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CONVENTIONS IN SCIENCE

THIS may sound like a contradictory title, for the reason that scientific thinking is supposed to be free of the constraints of convention. It has been claimed for science, or for the scientific method, that this way of approaching the problem of knowledge by-passes a large category of human weaknesses which commonly bias or render ineffectual man's search for truth.

The scientist, for example, is expected to reject assumptions for which insufficient evidence exists. He must not allow himself to be influenced by so-called "moral considerations"—that is, he must acknowledge facts to be facts, even when those facts seem prejudicial to human welfare. He will, it has been assumed, slowly erect the edifice of scientific knowledge, piling block upon block of laboriously proved conclusions, until, at last, the larger meanings of existence finally emerge.

Is there anything wrong with this picture? Should the scientist reconsider the matter of his "moral" influence? This is the question which critics of atomic and thermonuclear experiment keep asking.

But this question cannot even be intelligently examined without some account of what may be meant by "moral" influence. A moral influence obtains its definition from what is held to be the good of man. In Russia, for example, it is official doctrine that the good of man is to be achieved by altering the environment of the young. No doubt environment exerts a tremendous influence on the young, and no doubt certain controls over the environment of the young can accomplish some good, when the controls are wisely conceived. But the ardor of Marxist belief in the supreme importance of environment led to the condemnation of doctrines of hereditary influence as anti-Marxist, and therefore undesirable. And since the Marxist ideology has no room for "moral" ideas which are independently reached, theories of heredity (such as those of Gregor Mendel and T. H. Morgan) could not be called "immoral," but had to be branded as "unscientific" or "false." This actually happened, and for years the classical genetic theory of the West was practically banned in Soviet Russia, with persecution and possibly liquidation of Soviet scientists who refused to support views more in harmony with the prevailing interpretation of dialectical materialism.

So, we shall have to admit the need of scientists to remain indifferent to claims of "morality" of this sort. Science, in other words, can hardly submit to political censorship. Nor can it submit to religious censorship. In Galileo's time, "morality" was thought to depend on the Ptolemaic explanation of the universe and the movement of the heavenly bodies. Galileo was therefore silenced by the Inquisition. It was argued that if Galileo should be allowed to teach his doctrines of the double motion of the earth, he would establish an authority which rivalled the Church, thus calling into question not only the Church's views on astronomy, but those on morality as well. This prospect seemed filled with disaster, and Galileo was forced to retract.

Another attempt at religious censorship of science occurred in 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee, when a young science teacher was indicted by the state for instructing his pupils in the doctrine of evolution. The teacher, John T. Scopes, was convicted, and the "religious integrity" of Tennessee was saved from subversion, but this seems to have been about the last important attempt on the part of organized religion to interfere with the activities of science and scientific education. There is today little active conflict between science and religion, and not

much expectation that it will be revived—not, at least, in any familiar terms.

However, in consequence of this history of interference with the free practice of science, a certain "moral" tradition has grown up in connection with the idea of science itself. While scientific truth is still held to be independent of "moral" considerations, the freedom to pursue scientific truth without prejudice is a recognized moral value in our time. It is natural, therefore, that any sort of attempt to set a limit to the scope of science should be regarded as menacing to *this* moral value.

Now it so happens that the defense of the moral value of scientific freedom seems to be aided by the *content* of scientific theories and conclusions, in certain areas. When La Place told Napoleon that he "managed" without the hypothesis of "God" in his astronomical thinking, he was protecting astronomy from the intrusion of an incommensurable cause. The views of the mechanists in biology are supported not alone by the results of observation and experiment: they are also supported by the *moral* consideration that vitalistic doctrines seem to undermine the sovereignty of the scientific method, and to do this in a field—biology—which has belonged exclusively to science since the time of Darwin. Similar motivations are apparent in the attitude of many psychologists toward the investigations of psychic researchers.

A response which may be taken as typical of academic psychologists was repeated by Dr. Joseph Jastrow in an article in the American *Scholar (Winter,* 1938-39). Dr. Jastrow said that the rejection of extra sensory perception by psychologists grew "out of a profound philosophical conviction," and he summarized this attitude in the words of a colleague:

> ESP is so contrary to the general scientific world picture, that to accept the former would compel the abandonment of the latter. I am unwilling to give up the body of scientific knowledge so painfully acquired in the Western world during the last 300 years, on the basis of a few anecdotes and a few badly reported experiments.

It should be noted that this contemptuous dismissal of the work in ESP by Dr. Rhine of Duke University was not justified by the record. Only a year later, commenting on the opposition to ESP, the New York *Times* declared editorially:

> THE TIMES is neither for nor against Professor Rhine. But it does believe that, the mathematicians having approved Professor Rhine's statistical conclusions, it is time for the psychologists to explain them.

Nearly twenty years have passed since these expressions, and while a few more psychologists now show at least a tolerance of the work being done in psychic research, there is still strong resistance to forthright admission that a decisive reality ought to be accorded to psychic phenomena of the sort studied by Dr. Rhine and others. In explanation of this resistance, we should like to suggest that Dr. Rhine and his colleagues are contending against the force of a scientific convention—a convention, moreover, which is shored up by "moral considerations" bearing on what many believe to be the *actual survival* of the scientific method.

A text on sociology, published in 1934, gave full play to the strength of this convention in a passage on the presumed triumph of mechanistic analysis of human behavior. L. L. Bernard wrote in *Fields and Methods of Sociology:*

> More and more the attempt to reduce behavior to physicochemical and psycho-physical processes has been successful. The development of biology into anatomy, physiology, neurology, and endocrinology has at the same time produced an extension of the objective analysis of the physical personality. The old theological assumption of personal control through spirit direction, which later developed into a theory of spirit possession, and thence into a theory of an individual or personal soul (a permanent indwelling directive spirit), has given way, under the influence of an analysis of neurons, cortexes, and endocrines, to the behavioristic theory of the conditioned response and stimulus-response or behavior patterns. The spiritualists and the theologians and the metaphysicians have not welcomed this growth of a

> science of personality and they have not hesitated to reveal their intellectual character by their strenuous efforts to sweep back the oncoming tide of behavioristic science with their witch brooms on which they have been accustomed to ride in the clouds of spiritistic phantasy. But in spite of this bit of diverting hobby-horse play, a science of personality based on a measurable mechanics of behavior is bound to replace the old magical and mystical spiritism which still survives in the thousand and one cults - that delight in calling themselves psychological.

This statement by Dr. Bernard seems a fairly good illustration of the strength—and even arrogance—of the scientific convention of rejecting any form of independent, psychic reality. He concedes no right to serious consideration to anyone except the advocates of mechanistic theory, and he shows unrestrained contempt for differing views. Unable to conceive of science that is not mechanistic, and intolerant of those who seem willing to sacrifice this sort of science in order to preserve a non-mechanistic conception of the human individual, Dr. Bernard represents intransigeant, conventional science fighting at the barricades for its "moral" ideal.

Today, however, we are able to report considerable changes in attitude on the scientific frontier. A lessening of skepticism was already noticeable among physicists in the 1930's, and the strong position of such scientists in their own field has perhaps given them security in contemplating unusual possibilities in psychic phenomena. Telepathy, after all, does nothing to unseat field theory, and falling bodies will still behave as Galileo predicted, whether or not clairvoyance is a fact. Moreover, the physicists have themselves experienced an almost total revolution in both the concepts and the vocabulary of their science, so that a certain tolerance of change may be expected of them. Not so the psychologists. Surveying the past half-century of psychic research and its reception by workers in other fields, Prof. C D. Broad comments (in the *Journal of Parapsychology* for December, 1956):

> When we leave the physicists and pass to experts in the biological sciences and in experimental psychology, I think it must be admitted that, with a few notable exceptions, they remain either completely indifferent or else positively hostile to psychical research. Many of them seem to be wrapped in an impenetrable cocoon of obsolete scientific concepts which they acquired when they studied elementary physics and chemistry in their student days, and which were even then beginning to be obsolescent. In the case of some of them the hostile reaction to psychic research bears all those marks of violence and irrationality which suggest that some deep-seated emotional complex has been stirred. A psychoanalytic study of some eminent experimental psychologists might be illuminating, in view of this, if it could be undertaken.

A study of this sort, if it could be pursued, might easily show that the "moral" values of science seem threatened by psychic research, and that the compulsive sense of "ought," in relation to the theory and practice of science, is at least as convention-bound as it is found to be in entirely different and quite unscientific areas of human enterprise. In short, the *moral* compulsions of human behavior operate with as much force in these instances as they do elsewhere in human life.

This situation raises a rather important question. Is it possible that the scientists, in proposing to outlaw "moral considerations" from their work, were guilty of a serious over-simplification? Should they have attempted, instead, to get better definitions of what is "moral" and what is not? If science must itself respond to moral considerations—the obligation of the scientist to be free, and remain free, for one thing—can we now say, in the light of history, that what actually happened was that, instead of really getting rid of the moral factor, the scientists suppressed it and shoved it deep down in their collective subconscious, where it operated to produce prejudices and obscure compulsions, just as it does with other men?

How else can you explain the extraordinary insistence on mechanism and the materialistic account of man and of nature? Arguments on this subject bring out arrogance, contempt, and anger,

even in the Olympians of laboratory and test-tube. It is not unreasonable to suggest that these reactions betray a basic insecurity.

There is, however, ample justification for "going slow" in the direction of scientific endorsement of a non-mechanistic universe, or at least a mechanistic universe with non-mechanistic elements in it. The problems are tremendous. How are you going to put the two together? What can serve as the practically miraculous *nexus* between the free and the unfree, the causing and the caused?

At present, we should think, the best plan would be to begin to show an unequivocal hospitality to every sort of hypothesis which entertains such a possibility. This would mark a dramatic break with the scientific convention of mechanistic faith, although it would undoubtedly open the way, also, to extravagant speculation. We might consider, however, that the longer a dogged resistance to non-mechanistic thinking continues, the worse will be the confusion when the dams of mechanistic convention in science finally burst.

REVIEW
PSYCHOLOGICAL MATURITY

A SUBSCRIBER and contributor to MANAS recently suggested a reading of A. H. Maslow's *Motivation and Personality,* with special attention to the concluding section, "Self-Actualizing People: a study of Psychological Health." We agree that the some sixty pages of this material contain many passages that complement themes found in MANAS for a number of years.

Prof. Maslow explains that he had long felt frustrated by the inability of psychologists to devise impressive means for identifying the components of psychological health; neuroticism and psychoses lend themselves much more easily to a statistical approach. Finally he concluded that some sort of inquiry was better than none—even if his own opinions be found to weigh heavily in the scale; so, using students and faculty of Brandeis University as subjects, he plunged in where academic angels fear to tread. "I sought only to convince and to teach myself," he writes, "rather than to prove or to demonstrate to others." "After somewhat unexpected results, however," he continues, "these studies proved so laden with exciting implications, that it seems fair that some sort of report should be made to others in spite of its methodological shortcomings. I consider the problem of psychological health to be so pressing, that *any* suggestions, *any* bits of data, however moot, are endowed with great heuristic value. This kind of research is in principle so difficult—involving as it does a kind of lifting oneself by one's axiological bootstraps—that if we were to wait for conventionally reliable data, we should have to wait forever."

According to Prof. Maslow, the faculty of self-actualization "may be loosely described as the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities, etc. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best that they are capable of doing, reminding us of Nietzsche's exhortation, 'Become what thou art!' They are people who have developed or are developing to the full stature of which they are capable."

We wonder whether Prof. Maslow is familiar with Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces,* for he says, in effect, that the autonomous or self-actualized man is the "hero" who is neither afraid to be himself nor to reach out past the safe boundaries of past habits. The hero has no recourse to conventional religion—in Campbell's presentation of the "monomyth," heroes tend rather to challenge its orthodox manifestations. "Self-actualizers," on the other hand, recognize the realm of the mystical:

> They do not neglect the unknown, or deny it, or run away from it, or try to make believe it is really known, nor do they organize, dichotomize, or rubricize it prematurely. They do not cling to the familiar, nor is their quest for the truth a catastrophic need for certainty, safety, definiteness, and order, such as we see in an exaggerated form in Goldstein's brain injured or in the compulsive-obsessive neurotic. They can be, when the total objective situation calls for it, comfortably disorderly, sloppy, anarchic, chaotic, vague, doubtful, uncertain, indefinite, approximate, inexact, or inaccurate (all, at certain moments in science, art or life in general, quite desirable).
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> Thus it comes about that doubt, tentativeness, uncertainty, with the consequent necessity for abeyance of decision, which is for most a torture, can be for some a pleasantly stimulating challenge, a high spot in life rather than a low.

Under the heading of "Spontaneity," Maslow continues with reflections in the same tenor, with special reference to conventionality. Self-actualizing or autonomous people, he explains, strive neither for conventionality nor unconventionality. Rather, "their behavior is marked by simplicity and naturalness, and by lack of artificiality or straining for effect. This does not necessarily mean consistently unconventional behavior." This is "essential or internal unconventionality"—the only sort worth attention. Maslow then establishes some important distinctions, admitting that the self-actualizer will

often "go through the ceremonies and rituals of convention with the best possible grace." However, "that this conventionality is a cloak that rests very lightly upon his shoulders and is easily cast aside can be seen from the fact that the self-actualizing person practically never allows convention to hamper him or inhibit him from doing anything that he considers very important or basic. It is at such moments that his essential lack of conventionality appears, and not as with the average Bohemian or authority-rebel, who makes great issues of trivial things and who will fight against some unimportant regulation as if it were a world issue." And now for what seems to us his best statement: after discussing further the qualities of "spontaneous unconventionality" in the self-actualizing person, Maslow continues:

> One consequence or correlate of this characteristic is that these people have codes of ethics that are relatively autonomous and individual rather than conventional. The unthinking observer might sometimes believe them to be unethical, since they can break not only conventions but laws when the situation seems to demand it. But the very opposite is the case. They are the most ethical of people even though their ethics are not necessarily the same as those of the people around them. It is this kind of observation that leads us to understand very assuredly that the ordinary ethical behavior of the average person is largly conventional behavior rather than truly ethical behavior, e.g., behavior based on fundamentally accepted principles.
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> Because of this alienation from ordinary conventions and from the ordinarily accepted hypocrisies, lies, and inconsistencies of social life, they sometimes feel like spies or aliens in a foreign land and sometimes behave so.
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> I should not give the impression that they try to hide what they are like. Sometimes they let themselves go deliberately, out of momentary irritation with customary rigidity or with conventional blindness. They may, for instance, be trying to teach someone or they may be trying to protect someone from hurt or injustice. . . .

"Self-actualizing people," writes Maslow, "have the wonderfu1 capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naïvely, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder, and even ecstasy, however stale these experiences may have become to others." It will hardly be disputed that this is the *summum bonum*, so far as anyone's conception of the ideal psychic life is concerned. We all feel, at least temporarily, nostalgia for the enthusiasms of youth, for the "freshness" and wonder of new discoveries, and we sense that the person who has come to terms with himself carries this receptivity through all the days of his life. Here, apparently, is the answer to "stress" and "uncertainty," not because the "self-actualizing person" lives a life apart from the disturbances which surround human existence, but because he is able to turn every difficulty into an educational experience.

But we suspect that Maslow's recommendation of an attitude which combines "tentativeness and uncertainty" with refusal to "allow convention to hamper or inhibit," will encounter vigorous opposition in some quarters. Doesn't maturity include the capacity to live in harmony with one's environmental companions? Do we not owe a primary obligation to the opinions of the majority and shouldn't we cultivate a willingness to "fit in" to the standards of the system which, to some degree at least, supports and nurtures us? Well, the assumption in this sort of reasoning, which deserves some counter-questioning, is that the man who consistently reaches beyond the confines of the status quo fails to give what is "due" to his community or nation. Though Maslow apparently does not trouble to develop this rationalization, the record of history seems to support Polonius' saying, "To thine own self be true and . . . thou can'st not then be false to any man." If one grants that the life of any society, like the life of any individual, can stand improvement on many counts, we must assume that growth will only come about through new perspectives, by profiting from challenges to old standards.

The "self-actualizing person" may not consider himself a professional humanitarian, but his life declares his discovery of the supremacy of ethics over morality—a discovery which everyone

ought to eventually share. The root of the matter is that no one lives to his potential so long as he feels himself to be "on the defensive," covering over a part of himself or a good many of his ideas, simply because they may not be approved. Since the "self-actualizing person" is always on a non-belligerent offensive, he is unlikely to become a victim of inertia, and even less likely to find himself, as so many of us do, adopting and defending familiar doctrines for which one has no genuine enthusiasm. So if Maslow's self-realizing man is a threat to complacency, he may, by his very presence, offer a great gift to those whose complacency he disturbs. He is apt to make people doubt what they have believed before, and, as Peter Abelard remarked, "It is through doubt that one comes to investigation, and through investigation that one comes to truth."

COMMENTARY
MORALITY AND ETHICS

TREATED abstractly, Morality and Ethics are easily distinguished. Ethics are principles of right behavior while morality is constituted of rules made from ethical principles. You can't abuse a principle, but you can abuse a rule. The use of principles requires original thinking; *every* use of a principle requires new thinking. A man can live by rules and do practically no thinking at all. For this reason, principles are neglected while rules become the popular authority.

Is "morality," then, a harmful indulgence of human weakness? It would be better to say that morals are half-learned ethics. While we are getting to understand principles better, we may use the rules that others have made in the past. It may even be a good idea to follow the rules so long as they violate no principle, in order to avoid confusing people who know no other guide. This, it seems, is often the policy of Prof. Maslow's "self-actualizing person," who may seem quite conventional for a time, but who "never allows convention to hamper him or inhibit him from doing anything that he considers very important or basic." (See Review.)

Extremely "moral" people can be made to feel that they are set completely adrift when obliged to live in close proximity to those who endeavor to live by ethical principle alone. Often the "moral" man becomes angry and resentful toward the ethical man, who shakes the moral man's universe of "rules." It is a terrible shock to discover that rules can be misapplied, that they often work injustice, that ordinary "goodness" easily passes into unconscious hypocrisy and tyrannical self-righteousness. It is then that the "good" men take refuge in the welfare of "society." *They* don't mind; *they* can be "broad" as anyone else—but society must be protected from unsettling ideas. So the "good" men of Athens poisoned Socrates; the "good" men crucified Jesus; and the "good" men of Rome burned Giordano Bruno at the stake.

No more then, than now, could the "good" men distinguish between the individual who cleaves to principle and "the average Bohemian or authority-rebel, who makes great issues of trivial things and who will fight against some unimportant regulation as if it were a world issue."

This distinction is of course important and has to be made. The sad thing is that merely good or moral men are never able to make it. To recognize principles in operation, you have to know principles and be devoted to them. The devotees of morality fail in this, and so they pillory both fools and sages, not knowing one from the other.

The study of morality is a part of the study of habit in human life. In some departments, habit is a wonderful and indispensable thing. The heart beats from a kind of organic habit. It beats best when left completely alone. So with breathing, digestion, and countless natural functions. We should be completely lost without such habits. Even if we knew how to direct these actions by conscious decision, having to do so would ruin our lives. We should have time for nothing else.

Morality endeavors to install constructive "habits" in relationships which ought to be governed by ethical values. Morality, we might argue, may be very good for very little children, and very bad for adults. Our physiological lives probably grow better and better, the more we learn to regulate them by orderly habit, but our ethical lives grow better only as we *reduce* the role of habit—of morality—in choosing what is good and right.

Turning morality into ethics is, then, the process of growing up as human beings. The confusing part of the process lies in the fact that each man must go his own pace, and that while morality is constituted of "public" rules, ethics are unalterably private, unique in their meaning to each one. Growing up, we suspect, never gets "easy." The best we can hope for is to understand what may be going on.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

IT happens, now and again, in the writing of any column, we suppose, that there doesn't seem to be anything to say that hasn't been said before. But at such times, if the general subject is education, there is usually something new to be thought about the great problem of "discipline." For around this word, and its various shades of meaning and interpretation, debates have raged for centuries—between religious and scientifically-minded persons, between differing schools of like persuasion, and between parents in the home, regardless of ideological or sectarian background. Systems and theories of discipline involve everything from claims that "no discipline save self-discipline is valuable," to the conditioning theories of orthodox religionists.

Let's start with two negative generalizations this time, and work around them: The parent who is not "disciplined," we can easily assert, had better not try to "discipline" his children. For the acute intuitions of the young will detect his preachments as lacking in integrity. If, on the other hand, the parent has some right to call himself a disciplined person—one who sticks to some regimen, who can do the thing he feels he ought to do whether he feels like it or not—he may not be in much better case. For with the knowledge that *he* is able to live an ordered life, and transcend the inconsistencies of a capricious existence, he is apt to acquire a measure of self-righteousness. This quality is also repugnant to children, or at least distasteful, and for reasons just as good as those which make them reject hypocrisy.

At this point, the crucial distinction is between discipline considered as *order,* and discipline considered in terms of someone's theory as to what a child "ought" to feel, think and do. The parent has a right—we would even say an obligation—to impose something of the rational order of his own existence upon the child. In other words, he may demand compliance so far as the practical workings are concerned. He has created the order or pattern, such as it is, and it is from that order and pattern that the child's subsistence comes. Also, even if one argues that children should grow up to feel "free," to make up their own minds as to the ends of life, one can hardly expect intelligent opinion to arise in a vacuum. By participating in the order or pattern of a parent's existence, the child will gain a basis for judging other conceptions of pattern and order as he later encounters them.

The great difficulty, we think, lies in the tendency of most parents and teachers to "sell" a pattern or a practical discipline on the ground that it is "good" for the child. The plain fact is that young people do not, unless they are insecure, wish to be told what is good for them. They feel themselves somehow worked into the position where they must accept a standard which they have not yet had time to evaluate. Much of the "rebelliousness" of youth may be simply an objection to having to agree with what other people say. And then there is the moralizing which accompanies most parental staining and even a certain amount of public school instruction. It is not so much that the child will always be *told* what he must do and think in order to be "good," of course, but that these standards are implicit. So we should say, leave the child alone—strictly alone—when it comes to matters of value judgment—if the only alternative is to seek to persuade him to accept our own values. Some parents and some educators perceive, as everyone well might, that other alternatives do exist—that the parent's opinions may be expressed without the implication that they should be adopted by the child. And in such a context the child is far more likely to *ask* an opinion, or even show a hunger for advice and instruction in ethical matters.

The carry-over from the days of orthodox theology are numerous indeed. When we tell a child that he is "selfish" because one of his actions has been harmful to others, or entirely egocentric,

we may be perpetuating the idea of original sin. If the child is told that he is a selfish person, or even allowed to believe this, he will feel that he is required to fight evil propensities within himself. And since many of the things he does which we term egocentric or destructive are not intentionally so, we confuse the area of motivation with the area of ignorance. The child who is criticized for not being the sort of person his parents would like him to be has an uphill battle to wage for the attainment of self-respect, and without self-respect, self-mastery becomes much more difficult. The fact that a child may do something which we rightfully catalogue as cruel or destructive does not by any means establish the fact that it is the child's *nature* to be cruel or destructive. The theological premise was that all men are guilty by virtue of Adam's original sinfulness and, at best, can prove themselves only partially innocent through a long life of denying their baser instincts. We would rather begin with the assumption that all children are innocent of inherent tendency towards evil, and can never be proved guilty of being primarily sinful or selfish. On this view, the cruel or destructive acts of a child should be met with a willingness to equate these with simple ignorance, with lack of experience and failure to feel the need for close rapport with others.

It all comes down to this: Educators and parents argue about discipline because they are not yet sure how to regard the essential nature of the human being. The broadest of all views is that every child, like every adult, is a "soul" engaged in the adventure of evolution. The soul, according to Plato's definition, is a "self-moving unit." We cannot discover ethical principles for someone else, we cannot make the decisions that matter for them, and we cannot condition them to accept a pattern of values which is ours without inhibiting the natural impulsions to progressive awakenings of their own. The soul has a body, and the body must be fed in order to live. The soul has a family—so far as the body is concerned—and to that family, which provides his food and shelter, he owes both practical cooperation and a measure of appreciative respect. But the real family to which every innately independent soul belongs is oriented around those ideas by which he feels most inspired. The intimate companions of his later life will be those who share the beliefs, convictions and values which arise on the plane of ideas. If he finds a true community, it will be a community of minds, and if this community is far removed from the level of opinion shared by his physical family or his community, this is in no sense a rejection of either family or community. By presenting the ideas of life in which he believes, he will be offering to his parents, brothers and sisters the gift of himself *as he truly is*, inviting them to share what they can of him. In this atmosphere of freedom, he is more than willing to share whatever he can with those who hold points of view partially divergent from his own.

So the counsel ultimately becomes one of demanding, unequivocally, all that is due from a child in terms of practical cooperation, while at the same time leaving him free to become an independent moral agent. When he finds his own course he will be enthused, and enthusiasm is the only guarantor of self-discipline. When we accept, uncritically, without enthusiasm, the standards of family or community, we accept them in a spirit of compromise. What we do and what we say and think is apt to be half-hearted, and so we give neither what is "due" to our friends nor what is due to ourselves. Sailing our own course, a course for which we readily admit no one else is responsible, we *feel* the ultimate responsibility. And thus it is that the ethical man is superior to the moral man, for the ethical man is obliged to be creative all the time, whereas the moral man may never know the kind of self-discipline which creativity obliges.

FRONTIERS

Recent Correspondence

[F. J. Waldrop, of Weston, West Virginia, continues the discussion of an "ideal" church, begun by John Morris, of Quincy, Illinois, in the Feb. 20 Frontiers article.—Editors.]

CONCERNING A New Definition of a Church:

Some of us in this area have been trying to experiment in the realm of such a new definition. We would agree that "the greatest difficulty of all is in finding a sufficient number of persons willing to devote the time, to endure the possibility of misunderstanding from their neighbors, to risk laying open areas of the self that may have been carefully hidden for years."

Yet the church today is an organization, and as such is inimical to a free flow of life. An organization produces ideas and actions that are lower than the individuals in it are capable of, as a nation at war does things that the individuals in that nation would not do.

In a free, spontaneous fellowship, ideas and action come forth that are beyond the capabilities of the individuals in it. Such is a true democracy, a true church.

Jesus' definition of a church has never been improved upon—"two or three gathered together in my name"; two or three (maybe a few more) who are brought together by and only by their hunger for truth, who are held together solely by their hunger for truth. "They need no tie to bind who do not one another seek but do one another find."

Once in a group there was one rather important woman, a stranger to most present. She remarked, "If I should think I was more important than any other here, or that I should do most of the speaking, then this meeting is no good so far as finding truth is concerned." And the effect would have been the same if others present had looked upon her as being more important, etc. By the very nature of the church as it is today, the minister is placed in a pulpit above and apart from the others as knowing more and being more important.

The true church is a fellowship wherein each is just as free as though utterly alone, yet a more vital part of the others than any member of the human body is of the rest of the body. A small child is free and spontaneous. It joins other small children at play, and remains just as free, though in doing so its life is much more meaningful; in fact, a child can hardly be normal without the fellowship of other such children. A free, spontaneous man cannot be his full self apart from vital fellowship with other free men.

In a true church one can learn more from all the rest, than all the rest can learn from any one; each is teacher and each is pupil.

F. J. WALDROP

Weston, West Virginia

"Children . . . and Ourselves" for Feb. 27 printed a portion of a criticism of an earlier article ("Children," Jan. 16) which had cited Morris Ernst's favorable comment on the conduct of a Soviet primary school. Our critic reproached us for neglecting the darker side of Soviet influence, in education and elsewhere. Now, looking over this correspondence, we find that unquoted passages of criticism go beyond the immediate point of the "Children" article, and should probably be given space independently of the Feb. 27 reply. This correspondent implies that the determination of dictators to control the minds of youth through education is by far the most important fact to be considered in weighing the educational activities of totalitarian countries. He writes:

> They [the dictators] realize, in a mad sort of way, that to capture the youth is the way to grace, but like our own educators, too, want to infuse scientific-industrial megalomania right away to do away with it (youth). In short, if they can get at the youth there will be none, and then the present drive toward full

> mechanization of life, which in turn makes the scientific thinking behind modern warfare possible, can continue at an accelerated and unimpeded pace.
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> The tone [of the MANAS article] is naive like that of the thirties because the relationship precisely of these youth to these adults (who have other ideas for them) is not brought out. It is the typical American tourist-in-Russia's traveller's check, a blank check, to be filled in with all sorts of goodies by the unsuspecting at home.

In general, we can hardly disagree with this correspondent (except that we gave no blank check). When he suggests that children, wherever they are, are *born* "anticommunist or for that matter anticapitalist," he means that children have to be converted to doctrinaire ideologies, and that this is an unavoidable crime in totalitarian education.

But look at the matter, for a moment, from another point of view. Some day, we are going to be able to get along with the Russians. There are many obstacles to this, some necessary, some unnecessary. The necessary obstacles spring from the rigid partisanship of totalitarian ideology. It is no service to world brotherhood or world peace to gloss over the sort of indoctrination of which our correspondent speaks. Ignoring such evils is foolish sentimentality and peace cannot be made of it.

On the other hand, the unnecessary obstacles to getting along with the Russians include every form of assumption that the Russian people and the Soviet ideology are interchangeable values. We have, in other words, to make an effort to understand the Russians as human beings and to honor what we can in what they do. This was the level of the comment in "Children" on what Morris Ernst reported. And so our correspondent accuses us of naive or bland disregard of what is wrong with Soviet education.

No harm is done, so long as both points get made. What we wish to emphasize, here, is the extreme difficulty of distinguishing between good and evil in a situation of this sort. Even the "seeming good" can be charged with concealing Machiavellian purposes, so that every act of every Russian in some social or political relationship becomes *ipso facto* bad. If you take this view, you can still admit that the Russians are "human" in an abstract sort of way, but are obliged to find practically every specific form of behavior tainted, when it is brought up for examination.

We thought the primary schools far enough away from the politicalized life of adult Russians to allow the admission that certain human decencies and constructive qualities might emerge there, untainted. We find it difficult to believe that genuine human feelings get no play at all in the Soviet schools. It seemed a good idea to report what Mr. Ernst saw in this respect, since there is little enough to work with in wondering how we are ever going to get along with the Russians. On the whole, doing what we tried to do is a thankless task, making the people who do it vulnerable as "sentimentalists." But we shall probably go on doing it as best we can. Our correspondent may argue that the "human" things the Soviets do are irrelevant, these days. We do not think so, especially since the indictment which our correspondent offers of what the Soviets have done in Hungary makes so great and just a claim upon our attention. He writes:

> It was these youth too, youth like these [like the Russian youth], just as gentle, fundamentally, just as beautiful, who resisted in Hungary the ministrations of their adult Soviet (the grown-up, destroyed variety of youth) masters, who attempted to keep what they had gained or had before *"brainwashing."* Even the august New York *Times* commented that with all the "education" these Hungarian youth had received, they still remained unspoiled, still had the characteristics of youth in all countries. This was the miracle of the rebellion in Hungary; this is what is really meant, that without the decadent form of rebellion on the part of youth misinterpreted here as "juvenile delinquency," the youth in Hungary kept their integrity against all impossible odds. It was the students who really engineered the rebellion in Hungary.
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> For this reason we call it tragedy, unequalled in kind or degree by other forms of national injustice or even imperialistic ventures by the West in other parts of the world, in speaking of the intervention of the

> Soviet masters in Hungary. The crushing of these youth, their shipment to slave-labor camps, was the real despicable and unspeakable tragedy. Not so much the crushing of Hungarian nationalism, which has taken on many defunct forms in the past.

It is certain that this crime against Hungarian youth is matched only by the heroism of the Hungarian resistance.

For some reason or other, our correspondent suspects MANAS of wishing to "whitewash" the Soviet action in Hungary. He feels that because we took note of the British and French bombing of Port Said by asking whether there was so great a difference between this and what the Russians have done in Hungary, we sought to minimize the action of the Soviets. We fail to see how the mounds of bodies on the streets of Port Said reduce the evil that went on in Hungary. What we did say was this: "After all, the British and the French belong to the 'free' world and are supposed to represent the forces of righteousness." (MANAS, Dec. 5, 1956.) Concerning the Soviet action, we had said in the same editorial: "The grip of the past on the Soviet policy-makers has caused a mindless repetition of methods which, through the years, have disillusioned all but blind partisans with the country of 'revolutionary socialism'."

Concerning the British and French bombing, and the part played by Israel in the attack on Egypt, our correspondent writes:

> National self-defense, which some of these actions entailed, can result in injustice and the horrors and crimes of war. But they are in no wise sadistic, done for the sake of the destruction of all vitality. So you may retort that the Soviets acted in self-defense. Is this not a curious riposte that MANAS has logically [!] drawn itself into? It can only lead to apologias for Soviet foreign policy and to the underlying assumption that states are all equal in their international and national strivings, regardless of the home policy towards the inhabitants of these states.

This paragraph, we are constrained to remark, really makes something out of nothing! From a shy little approval of a Russian elementary school and a comparison of the bombings in Egypt with the suppression of the Hungarian revolt, our correspondent would convict us of agile "ripostes" in defense of Soviet foreign policy! Our sole point was simply that if the Western democracies claim to be better than the totalitarian countries, they had better be better. The ruthless slaughter of Egyptian civilians should not be "whitewashed" either, even if conducted in the name of Freedom, Civilization, and Self-Defense. We care even less—if that is possible—for the excuses by the Soviets for their intervention in Hungary. Our view of what happened in Hungary was expressed in the Jan. 2 issue:

> With the arrival in this country of refugees from Hungary, the reports of the Communist terror have been translated into first-hand eye-witness accounts and personal experiences. Not that anyone has doubted the truth of the reports. The twentieth century is too old in the double horror of terroristic regimes for doubt. Terrorism is horrible, first, because of the hopeless agony of its victims, and second, because of the stark compulsion which makes men who hold power through terror resort to more and more terrible measures when their authority is questioned. They know nothing else to do.

But our correspondent's analysis of the crime against Hungarian youth gives greater depth to the tragedy and we are glad that he explored this dimension in his letter.

A letter from George M. Hauser, executive director of the American Committee on Africa, announces that on March 6, the West African Colony of the Gold Coast changed its name to Ghana and began its existence as an independent nation within the British Commonwealth—the first Commonwealth nation to be governed by Africans. (Here the British are reversing the course of colonialism and have contributed to a peaceful transition of the Gold Coast to national independence. We trust no readers will suspect that publication of this bit of encouraging news is intended to make the bombing of Port Said seem a phase in the reform of British foreign policy!) Mr.

Hauser notes that the creation of Ghana marks the first time in modern history that an African state south of the Sahara has become free and he hails it as "an event of enormous importance not only to the people of Ghana and to one hundred million other Africans, but to the entire community of free nations." Mr. Hauser continues:

> We of the American Committee on Africa wish to bring to the attention of the American people the importance of this event, and to show our friends in Africa that we wish them well. One of the ways we are doing this is by publishing a special "Freedom Issue" of our bi-monthly magazine, *Africa Today*, featuring articles on the Gold Coast by well-known experts.
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> You can help in the task of making Americans aware of the significance of Ghana's independence. Single copies of the "Freedom Issue" are 35 cents, a one-year subscription, $1.50. . . .May we hear from you soon!

The American Committee on Africa may be addressed at 4 West 40th Street, New York 18, N.Y.