VOLUME X, NO. 7
FEBRUARY 13, 1957

THE NUMBER ONE QUESTION

WHAT is the human individual? It is probably far too soon to ask this question, but we are asking it anyhow, as the question to which our civilization will eventually have to supply at least an approximate reply, or perish.

Why should it be "too soon" to ask it? It is too soon for the reason that, only a few years ago, it was commonly thought that this question was either foolish or easily answered. There are, of course, the cant answers of orthodox religion, and the familiar formulas of the scientific account of man. The religious answers, however, are lacking in essential elements, since they exploit the fact of human weakness, while they give no explanation of human strength and creative capacity. The scientific answers neglect almost entirely the qualities in human beings which differentiate man from the animals. Although the scientific answers—unlike the religious answers—are founded on observable facts and can be verified, they give no foundation for what we familiarly term "the dignity of man."

But even if it be acknowledged that neither the religious nor the scientific account of the nature of man is acceptable, it is still too soon to ask this question with much hope of obtaining an answer. To have an answer to so ultimate a question, a vocabulary of terms equal to the primary realities of man must be available, and we have no such vocabulary as yet. All that we have is a sickening realization that we have made some terrible mistakes concerning what is precious in human life.

It is of course a philosophical or metaphysical question. Some philosophical and metaphysical questions can have ready answers which are credible in abstract language. This is not true of questions about man. Questions about man, when they are important, involve essential matters of psychology. To answer them is therefore a cultural project, involving all the disciplines of knowledge, as well as purely philosophical reasoning. A Gandhi or a Schweitzer, perhaps, might return an answer in generalized terms, and their answer might lead to reflection by others. But an answer that men can build with for themselves must be made of the stuff of common human experience. In our culture, the science of psychology is still very young. Until quite recently, psychology has neglected the subjective side of human experience, with the result that the accumulations of facts concerning human beings are mostly facts relating to the non-individual aspects of human behavior. Science deals with *caused* behavior, but the reality of human individuality is revealed only in *causing* behavior. Science has no techniques for studying this sort of behavior, and, indeed, is reluctant to admit that it exists at all.

After ten years or so of regarding human beings as being able to constitute themselves "original causes"—as "creative beings," we may say—the sciences may then be in a position to supply the beginnings of a vocabulary that can deal with the human individual, or support a discussion of the nature of individuality. But for the present, so far as science is concerned, we shall have to wait.

Why, then, raise the question at all? We raise it on fairly obvious grounds. Within the past few years, a number of influential writers have discovered terrible flaws in modern culture, all of them traceable to the neglect of human individuality. These writers declaim against the omnipresent tendency to erase the quality of human uniqueness. What is private, personal, and individual in man stubbornly resists the planners by formula, the definers who rely upon "past experience," so that original behavior, for such

planners and definers, is logically construed as Original Sin.

Neither the ideologists of Freedom nor the ideologists of Equality can claim innocence of this attitude. The ideologists of freedom ought to be champions of individuality, but most of them—the best known and popular ones, that is—long ago sold out to Free Enterprise, and Free Enterprise on an industrial and mass-production scale is noticeably successful only if the uniformity and predictability of human beings can be assumed. The secret injunction of the Free Enterprisers, throughout all their *serious* utterances, is, *"Don't disturb the graphs.* The curves of sales must go up. Consumption must grow with population and technological advance." Some kind of geometrical progression is expected. Anyone who threatens the escalator of economic progress is an enemy of mankind, and anyone who is too "individual" to be predictable in his behavior—in his response to sales appeals and other formulas intended to guide the masses to the future designed for them by marketing and other experts—is an unhealthy influence who should be discouraged and shunned. If everyone were like him, what would happen to us all? Our curves would go down and our security would be lost. The independent individual gives the Free Enterprisers much reason to dislike him. He ignores their scriptures.

There are other reasons, of course, for conformity. The economic reasons are useful to notice and to stress because they are so obvious, and because economic logic is the most respected in our time. But the religious nonconformist is disliked by orthodox believers for similar reasons. He is a threat to their salvation. Their confidence in what they believe is basically different from his sort of confidence in his beliefs. Simply by being a nonconformist, he gives evidence of private, individual thinking. Usually, the orthodox person fears the idea of private, individual thinking. He fears it because he is not sure he can do it. He wants the confirmation of others to assure him he is right. He cannot have this as a private thinker. The surety of private thought rests upon reason and personal experience, and the conformist does not have much experience that can be called "personal." The proper experience of the conformist is group experience, "shared" experience. He calls it "shared" because there is known virtue in sharing. All through human history, heretics have been hated for their independence, for their "private enterprise." The heretics set too high a standard in the religious or philosophic life, and this assumes the aspect of a reproach to the conformists. Accordingly, the heretic must be suppressed, and in order to justify his suppression he is branded as wicked and dangerous to other people.

Fortunately, originality is a quality for which men become exceedingly hungry, and in days of spreading conformity, a sense of deprivation gradually overtakes those who are sensitive to its decline. Some kind of climax of complaint against the pressures of conformity is being reached right at the present time. For example, in the January *Harper's,* three books declare their writers' resistance to molds of conformity. One of these volumes, *The Organization Man,* by William H. Whyte, Jr., is an articulate protest against the bland compound of the ingredients of "success" which the young men who work for America's large corporations are supposed to embody. Paul Pickrel, the reviewer, describes the book:

> The segment [of American society] Whyte has chosen to write about is composed of the young men (roughly between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five) who have elected to make their careers in large corporations. He tells in abundant and entertaining detail how they are selected and trained, what they regard as the good life, how they amuse themselves and spend their money, what they expect of the churches they attend and the schools they send their children to, and so on. . . .

These young men, Whyte contends, have abandoned the old Protestant Ethic, on which much of the so-called Capitalistic doctrine of individualism was based, and have embraced the Social Ethic, which Pickrel explains as "belief in

'belongingness,' belief in the group as the source of creativity, and belief in science as a way of achieving 'belongingness'." Pickrel repeats Whyte's indictment:

> He [Whyte] thinks that it [the Social Ethic] results in the exaltation of mediocrity and discourages, in science and art and daily life, the creative individual who is society's only source of innovation. Man has been tamed and domesticated to serve the great bureaucratized collective that is the modern corporation, he has become a steady uninventive producer and a steady uncritical consumer who doesn't believe in making any trouble for anyone, including himself; soon he will be as contented as a cow, with the same herd-like instincts, the same routine demands, and the same passive acceptance of being milked.

A critical comment by Paul Pickrel makes an important distinction:

> It does not clarify the argument very much to confuse respect for individuality with belief in individualism, as the framework of Whyte's argument tends to do. Individualism is the economic doctrine that the world's work is best done on the principle of every man for himself and the Devil take the hindermost; it is the practical consequence of what Whyte calls the Protestant Ethic. Individuality is the unique quality every human being has; it is what Whyte thinks the Social Ethic neglects. The two are really very different things. One is a passing idea about how to get work done and the other is an eternal wonder of the world. There were men who respected individuality long before individualism was ever heard of; there will be such men after individualism is forgotten.

David Riesman's latest, *Constraint and Variety in American Education*, sees hope in modern education for relief from the enclosing patterns of social orthodoxy. Our schools, he urges, can slow down the process of regimentation. If the young men and women who attended the recent sessions of the National Association of Manufacturers in New York are at all typical, this sort of resistance is already well under way. But Pickrel's comment should be repeated: "It is useless to expect the schools to be very different from the society that supplies their students and pays their bills."

The third book which serves as a tract against conformity is Robert Wernick's *They've Got Your Number*, a diatribe against psychological testing to pick people for jobs. Both Whyte and Wernick are against these tests, although for somewhat different reasons:

> Whyte thinks that the main trouble with personality tests is that personnel men use the results to erect tyrannical standards of normality; when he administered tests used in the selection of corporation trainees to the highest executives of the same corporations, he found that the executives failed—they were too eccentric or lopsided, they were not normal enough.
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> Wernick, on the other hand, questions the tests themselves. He flatly denies that anything has been proved *about* any mental test, and he certainly implies that very little has been proved *by* any mental test. And where Whyte objects to tests because, as they are interpreted, they do not lead to the most efficient use of people, Wernick questions the very notion that people ought to be used efficiently.

On the absence of individuality of Americans, generally, Edgar Ansel Mowrer wrote in the *Saturday Review* two years ago:

> "Why," asks Riesman innocently, "are American people so frequently aimless, lacking private pastimes and passions and pursuits (in other words, half dead) when a greater variety of skilled careers are open to them than ever before?"
>
> Obviously, because they have been trained to eschew private passions and pursuits (the thrills of life) and pursue only the inevitably tepid aims which they have in common.
>
> One can understand underpaid schoolteachers succumbing to the selfish economic pressure of businessmen who want "homogenized" young people to fit into their "homogenized" administrations. But how explain the support of the intellectuals? . . . Here are fine minds renouncing traditional intellectual and cultural values—in deference to what? To undemonstrated theories that deny the dignity of man!

Mr. Mowrer shapes the issues and points the question: What are the theories that *support* the dignity of man? If there are such theories, in them we shall have the beginnings of a significant

statement about the human individual. By theories, we mean more than brave affirmations that human dignity is "important." We mean conceptions of the human being which give logical structure and justification to the values we *want* to believe in, but are discouraged from believing in by the prevailing anti-individual (anti-human) theories of man's nature. The anatomy of the decline of idealism in which we are involved is clearly put by C. Wright Mills in *White Collar:*

> The uneasiness, the malaise of our time is due to this root fact: in our politics and economy, in family life and religion—in practically every sphere of our existence—the certainties of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have disintegrated or been destroyed and, at the same time, no new sanctions or justifications for the new routines we live, and must live, have taken hold. So there is no acceptance and there is no rejection, no sweeping hope and no sweeping rebellion. There is no plan of life. Among white-collar people, the malaise is deep-rooted; for the absence of any order of belief has left them morally defenseless as individuals and politically impotent as *a* group. Newly created in a harsh time of creation, the white-collar man has no culture to lean on except the contents of a mass society that has shaped him and seeks to manipulate him to its alien ends. For security's sake, he must strain to attach himself somewhere, but no communities or organizations seem to be thoroughly his. This isolated position manes him excellent material for synthetic molding at the hands of popular culture—print, film, radio, and television. As a metropolitan dweller, he is especially open to the focused onslaught of all the manufactured loyalties that are contrived and urgently pressed upon those who live in worlds they never made.

The decline in beliefs and convictions, as Mills points out, has affected our entire culture, and no other views have emerged to take their place. That is why, for the present, we have no vocabulary to restore our conception of human individuality. There are no cultural roots for such words and ideas. Meanwhile, and in consequence, we adopt shoddy substitutes for the dream of human dignity and high achievement. Mills remarks:

> . . . during the American postwar boom Willy Loman appears, the hero of *The Death of a Salesman,* the white-collar man who by the very virtue of his moderate success in business turns out to be a total failure in life. Frederic Wertham has written of Willy Loman's dream: "He succeeds with it; he fails with it, he dies with it. But why did he have this dream? *Isn't it true that he had to have a false dream in our society?"*

What is the stuff of which better dreams will be made?

This is the question for which we shall have to find an answer—or many answers—before we can ripen our capacity to say wise and sustaining things about the nature of individuality and the human individual. An entire credo is needed, built of long thoughts about the human situation.

For a start, we might consider the idea that human longings for greatness, for the enduring and the ennobling—even for immortality, which is a symbol of the enduring and the ennobling, and possibly their substance as well—are more scientific than science itself, since from such high aspirations were born the sciences we now practice in an almost humdrum mood. Science, in other words, without the vision of a high calling for man, is only a technique for more elaborate degradations and betrayals of the human spirit. The vision is the prior reality and authority. In any great rebirth, it must come first.

Letter from
CENTRAL EUROPE

INNSBRUCK.—The Hungarians, like the Finlanders, belong to the Magyar race which migrated from Asia more than a thousand years ago, settling, after some fighting with the Germans, on both shores of the Danube, not far south of Vienna. They chose a king, became farmers, and developed into civilized people along with the rest of the Europeans.

After their monarchy died out, the Hungarians accepted the protection of the mighty German Emperor in Vienna—instead of being subdued by him—and an Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy was established during the nineteenth century, in which the Emperor of Austria represented himself at the same time as King of Hungary. Although the Hungarians were probably as free as any other European group in that period, their aristocracy longed for independence and even found supporters among the members of the Imperial family at Vienna. There exists historical proof that the eldest son of the Emperor Franz Joseph, the Crown Prince Rudolf—before he committed suicide (together with Baroness Vetsera at Mayrling)—had been in secret communication with Hungarian noblemen and had promised them total independence, and that the Empress Elizabeth, wife of Franz Joseph, former Princess of Bavaria and a famous beauty who was murdered by an anarchist at Geneva, had never lost her sympathy for the Hungarian cause.

Those who knew the history and character of the Hungarians—their thirst for freedom and their entirely western culture—realized that if any soviet satellite should stage a revolution against the terror of the Communist regime, it would probably happen at Budapest. There, today, the Hungarians have been fighting with their fists against massed Soviet tanks. Not only men, but women and children have sacrificed their lives. Many thousands of the younger generation have been deported to Russian Siberia, many thousands of them fell in the streets, and many thousands fled, after it became obvious that the Reds would seize and punish everybody they found in their reach. Since Austria is the only neighboring non-communist country, the majority of the fugitives passed over this frontier.

The relief organization on the Austrian side was good. The refugees were equipped with provisions, blankets, etc. They were transported by car either to empty barracks or to hospitals, and sometimes to neatly outfitted camps. When the number of refugees made the problem of accommodations acute, the Austrian Government appealed to the governments of the Free World to accept refugees, so that today many Hungarian patriots are on their way to the U.S.A., Canada, South Africa, and Australia, or have already arrived.

This world-wide cooperation is a hopeful fact. These governments have acted quickly, and everyone with authority in the matter has certainly done what seemed best and possible.

But it remains a question whether this was the best solution. First, the Hungarians are people who, loving their homes above all, never like to leave their country. And since they did not emigrate voluntarily, particularly the adults among them will not easily make themselves understood in another language, and they will seldom find another settlement of Hungarians to welcome them. Many will probably suffer from the psychic complex of being just merely tolerated, pity-deserving "refugees."

Lastly, what of the future of Hungary? Lots of democratically thinking young Hungarians have been killed, many were deported by the Russians, and those who escaped with their lives and are now settled overseas will probably never be able to return home. Eventually, Hungary will be populated by elderly people, plus opportunists and communists, with whom the rulers in Moscow will have no trouble. Would it not have been better for the free nations to have supported the Austrian Government, and eventually some neighbouring

countries (Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands), with sufficient funds to establish accommodations for the refugees closer to Hungary, especially since a labor shortage exists in all these countries? The refugees would then have been able to observe further developments in Hungary from near-by areas, and could have offered moral encouragement to all who remain in Budapest or elsewhere and continue to resist the Communists non-violently. They then could have planned to return with less difficulties, when circumstances would allow. And the danger that Hungary will one day cease to exist would have been smaller.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
A NOVEL OF FRANCE

A COPY of the second English printing of *Les Mandarins* (World Publishing Co.), Goncourt prize-winning novel by Simone de Beauvoir, reached us a short time ago, and, after reflection, we see no reason to dispute the decision that Mme. de Beauvoir knows how to write "a novel of ideas" and "a novel of intrigue" at the same time. If the dominant tone in French fiction has been pessimistic, and if the typical characters seem jaded and the general horizon for French intellectuals bleak, there are understandable reasons for all this, and it is one of Mme. de Beauvoir's well performed tasks to indicate why this is so.

During the time of the German occupation, with liberal or socialist intellectuals playing an active part in the Resistance Movement, there was something to *do*. But afterward, with France one of many countries being used as a shuttlecock for the athletic swings of Russia and America, it began to seem that neither political writing nor political action could make any real difference in the course of world affairs. Further, even if one with a capacity for discussing political issues decided to confine himself entirely to literary expression, he ran the risk of persecution by some dominant political group, so surcharged had the atmosphere become with partisan passions denied any constructive outlet. For the writer who also wanted to take an active part in politics, the same discouraging situation prevailed. An early conversation in *The Mandarins* explains:

> "It's so rare to find a man who dares to come out in the open! And when he *does* accept the dare, he invariably wins out in the end."
>
> "Yes," Robert said, "after he's dead." He shrugged his shoulders. "Now that I'm back in politics I have a lot of enemies. Do you realize how delighted they'd be the day those memoirs appeared in print?"
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> "Your enemies will always find weapons to use against you, the ones in the journal or others." I said.
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> "Just imagine those memoirs in the hands of Lafaurie, or Lachaume, or young Lambert. Or in the hands of any journalist, for that matter," Robert said.
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> Cut off completely from politics, from the future, from the public, not even knowing whether his journal would ever be published, Robert had rediscovered in its writing the adventure of the explorer venturing into an unnamed wilderness at random, without a trail to follow, without signs to warn him of its dangers. In my opinion, he had never written anything better. "If you become involved in politics," I said impatiently, "then you no longer have the right to write sincere books. Is that it?"
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> "No, you can write sincere books but not scandalous ones," Robert replied. "And you know very well that nowadays there are a thousand things a man can't speak about without causing a scandal." He smiled. "To tell the truth, there isn't much about any individual that doesn't lend itself to scandal."

Much of the time, it is hard to tell whether *The Mandarins* is a political novel, a psychological novel, or a story of indifferently successful love affairs; what remains impressive is Mme. de Beauvoir's talent for psychological analysis. She writes of psychological pain with understanding, and none of the typical American over-simplifications of complex reactions. A first reading of this novel may not leave a good impression, but more careful attention suggests that the author has finally concluded that there is always enough light to live by, whatever one's torments or frustrations. In a closing chapter, Mme. de Beauvoir has one of her leading protagonists step out of his isolated gloom and decide that a man can always be more than a mere "spectator":

> That night, without quite knowing why, it irritated him to think that in the eyes of certain people he passed for a splendid specimen of humanity. The clock struck ten. Dubreuilh was speaking out against war, and Henri suddenly wished he were in his place. He had often said to himself, "War is like death: there's no use preparing for it." But when an airplane starts into a nose-dive, it's better to be the pilot who's trying to pull out of it than a terrorized

> passenger. Doing something, even though it were only speaking, was better than sitting by himself in a corner with that dark weight on his heart. Henri pictured the hall filled with people, their faces upturned toward Dubreuilh, Dubreuilh bent toward them, throwing out words. There was no room in them for fear, for anguish; together, they were hoping. After it was over, Dubreuilh would go to a bistro, a very ordinary bistro, and eat sausages and drink wine. No one would have very much to say, but they would feel good. Henri lit a cigarette. You don't prevent a war with words. But speaking was not necessarily a way of changing history; it was also a certain way of living it. In the silence of that study, given over to his innermost nightmares, Henri felt he was living it poorly.

The ideological writer, Dubreuilh, possesses a rather remarkable wife, a practicing psychiatrist who speaks in the first person throughout the book. Of all the skeins of thought in *The Mandarins,* we found most interesting the matter of her doubts as to the ultimate value of psychiatry for emotionally tortured people. "My profession? What a joke!" remarks Anne, at one time. "How could I presume to stop a woman from crying, compel a man to sleep?" One of Anne's friends becomes temporarily insane, is fairly promptly "cured," but then seems incapable of finding anything in her rehabilitated life save dullness and mediocrity. Her attempts at writing are entirely without eagerness or creativity, and so, in this instance at least, Anne rebels against the easy professional assurance which typically insists that suffering is never worth the price:

> The next day I read Paula's manuscript—ten pages as empty, as flat as a story in *Confidences.* But there was no point in getting upset about it; actually she wasn't as determined as all that to be a writer; a failure certainly wouldn't be tragic. She had insured herself once and for all against tragedy; she was reconciled to everything and anything. But I couldn't resign myself to her resignation. In fact, it saddened me to such an extent that I became more and more disgusted with my profession; often I felt like saying to my patients "Don't try to be cured; you'll heal as much as you need to by yourself." I had many patients, and that winter, as a matter of fact, I met with success in several difficult cases. But my heart wasn't in it. I really no longer understood why it is proper for people to sleep at night, make love with ease, be capable of acting, choosing, forgetting, living. Setting free all those neurotics imprisoned in their narrow misfortunes—when the world, after all, was so vast—used to seem terribly important to me. Now, however, when I tried to rid them of their obsessions, I was merely obeying a set of old slogans.
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> Anne, the psychiatrist, refuses to take the easy way out herself. She fights through her own sufferings with stubborn self-respect, becoming neither "adjusted" nor nihilist. She ends the book thus:
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> For a moment, I had really passed over to the other side, there where nothing counts any more, where everything is equal to nothing.
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> "Are you listening to me?" Robert asked. He smiled at me. "Where are you?"
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> "Here," I replied.
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> I am here. They are living, they speak to me, I am alive. Once more, I've jumped feet first into life. Words are entering my ears; little by little, they take on meaning. Here are the estimates for the weekly and the layouts Henri suggests. Do I have an idea for a name? None of the ones they've thought of so far are suitable. I try to think of a name. I say to myself that, since they were strong enough to wrest me from death, perhaps they will know how to help me to live again. They will surely know. Either one founders in apathy, or the earth becomes repeopled. I didn't founder. Since my heart continues to beat, it will have to beat for something, for someone. Since I'm not deaf, I'll once more hear people calling to me. Who knows? Perhaps one day I'll be happy again. Who knows?

Simone de Beauvoir has an interesting history. After studying in a religious institution she earned a degree in philosophy at the Sorbonne. She taught for a number of years, but left the academic life to devote herself entirely to writing, and is now considered one of the most, if not the most, distinguished woman writer in contemporary France. *Les Mandarins,* in receiving the Prix Goncourt, attained France's most prized literary award.

COMMENTARY
CEREMONY AND RITE

WHAT is there about a ceremonial rite such as the Red Deer Dance of the Pueblo Indians which could cause John Collier to say that it "became a universe that no words or pictures or even music can ever contain"?

Obviously, the dance is "symbolic," but this is a word too tamed and familiar to embody the meaning Mr. Collier has in mind.

Carlo Levi's *Of Fear and Freedom* hints at an explanation of such things. He suggests that the human adventure is a long pilgrimage from Chaos to Chaos—not chaos in the sense of "confusion," but in its original philosophic meaning, as the Primeval One, from which, as the Rig Veda has it, "all doth proceed, unto which all must return.')

Our origin is in unity, and throughout the tangled windings of our separate ways, we remember the peace of that ancient oneness, and long for it. Religion is memorial and promise—memorial to the unity we once enjoyed, promise that we may attain it again. But gaining it in full self-consciousness—for this is the meaning of individuality—is filled with struggle and anguish. We falter, we become lost, we suffer endless bewilderments while wandering in the labyrinth of concrete existence. So, in their wisdom, the wisdom of those who anciently devised the patterns of culture, men undertook to perform rites that restore the feeling of strength, that act out the meaning of their lives.

The dance, then, becomes a representation of the dance of life. It typifies the meeting of obstacles, trials, and disasters. It offers the Odyssey of the Soul within the scope of a dramatic unity. It shows despair, but it also proclaims triumph. It attunes the soul and recalls the Promethean vision. It assimilates our sorrows and defeats and casts out our self-contempt. It leads us beyond ourselves, unto ourselves.

This, then, is the symbolism of the dance.

But we, revering the Indians, cannot dance. A facile intellectuality outruns all rituals. We are too self-conscious for this sort of identification with the currents of nature. We have lost, but we have not found. We are unhappy foundlings of a disillusionment with all forms and observances. Our culture is overtaken by a Tolstoyan dilemma: we are weary unto death of our unnatural lives, yet we cannot go back to the Nature of our cultural past.

How can we recapture the promise of ancient faith, without betraying our minds, which know so well how to diagnose, but so little of how to prescribe? What forms may the promise of life assume for us—or is there a formless promise in which a subtler nature may instruct? Where is the voice of this meaning, who hears the sound of its song?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

THE CHALLENGE OF CHILDREN

FEW of the "little books" on education which reach us are reviewed here, possibly because we are either too choosey or hate to be repetitious—most of the writing in this category seems to play over themes considered many times before. However, *The Challenge of Children,* growing from a collection of essays written by parents of the Cooperative Parents' Group of Pacific Palisades, California, is certainly worthy of notice. (William Morrow & Co., $3.75.)

The Cooperative Parents' Group evolved this volume as a workshop effort of ten parents who met together weekly, each eventually writing his own chapter for the book. It is immediately apparent that this unpretentious collection of unsigned essays is the fruition of bed-rock discussion of the role of parents in the teaching-learning process, and is uncluttered by attempts to follow any particular "line" of educational theory. The first chapter provides an introduction:

> Human integrity cannot be banked like money and passed along intact from the dead to the living. It must be minted fresh in each new life; we cannot take it for granted.
>
> As parents, we have the responsibility to look and see where our action, our attitudes and our values are leading our children. We have both the freedom and responsibility to learn all we can about the world we live in, about the nature and development of man, but foremost about ourselves. We have a real need to examine the worth of our ambitions and desires for our children.
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> Looking to the experts for answers, we find their thinking so diverse that it is difficult to accept any one particular formula with conviction. For a saving word, we turn to other sources—to politicians, scientists, religious leaders, newspaper columns. We look to "practical," external solutions: improved standards of living, better playgrounds, school facilities, clubs, camps, sports. In fact, we look everywhere except inside ourselves for solutions to the difficulties that have arisen from our own faulty thinking. It is time we began to look within to the source of the outer conditions we would like to change.

We particularly admire one parent's analysis of the meaning of "love." The writer feels no need to be apologetic about insisting that it is the transcendental quality of "love," rather than its immediate emotional expression, which is of importance:

> Neither permissive indulgence nor overbearing harshness reflects the insight of love. We need to recognize and make our own that less familiar form of love which comes from a deeper level and transfigures the entire relationship between parent and child. This is a dynamic love that says, "I respect you so much as a human being that I will give all that is required to educate you in noble, free living, against all opposing influences, in the face of popular indifference, at whatever cost to myself in comfort, convenience and effort. I will nourish the vital essence of your life until the day when it has come to flourishing independent strength. I will not permit your heritage to fall away through neglect and ignorance. Together we will search our ways to make the integration of life a living thing."
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> Real love is wisdom. It loves wisely and educates its children in the ways of wisdom. It is an unselfish love—love that is not of the self, but from the self. Unselfish love goes outward to all of life. Until very recently, this kind of love has been associated largely with religious thought; it is just lately beginning to emerge as a factor in all human relations. Most of us have felt its inner pull and dismissed it, thinking it could not be reconciled to the realistic demands of life, but science and medicine are now proving otherwise. Investigations into the relationship of mind and body demonstrate again and again that the human being who tries to live without genuine love can do so only at the price of injuring himself.

A discussion of religion is notable for its refusal to become tangled with anything even vaguely theological. The religion in which the Cooperative Parents' Group is interested, we might say, is the Religion of Nature. The writer of the chapter on "Creative Religion" is not embarrassed by the word "soul," but neither is he backward in suggesting that most theology results in an alienation of man from himself:

> In itself, the word *religion* carries no possible suggestion of segregated groups, although it has been falsified and has come to mean that to many. The Latin *religio* meant: "I join and bind with the highest." Religion is man's inner urge to live out in his life the beautiful, the highest; to serve the good and clearly, not blindly, see the good in everything. This is our means of fulfilling and completing life, of feeling our own spiritual roots. In an inward openness to the "Real" we are listening to the message of our own heart.
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> Until religion becomes an inmost experience and a way of life, it is only a word, a definition, and we in our living have not found its significance and wholeness. But to incorporate in us the highest and to cooperate with the highest is deeply transcending and real religion. This leads to the true development of mankind and a beginning realization of the destiny and purposes of life.
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> It is through our own spiritual feelings and awareness of life that we can teach our child religion. Our own life, when in the form of active living religion, is the young child's closest and truest spiritual teacher. Our own living way, feeling and example is creative religion for the child.
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> The realization of the brotherhood of man is spontaneous and already within a child. It is a necessity that this be preserved and nourished for the continued unfoldment of his spiritual consciousness. In this way his own good becomes the good of all mankind, and his religion becomes a living religion which does not divide but joins together man with his source and with all life.
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> Nature is an integral part of the wholeness of life and an ever ready friend to those who know her. All man's moods, aspirations and feelings can be felt in nature. This is a close world to the child. All about him there is life. Creation takes place anew every instant. Nothing is static. There is ceaseless action and the outpouring of the creative force of life. The child's love and his sympathy will go out naturally to all forms of animal life. He can feel for the big and little furry and feathered creatures, for the caterpillar, the worm, the ant, even for the snake.

The publisher of *The Challenge of Children* secured a short introductory note from Robert M. Hutchins, who calls the book "a pioneering venture of importance in the understanding and development of education." The lengthy passages we have just reproduced are sufficient indication that Hutchins' interest is genuine, for if there is anything that the former Chancellor of Chicago University has always tried to say, it is that both integrity and philosophy "must be minted fresh in each new life; you cannot take it for granted." The members of the Cooperative Parents' Group would make excellent participants in the Great Books Discussion Groups encouraged by Mr. Hutchins for philosophic adult education. These people have not only decided to involve themselves in the tasks of philosophers and educators; they have also proved that they are more philosophically aware than most of the academicians. For this reason alone, *The Challenge of Children* is a book worth reading.

Since not one of the essays either attacks or defends a "recognized school of thought," and since each writer politely declines identification with any sect of any sort, either religious or educational, there is an air of freshness and legitimate optimism about the entire enterprise. It seems to us that the children of the writers of this book are fortunate children indeed. These people are apparently *natural teachers.* We might add that participation in the enterprise of the Cooperative Parents' Group of Pacific Palisades allows them a psychological world of their own making, and one rich in the rewards that matter most. To sum up in the words of one parent-contributor: "Life thus lived with children becomes an exciting interaction of growth."

FRONTIERS

The Genius of Culture

[In this article, the writer, John Collier, continues a theme which was first presented in MANAS for Nov. 21 of last year. The subject, an age-old mystery and spur to reflection, is personal immortality—conceived, in Mr. Collier's words, "as secular continuity beyond death, as contrasted with the realization of eternity in the here and now—eternity as experienced by man and all the creatures, and seemingly everlasting abiding beneath a near threshold of individual consciousness and in the world." Mr. Collier is now residing in New Mexico, and a later cycle of reflection grew from contemplation of the "wreckage done upon Rio Hondo Canyon, the most perfect of the canyons cleaving the mountains upward from the Taos Plateau." This was, he says, "the wreckage done by an arm of the Federal Government, under a distant control, an expression of the unchallenged command of money and of the omnipotent machine." These thoughts formed a portal to what follows.—Editors.]

THE meditation then passed to a conversation amid the charmed aspens far above the ravaged canyon's floor; and the conversation dwelt not on the ruin done to nature by recent man, but on the mystery of human culture: the mystery of origins, and of continuities beyond apparent dissolutions; most of all, the mystery of the making and sustaining of individual personality by the unregarded cultures, and of the cultures by the unregarded personality.

These human cultures, we perceived, were not isolates on our planet. In their ancient genesis and in their deepest symbolic present intent they contained our Planet. And they were man's particular realization of that which one can only term a principle of organization creatively impelled, evident to the deep view and to the detailed perception in all of organic being—in the individual being and the life web. And his genius of creative organization, we felt assured, could not be a sudden property of organic being alone; it must be a property, and indeed, even, the explanatory principle, of the cosmos. Organic being and human culture, no local and temporal accidents within cosmic drift, but partakers in the immanent, nameless Intent, and charged by it with purpose deep as the universe.

From this further bound, the thought went backward to man: to man's particular realization of the organic and cosmic principle of organization creatively impelled. In trying to understand his own cultural genius, man is trying to understand the universe. And if he forswears his own cultural genius, he forswears the universe. And it seemed, at this point of our thinking, that man in our own age veritably is forswearing the universe—betraying it, through betraying his own cultural genius. While he masters the universe through intellectual achievement, and exploits it within no limiting world-loyalty, actually and practically he is betraying, degrading, the universe through betraying, degrading, his own genius of culture.

Viewed in this perspective, the preoccupations concerning personal immortality, commented on and partly shared in the earlier meditation, must appear somewhat inconsequential. Personal survival does not appear to be ruled out; its increasing evidences remain silently imperative; but the issues of future personal immortality seem all—literally, they seem all—contained within the cultural, ecological and cosmical present, where our opportunities and duties await. And if man no longer can sustain his cultural genius, *i.e.*, his role in the universe, then his individual survival, or ceasing, beyond bodily death, has little more than a phantasmal importance.

From this thought, there dawned the perspective of generations and æons to come, if man in his cultures can reorient himself toward his primordial and cosmic intent. These æons to come would be eons of the ever-deepening discovery and understanding and use of human culture cosmically based and cosmically intended. And from such understanding, if the creative genius of culture-building (*i.e.*, of the building of the soul into culture and of culture into the soul

and of soul and culture into the world) can yet go forward, we truly may believe that only the beginning of human significance has been made; that personalities greater than Buddha or Socrates, Goethe or Einstein, shall yet be born, and shall persuade events.

> The silent onward waters draw
> Toward something more divine in awe
> Than any phosphorescent spark
> That Christ or Plato lived or saw.

Thirty-six years ago, there came, out of complete unforseeingness, the discovery of the Red Deer Dance at Taos Pueblo. Some very, very inadequate record of that discovery, and of the changed world-view it brought, was attempted then, and again years ago.

Day before yesterday, for the second time only, the Red Deer Dance was witnessed once more: "Witnessed" is the word, rather than "experienced." The experience was potent, if ineffable, yet it was only the baffled intimation of what the experience could be, had one the inner power.

The Red Deer Dance emerged into the secular present from the Red Man's equivalent of the Aurignacian Age or a much older age. Its extreme ancientness was an almost terrifying impression. Only two hours preceding it, there had been circumstantial encounter with the frustrations and conflicts within pueblo life. Then came the Red Deer Dance: these same pueblo dwellers created, and indeed became, a universe that no words or pictures or even music can ever contain. In the thirty-six years there had been no loss or dimming of any of the myriad components of this event which we call the Deer Dance. The little boys entered as of old into the fathomless heritage of their Race—entered through symbolic, joyful death; the men and women, the young and old, upbore a more than human—truly a cosmic—weight, and the weight was a lift of something beyond planetary wings. How this miracle came to be, unknown thousands of years ago, how it goes on, amid so much of present and of hundreds-of-years-old seeming dissolution; this is the mystery of human culture, viewed as man's particular having of the genius of creation of the universe—man's having through mutual striving toward the ends reaching beyond frustration, beyond all pain, beyond any concern with self, beyond all fear, and reaching toward where, oh where?

This is as far as words or thought can go, as yet. Merely, "We have heard the trumpet blowing on the plain of a thousand years." We have glimpsed the human opportunity, and the awful human obligation of now and of whatever time to come.

JOHN COLLIER

Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico
December 27, 1956