human community. The human community—such of it as we possess—exists chiefly as an abstraction in the attitudes and relationships of individuals who share in varying measure and at varying levels the values of the human community. These values are the very blood of all that we know to be good in human life, but they have no typical institutional embodiment. They rather come into being transcendently, if persistently, as the waters of a fountain overflow the hard material which shapes its direction, as music emerges from the plumbing and other gadgetry of a symphony orchestra, or as friendships strike up as sparks in even the most alienating surroundings.

We are not suggesting that the modern nation-states must be dissolved, possibly by some brave anarchist *tour de force.* Always the great developments of history take place in a matrix which has enough footholds in it, enough fissures

in its shell and openings in its towers to permit an ingenious transformation of its functions while new forms of association and social relations are being evolved. What has to emerge, first of all, is new ways of thinking about peace—the kind of thinking which leads us to discover that peace is always the fruit of a radical transformation in human attitudes. The "peace," we soon realize, is never an institutional arrangement, but a kind of subtly overt harmony which results when men pursue worthy ends.

Now this is of course a suggestion which has religious overtones. But the field of religion suffers from the same institutionalization as the field of international relations. It is riddled with organization and the mechanisms and devices and solutions to "problems" which organizations deal with and suppose that they understand. True religion emerges in spite of religious organizations, just as peace must emerge in spite of national organizations.

Organizations are finite and temporal shells which once housed for a time a particular epoch's understanding of the Eternal Verities. Organizations cannot restore or make contemporary a past version of the Eternal Verities. If evolution is a fact, if human awareness alters and grows, if perception deepens and men learn from experience and history, then the institutional organs of social life must undergo continual reconstruction.

What is at issue in the present is the very question of identity. Are we men with the essences of wholeness in our hearts, or are we bits and parts of a national machine? Is the coarse rind of the nineteenth-century State a burden we can no longer carry around with us and operate through? How shall we discover the answers to such questions? How many Gandhis will have to suffer assassination, how many Thoreaus must we neglect, how many Tolstoys need we ignore, until the dead weight of old habits of thinking of ourselves and our supposed "welfare" and "progress" compels an exercise of thought similar to theirs?

The rationalist's answer to the decline of function in the nation-state is the substitution of world government and a world social order. But first must come the birth of the essential human community. The unit is still the man. If world government is a tool for the realization of human values, those values must still become transcendently important if individuals are to give up their stake in national identity, if they are to recover from the military and diplomatic institutions the hostages of their morality and their humanity.

It was without the blessing of a court of canonical truth that Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of the Cathedral at Wittenberg; and no organization, but a rising tide of popular conscience supported him at Worms when he cried, "Here I stand, I can do no other!" Yet what a spawn of institutions followed him, to structure and finally to degrade the courage of his declaration!

Of course, we cannot do without institutions and organizations. We shall always have units and sub-divisions, regions and local economies, domestic authorities and organs of action. We cannot do without arms and legs. But arms and legs do not make a man. Not even eyes and ears make a man. Helen Keller is a magnificent testimony to the integrity and independent essence of the human spirit.

Do we suppose that the world can go on and on, guided by old, partisan institutions—improvising, patching, compromising, pretending, exhorting itself with stupid misrepresentations of the good, with counterfeit definitions of dignity and honor, putting patriotic haloes on interballistic missiles and building national shrines to a faith that has no greater security than bacterial poisons and other terrors Satan himself could not have devised with all the diabolical technologies available in Hell since time began?

It had better be acknowledged that the hope of peace *is* utopian, and that it cannot be had without venture, daring, and risk.

We need to keep first things first and simple things simple. There never was an Age of Miracles and never will be. A man is not made more of a man by belonging to a great military state. A man is not made less of a man by suffering death at the hands of a great military state. A man is made more or less by how human he is able to be. That is all. That is all that ever has been true of a man and his human development and quality. States, technology, organization, national defense programs, do not change these simple realities. But the supposition that states, technologies, organizations, and military greatness may make a man worthy to survive, or better and more important to the world and to posterity—*that* supposition leads to corruption of the human essence and turns the individual into some kind of a thing which is of no importance even to himself.

If we want to transform the face of the world from the image of insanity bent upon a Ragnarok of common destruction to the portrait of human beings who are finding life filled with the riches of one another, we shall have to accept these truths. No one invented them. They have always been known, always been repeated, and have always been true. Only today, perhaps, they are beginning to be said in a new vocabulary—in the hard-won words of meanings just now beginning to dawn on the human race. What was once the speech of the religious teacher, the prophet, or the self-sacrificing reformer or humanitarian, is now the faltering tongue, the innocent baby-talk of a new-born common man. It is a speech being learned from sheer necessity, truly invented on the spur of the moment, to take the place of a mad gibberish that can survive only in epitaphs and laments.

REVIEW
LEISURELY JOURNEY

JOHN STEINBECK'S *Travels with Charley* (Viking, $4.95) is a book for all who like Steinbeck, and it may also appeal to critics and readers who have not been particularly drawn to his fiction, for these impressions of regional differences and similarities throughout the United States are unobtrusively provocative.

Charley is an aging poodle, reared in France, and apparently both a born- and a well-trained traveler. When Mr. Steinbeck decided to roam the North American continent again, he planned to go as nearly incognito as he could conveniently manage, with no human companion. "I had not felt the country for twenty-five years," he explains in his introduction, "so it was that I determined to look again, to try to rediscover this monster land. Otherwise, in writing, I could not tell the small diagnostic truths which are the foundations of the larger truth."

For such traveling, a careful itinerary can be a nuisance, but sound equipment is simply a matter of intelligence. With a good camper-top on a three-quarter-ton pick-up as his vehicle, Steinbeck started off from Long Island for the northern tip of Maine—which he preferred as the take-off point for the long westward leg of his trip. But before he had left Providence, R.I., one of the dubious aspects of the American scene was already apparent:

> It takes far longer to go through cities than to drive several hundred miles. And in the intricate traffic pattern, as you try to find your way through, there's no possibility of seeing anything. But now I have been through hundreds of towns and cities in every climate and against every kind of scenery, and of course they are all different, and the people have points of difference, but in some ways they are alike. American cities are like badger holes, ringed with trash—all of them—surrounded by piles of wrecked and rusting automobiles, and almost smothered with rubbish. Everything we use comes in boxes, cartons, bins, the so-called packaging we love so much. The mountains of things we throw away are much greater than the things we use. In this, if in no other way, we can see the wild and reckless exuberance of our production, and waste seems to be the index.

As any Steinbeck reader knows, this writer draws sharp contrasts and delights in vividness in living as well as in assertion. In this context, the reader will likely appreciate, as we did, Steinbeck's account of a Sunday morning in a Vermont town:

> The prayers were to the point, directing the attention of the Almighty to certain weaknesses and undivine tendencies I know to be mine and could only suppose were shared by others gathered there.
>
> The service did my heart and I hope my soul some good. It had been long since I had heard such an approach. It is our practice now, at least in the large cities, to find from our psychiatric priesthood that our sins aren't really sins at all but accidents that are set in motion by forces beyond our control. There was no such nonsense in this church. The minister, a man of iron with tool-steel eyes and a delivery like a pneumatic drill, opened up with prayer and reassured us that we were a pretty sorry lot. And he was right. We didn't amount to much to start with, and due to our own tawdry efforts we had been slipping ever since. Then, having softened us up, he went into a glorious sermon. A fire-and-brimstone sermon. Having proved that we, or perhaps only I, were no damn good, he painted with cool certainty what was likely to happen to us if we didn't make some basic reorganizations for which he didn't hold out much hope. He spoke of hell as an expert, not the mush-mush hell of these soft days, but a well-stoked, white-hot hell served by technicians of the first order. This reverend brought it to a point where we could understand it, a good hard coal fire, plenty of draft, and a squad of open-hearth devils who put their hearts into their work, and their work was me. I began to feel good all over. For some years now God has been a pal to us, practicing togetherness, and that causes the same emptiness a father does playing softball with his son. But this Vermont God cared enough about me to go to a lot of trouble kicking the hell out of me. . . .
>
> I felt so revived in spirit that I put five dollars in the plate and afterward, in front of the church, shook hands warmly with the minister and as many of the congregation as I could. It gave me a lovely sense of evil-doing that lasted clear through till Tuesday. I even considered beating Charley to give him some satisfaction too, because Charley is only a little less sinful than I am.

So, Mr. Steinbeck cannot help being a psychologist of insidious talents, although he professes little interest in psychological theory. Despite his nostalgia for a more leisurely pace in life, with more distinction between individual cities

and persons, he wastes no time deprecating the "population explosion" or "scientific progress." However, he sees some things with less than wide-eyed respect:

> Everywhere frantic growth, a carcinomatous growth. Bulldozers rolled up the green forests and heaped the resulting trash for burning. The torn white lumber from concrete forms was piled beside gray walls. I wonder why progress looks so much like destruction
>
> All the energy has flowed out to the new developments, to the semi-rural supermarkets, the outdoor movies, new houses with wide lawns and stucco schools where children are confirmed in their illiteracy.

Steinbeck is still mildly Rabelaisian, with some touches that remind the reader of passages in *Tortilla Flats.* As he finished his Westward trek, he speculated about what would happen when Charley confronted his first giant sequoia:

> Now, there is not any question that Charley was rapidly becoming a tree expert of enormous background. He could probably get a job as a consultant with the Davey people. But from the first I had withheld from him any information about the giant redwoods. It seemed to me that a Long Island poodle who had made his devoirs to *Sequoia sempervirens* or *Sequoia gigantia* might be set apart from other dogs—might be translated mystically to another place of existence, to another dimension, just as the redwoods seem to be out of time and out of our ordinary thinking. The experience might even drive him mad. I had thought of that. On the other hand, it might make of him a consummate bore. A dog with an experience like that could become a pariah in the truest sense of the word. . . .
>
> This was the time I had waited for. I opened the back door and let Charley out and stood silently watching, for this could be a dog's dream of heaven in the highest.
>
> Charley sniffed and shook his collar. He sauntered to a weed, collaborated with a sapling, went to the stream and drank, then looked about for new things to do.
>
> "Charley," I called. "Look!" I pointed at the grandfather. He wagged his tail and took another drink. I said, "Of course. He doesn't raise his head high enough to see the branches to prove it's a tree." I strolled to him and raised his muzzle straight up. "Look, Charley. It's the tree of all trees. It's the end of the Quest."
>
> Charley got a sneezing fit, as all dogs do when the nose is elevated too high. I felt the rage and hatred one has toward non-appreciators, toward those who through ignorance destroy a treasured plan. I dragged him to the trunk and rubbed his nose against it. He looked coldly at me and forgave me and sauntered away to a hazelnut bush.

There is a serious side to *Travels with Charley.* Though Steinbeck might have preferred to avoid the South, this would have been a cheat, for the South is America, too:

> I am basically unfitted to take sides in the racial conflict. I must admit that cruelty and force exerted against weakness turn me sick with rage, but this would be equally true in the treatment of any weak by any strong.
>
> Beyond my failings as a racist, I knew I was not wanted in the South. When people are engaged in something they are not proud of, they do not welcome witnesses. In fact, they come to believe the witness causes the trouble.
>
> In all this discussion of the South I have been speaking only about the violence set loose by the desegregation movements—the children going to school, the young Negroes demanding the questionable privilege of lunch counters, buses, and toilets. But I am particularly interested in the school business.
>
> Recently a dear Southern friend instructed me passionately in the theory of "equal but separate." "It just happens," he said, "that in my town there are three new Negro schools not equal but superior to the white schools. Now wouldn't you think they would be satisfied with that? And in the bus station the washrooms are exactly the same. What's your answer to that?" I said, "Maybe it's a matter of ignorance. You could solve it and really put them in their places if you switched schools and toilets. The moment they realized that your schools weren't as good as theirs, they would realize their error."
>
> And do you know what he said? He said, "You troublemaking son of a bitch." But he said it smiling.

COMMENTARY
"THE HIDDEN REMNANT"

WE use our editorial space this week to speak of what we hope will become an epoch-making book—*The Hidden Remnant*, by Gerald Sykes, published by Harper ($4.00). This is a book which has the sort of excellence one finds in Ortega's *Revolt of the Masses*, in Macneile Dixon's *The Human Situation*, and in Erich Fromm's *Psychoanalysis and Religion*—which is to say that as you read it, you find yourself relating what is said in every direction. To borrow an expression from Ortega, it is a book which is written "at the height of the times."

It seemed appropriate to notice this book here, instead of waiting for review space, because of a sense of lack in this week's Frontiers. What, after all, is to be said to Mr. Cahoon about the confusion he so aptly describes as inevitable in these days of pluralistic philosophy and views of the real? It is not enough simply to urge that confusion is not confusion if you look at it differently. People *feel* confused.

Mr. Sykes speaks to the condition of the confused. What he says may not be altogether easy to understand, but then, neither is our kind of confusion easy to overcome. The *Hidden Remnant* is hardly a book on politics, but in a fascinating chapter called "The Politics of Shipwreck," the author says:

> *America is the land of the refused revolution.* The leisure offered by mechanical mastery is here. At the same time surely not through chance, leisure becomes economically ever harder to sustain—and psychologically more terrifying. So we see without seeing, read without reading, and fall back on mythologies in which we no longer believe. . . . Every novelty is embraced because it can keep our true situation from becoming too clear. Every *external* drama—that of a minority, or of a remote place in Africa—is welcome. Anything but *our own* drama, here and now. To be born into a minority means that we rarely recognize its *secondariness* among our real concerns. . . . These disturbing truths, if faced and told, would enable us to regain a moral dynamic. If we were to tell the world of the revolution we refused, and why we are having such a hard time in accepting it, we should win the clarity and strength that come from facing the truth in all humility. It would help us to purge ourselves of whatever exploitative or imperialistic motives we do possess. Democracy would take the initiative. Otherwise, it never will, since it is a religious idea, as much as a political one, that must lead to genuine religious action or perish.

Mr. Sykes has a formula for overcoming confusion. It is of course a formula which breaks up, dissolves, disappears, when you try to treat it as a formula. This book is *a tour de force* which brings a timeless kind of insight to the surface of our times in the contemporary idiom. The author has no tickets to sell, no movement to join. If Dr. Frankl were reviewing *The Hidden Remnant*, he might call it a prime example of the will to meaning, an expression of the noëtic capacity of the human mind.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

"STARK REALISM" AND "TRANSCENDENTALISM"

WHILE neither of the above labels receives much current attention, they nonetheless may be held to stand for important differences in the evaluation of human experience. A great deal of current fiction evidences a curious twist—strong "realism," as, for example, in James Jones' *From Here to Eternity* and Tom Chamales' *Never so Few*, into which elements of mysticism have found their way. The immense campus popularity of J. D. Salinger, who represents a similar combination, may indicate that young people are a long way from losing their taste for idealistic philosophy, but are inclined to welcome it only when it is noticeably off-beat. But the pessimistic side of "realism" also has an appeal, as in the novels of Arthur Golding.

Golding's *Lord of the Flies* has apparently made a great hit on Eastern seaboard campuses. *Time* for June 22 ran Golding's picture with the caption, "A Challenge for Salinger." We have read *Lord of the Flies*—some portions several times—and find Golding's conclusion inescapably this: That human beings are primarily "beasts of prey"; that it is silly to worry about nuclear war when continual strife of some sort is part of the natural order of things.

So far as we are concerned, this is cold comfort, and can lay claim to being comfort at all only on the same ground which enabled Japanese kamikaze pilots during World War II to feel "settled" in acceptance of death. It is true, of course, that if you expect nothing but fratricide it is impossible to be disappointed. If you don't believe that a brotherhood among men can come to be, whether in large or small societies, you can tough-mindedly take what can.

The British schoolboys in *Lord of the Flies* have a remarkable opportunity to create a small society uncorrupted by adults, but nothing like this happens. To quote *Time:*

> They create their own world, their own misery. Deposited unhurt on a deserted coral island by a plane during an atomic war, they form the responsible vacationland democracy that their heritage calls for, and it gradually degenerates into anarchy, barbarism and murder. When adult rescue finally comes, they are a tribe of screaming painted savages hunting down their elected leader to tear him apart. The British naval officer who finds them says, "I should have thought that a pack of British boys would have been able to put up a better show than that." Then he goes back to his own war.
>
> Says Golding: "The theme is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. Before the war, most Europeans believed that man could be perfected by perfecting his society. We all saw a hell of a lot in the war that can't be accounted for except on the basis of original evil."

So we take Salinger. Interspersed with *his* morbidity is an implicit search for the truths which help men to become beautiful and free. In comparison with Golding, apparently, Salinger is a metaphysician and an idealist. A Salinger collection by Signet *(Nine Stories,* 1953) concludes with one of Salinger's unmistakable explorations of "metaphysics." The title is "Teddy," and Teddy is a lad who seems to know that he has lived many lives and will live many more before he learns enough to know what he *really* should be about. Here are some passages from "Teddy":

> "I mean it's very hard to meditate and live a spiritual life in America. People think you're a freak if you try to. My father thinks I'm a freak, in a way. And my mother—well, she thinks it's bad for my health."
>
> Nicholson was looking at him, studying him. "I believe you said on that last tape that you were six when you first had a mystical experience. Is that right?"
>
> "I could get out of the finite dimensions fairly often when I was four," Teddy said. "Not continuously or anything, but fairly often."
>
> Nicholson took out his cigarettes again, but without taking his eyes off Teddy. "How does one get out of the finite dimensions?" he asked, and gave a short laugh, "I mean, to begin very basically, a block

of wood is a block of wood, for example. It has length, width—"

"It hasn't. That's where you're wrong," Teddy said. "Everybody just *thinks* things keep stopping off somewhere. They don't. That's what I was trying to tell Professor Peet." He shifted in his seat and took out an eyesore of a handkerchief—a gray, wadded entity—and blew his nose. "The reason things *seem* to stop off somewhere is because that's the only way most people know how to look at things," he said. "But that doesn't mean they do."

"The trouble is," Teddy said, "most people don't want to see things the way they are. . . . I mean I know that even though they teach Religion and Philosophy and all, they're still pretty afraid to die." Teddy sat, or reclined, in silence for a minute. "It's so silly," he said. "All you do is get the heck out of your body when you die. My gosh, everybody's done it thousands and thousands of times. Just because they don't remember it doesn't mean they haven't done it. Its so silly."

In Salinger's The *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield doesn't get involved in metaphysics in any obvious way, but he does evidence what Salinger clearly means to be taken as an *innate* propensity for seeking the good and the true. Holden cannot make a forthright search, for all the labeled idealisms are what so many cultural ex-patriates call a "shuck." He is against phoniness and he is against labeling, because his own experience reveals that the two are often interdependent. Still and all, he is a Platonist, rather than an Aristotelian. His illusions—and he knows that he must have many of them—are really in the direction of the dream of a Golden Age—and as such may represent an indefinable but ever-present truth about human aspiration.

The writers whom we choose to term "Platonist" seem to show today a marked leaning in the direction of pacifist non-violent resistance. A fine first novel by John Knowles, *A Separate Peace* (Dell, 1959)—original, yet in the Salinger mood—is filled with long thoughts transcending "war-thinking." In this passage, a teen-age boy says to his friend:

"Finny," my voice broke but I went on, "Phineas, you wouldn't be any good in the war, even if nothing had happened to your leg."

A look of amazement fell over him. It scared me, but I knew what I said was important and right, and my voice found that full tone voices have when they are expressing something long-felt and long-understood and released at last. "They'd get you some place at the front and there'd be a lull in the fighting, and the next thing anyone knew you'd be over with the Germans or the Japs, asking if they'd like to field a baseball team against our side. You'd be sitting in one of their command posts, teaching them English. Yes, you'd get confused and borrow one of their uniforms, and you'd lend them one of yours. Sure, that's just what would happen. You'd get things so scrambled up nobody would know who to fight any more. You'd make a mess, a terrible mess, Finny, out of the war."

FRONTIERS

What Can We Make of Confusion?

MANAS: The questions raised by your Oct. 10 issue, on the nature of "knowledge," seem to me to be rock-bottom issues, since they help us to decide what is true and real, and hence what meanings and loyalties we are going to expend our life energies upon. The concept of a "climate of opinion" for each generation, as defined by its assumptions about what knowledge is, and what knowledge is important, seems to be useful; but surely it suffers from the over-generalization and over-simplification which that generalizing and integrative function your magazine serves so well can not completely avoid. In the editorial you point out that the Communist ideology, with its institutionalization of the nineteenth-century "pseudo-scientific" view of knowledge, still offers us one version of the Enlightenment outlook. So also does our own "scientism," as writers like Krutch and Whyte emphasize, and our own continuing belief in the Enlightenment-originated "idea of progress." I think we could also show that sophisticated trends in language analysis, philosophy of science, and some forms of symbolic logic, often perpetuate the subject-object approach to knowledge and "experience," although some of these refinements of the Enlightenment heritage of knowledge seem to have considerable potential value. What we casually call "common sense" is also, it seems to me, one version of a theory of knowledge, and not very far removed from the "naïve realism" assumptions of the nineteenth-century view of science. You go on to contrast these Enlightenment-originated views with more contemporary ones which emphasize "subjectivism," and end your lead article on the question of freedom—as seems appropriate. "Could it be argued that any 'truth' which has the effect of taking away human freedom instead of increasing it, is false and not a truth at all?", you ask, in the next to final paragraph.

I would like to suggest two things in response to all this. The first is that C. Wright Mills has made a very useful and suggestive response to this question in his book, *The Sociological Imagination;* that is, he asks the same question, and answers it affirmatively, and in a way which fits the analysis of your article beautifully. What you call "Administrative," he calls "Bureaucratic Ethos," and shows that as bureaucracy spreads, "rationality" grows, but individual *reason* and *freedom,* in their classical senses, are destroyed until we become "cheerful robots." A cheerful robot seems to be a person caught, the possessor of a "captive mind," but ethically even more dangerous because he enjoys his captivity and does not realize that he is losing reason and freedom in the process.

The second reaction I have is that we may be living in a "generation" which can and must be defined in response to a plurality and diversity of views of knowledge. This has always been true (although our generalizations to the contrary seem useful and more appropriate in earlier ages), no doubt, but the popular dissemination of conflicting views of knowledge, and of conflicting views of approaching what is true and real, is after all still a fairly new phenomenon in man's history. As you emphasize, only a Democracy purposefully and actively honors such a plurality and diversity of approaches to life's ultimate questions (and answers). But it may be true in our generation that this dissemination, along with popular mass-education, and the fantastic growth of ideas spread through the mass media, has resulted in more confusion and disagreement, at the basic level of your questions, than our social critics usually assume. Cassirer's works exploring the history of theories of knowledge seem to be useful here, for example. So also does the diversity of assumptions about knowledge in psychology—Freudian attempts to be "scientific" about the way our irrationality distorts our conscious interpretations, Behaviorist uses of nineteenth-century science and Positivism, Roger's and Maslow's more subjective and ontological approaches to knowledge, Jungian and Existential emphasis upon archetypal and other symbolic approaches to knowledge, etc.

Don't different questions, and different meaning-criteria for answering them, arise from these various frameworks? And doesn't this diversity really pervade most of our confusions of daily living? I'm sure that this case could be presented and argued more cogently, but this may serve to clarify the central point I am trying to raise, which is that a great deal of the anxiety and search for identity, characteristic of our time, may be related precisely to the fact that we live in a culture and heritage where the underlying epistemology, the "climate of opinion," remains undefined and pluralistic. This, if true, is tremendously confusing, and calls for a personal choice and integration by each individual, perhaps in a new way in history. It seems to me one can see hope in all this for the "Western" view of Freedom; self-responsibility becomes more inescapable even as it becomes more confusing and threatening. Once again the question arises as to whether or not the "common man"—all men—can sustain this amount of threat and still define his own quality of self. Because what is new is that the individual no longer gradually matures into greater freedom and self-choosing—an evolving process that gives him time to grow in emotional and ontological quality simultaneously—but is now met by pluralistic demands of choice *before* achieving this mature quality of self. Can meaningful choice be made in this way? Possibly, we hide from the plurality of our time while it continues to operate and threaten us. I do not know the "answer" to this question, but the foregoing seems to me to be a plausibly correct analysis. No doubt the answer lies somehow in the direction of giving men the time to grow up and mature in the complexity and quality of their self-hood, prior to social and public responsibility of a too threatening nature—I don't know quite how.

Hydes, Maryland G. DAVID CAHOON

This discussion seems so clear a development of the questions raised in the MANAS article on "Knowledge" that comment may be restricted to the single problem of "confusion"—the name we give to a psychological condition in which we do not know what to do next. This condition may be defined as arising out of feelings of uncertainty and indecision in relation to our ignorance of the world and of ourselves. The confusion, then, is made of two things, our ignorance and our reaction to it.

But is confusion a necessary response to ignorance? The answer to this question must be no. Ignorance is a constant element in human experience. It is the raw material of our existence, the unassimilated area of life. It has always been with us, will always be with us. This is a way of saying that, under any conceivable circumstances, in any conceivable universe, there will always be more to know.

The great adventure stories of all history are tales of the conquest of ignorance. That is, they tell how men found, through long search and heroic determination, factors of control over formerly irrational elements of experience. The minds of these men grew to include regions which once had been *terra incognita.* You might say that they extended the radius of their being, since the essential being of man is in mind-stuff, his essential growth in understanding.

Looking at human life in this way has the effect of turning the meaning of "ignorance" around. From obstacle it has become challenge. From frustration it has become work.

What then is confusion, really? It is a state of philosophical error. It is a consequence of mistakes in setting the problem of life. A child, in his inexperience, is often less confused than a man in his experience The child, in his ardor, may have a sounder position in relation to the unknowns in life than the man.

Or, on the other hand, we may argue that the confusion the man feels represents a stage of disillusionment that the child has yet to encounter. If we say this, we imply a judgment that does not leave "confusion" with the same

meaning that it had before this judgment was suggested. The judgment is that man may be self-deceived.

Now this is a conclusion about human experience. It is an assertion about the *kind* of ignorance men must overcome. It is therefore a penetration of ignorance with the beginnings of a rational order.

Some certainties, this conclusion suggests, are not really certainties, but only seem to be. With this conclusion before them, men have opportunity to order their thinking about what is knowledge and what is not. This is a process which takes us back to first principles. The real certainties, we begin to find, are methodological and ethical. They are primary and in a sense pure abstractions. One methodological certainty is that we have the capacity to know, and will always have the capacity to increase our knowledge, which also means the capacity to correct our mistakes. A side-effect of this certainty is that knowledge at first-hand is more certain than hear-say or institutional authority. One ethical certainty is that we feel love for others. You might say that love is the intuitive experience of unity in diversity, while understanding is the intellectual grasp of the relationships created by diversity in unity. Both lead to an extension of the radius of being.

These are the inalienable capacities of man. Having these capacities, then, why do we get into trouble? Why do we follow false theories, embrace erroneous conclusions? Why do we trap ourselves in a state of confusion?

Because of our voracious hunger for the wrong kind of certainty—for a certainty which would close the books on evolution, on human development. A Buddhist thinker might put it that we want to get back into Nirvana before we are ready. Because in the unadventurous part of our being we long to escape from the hazard of discovery and the pain of creation. Because we are both Prometheus and Epimetheus. Because we seek a way out of our destiny, which is to experience and learn to live with the tensions which must exist for any form of intelligence that combines both finite and infinite terms in the equation of its existence. Because while we may be, as Hamlet said, in apprehension like a god, we are nonetheless only half-gods.

There are various ways to formulate this equation. Some periods of history have done it better than others. In *The Heroic Age of Science*, William A. Heidel says:

> The Greek seemed to have felt, as did Wordsworth, that "the world is too much with us"; its very jostlings gave him a sense of being an alien until he could, as it were, keep it at arm's length long enough to glimpse its meaning. Its significance and relations fascinated him—if he could discover these, the brute facts interested him little. That many of his guesses went wide of the mark, means only that he was human, that he returned again and again to the attack, and never gave up the attempt to read the hidden meaning of the world by the light of his limited experience, proves that he possessed the spirit of the scientist and the philosopher. Once one realizes the irrepressible urge of the ancient Greek, his every enterprise acquires an interest for the thoughtful student who values the idea more highly than the material in which it may chance to be embodied. Where the pioneers with the light heart of youth and inexperience thought to clear at a leap abysses which the ages have not sufficed to bridge, one must have grown old indeed if one fails to admire their adventurous spirit. May it not be in that spirit, informing everything they attempted, there is to be found the richest legacy which a highly endowed race has bequeathed to the modern world?

Here, in this passage, is the heart of the matter. Mr. Heidel speaks of the student who "values the idea more highly than the material in which it may chance to be embodied." The modern world suffers confusion because it has valued, not the idea, but the material in which the idea chanced to be embodied. And the material is breaking down, as it always does and always must.

In an epoch of lost confidence, thinking men go back to first principles, to the primary certainties. These are all there is to go back to. And since we start out in life as subjects, and become objects only by a process of rationalization of the material in which we as

subjects become embodied, the primary certainties we go back to are subjective realities. We begin to insist upon methodologies consistent with the subjective realities we feel, from which we start on all human enterprises.

This withdraws authority from the theories of knowledge which have been almost solely concerned with the external materials of existence. These old theories of knowledge, these once-respected avenues to "certainty" stand all about us, slowly becoming neglected temples of dying faith. And, looking at them, we feel—confusion.