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ANGER WITHOUT AN OBJECT

HISTORY is commonly written about the way rulers, governments and peoples move around, but it might more reasonably be written about the way the Good, the True, and the Beautiful move around. The latter sort of history, quite conceivably, would be both more interesting and more instructive. The things men hold to be worth reaching for, fighting for, and sacrificing for, are, after all, the mainsprings of history.

What is always the same in the lives of men—their labors to stay alive, to get enough to eat—is not really the subject-matter of history. There is nothing to tell about unless there is some actual change in human behavior, and the changes which are worth reporting have to do with the direction and devotion of men's lives.

The Good, the True, and the Beautiful are never, of course, conceived alone. Much of the time they are defined by implication, because of the focus of human attention on the Bad, the False, and the Ugly. *Infernos* hold more fascination than *Paradisos,* and the longing for the good usually gains practical definition from designs for escape from evil. We might make some large generalizations and say that the true history of mankind is always religious history, that the influential thinkers of every age are always the theologians, and that a theologian is any man who attempts to explain Good and Evil to his generation.

The Puritans and the Pilgrim Fathers found their way to the New World by reason of their habit of going to Church of a Sunday morning, where they acquired fixed and aggressive ideas about the nature of good and evil. A beaten and mutilated Germany lay submerged in feelings of exhaustion, apathy, failure, and guilt, one morning in 1945, while the Russians moved into Berlin, because enough Germans had listened to Adolph Hitler's explanation of good and evil. A few months ago, in the United States, some self-righteous and aggrieved Americans launched a weekly known as the *National Review,* intent upon perpetuating the theories of good and evil given currency by the late Senator Joseph McCarthy, and apparently determined to swathe with patriotic and religious piety the memory of that courageous but misunderstood man who "saw the gargoyles of Anti-Christ staring and sneering at him from everywhere, and innocently . . . reached out to crush them."

The temper of a culture, no doubt, is best identified by the focus of its concentration—whether it is upon evil or upon good. There is never, of course, a single focus, and any epoch will reveal a whole gamut of differing ideas about good and evil, but there is usually a dominant theme to which most if not all of the population will respond. It is certain that great historical changes are touched in their essential character by recognition of new ideas of good and evil. Martin Luther moved all Europe by attacking the Roman Catholic account of good and evil and establishing a new fulcrum of moral decision. The French Revolution swept away the loyalties of centuries and set up what were thought to be *rational* norms of political values and behavior. The American War for Independence launched a great river of similar themes and began a cycle of individualism which was something altogether new in human history.

Indeed, the eighteenth century accomplished what was probably the greatest conscious transformation in human attitudes the world has known—it took from tradition and established authority the right to define good and evil and gave that power to the people. "The people?' have been staggering under this heavy load of responsibility ever since.

Where do we stand, today? What do we now think about good and evil? This is precisely the question we cannot answer. There is no over-arching doctrine of good and evil in the world, today. The empty air of our moral lives is filled with the shallow echo of yesterday's slogans, the promises and denunciations of old theologies and past politics, but these words pick at no sensitive strings in the human heart. We hear them with the same indifference that the adolescent feels for the tempests of childhood emotion. We can still *fear*. Fear is probably the last emotion to die, as a man grows to wisdom or goes to death, but the fear men feel these days is a generalized, unspecified anxiety. There may be an enemy, but we do not really know who he is. There may be evil; indeed, we are sure that there is evil; but we do not know what it is.

So, in terms of history as we have conceived it, this is a time of unmotivated inaction, when the motions men make are of a random, involuntary character. We are waiting for a reason for something to do.

In such a period, we may be thankful for the sensitive ear of the poet. In the *Nation* for Sept. 28, M. L. Rosenthal, himself a poet, examines the latest work of Kenneth Rexroth, *In Defense of the Earth*, a slender volume just issued by New Directions. Rexroth, Rosenthal says, "is the strongest of the West Coast anarchist poets because he is a good deal more than a West Coast anarchist poet." We are inclined to agree with Rosenthal when he says, "A1most everything I have ever read by Rexroth has been worth reading, even when he was indulging himself, even when the piece was only half-finished, and even when he was being both wrong and wrong-headed." Rexroth is a man who, in this period of waiting, has not been rendered speechless, without an end. Yet we are here concerned more with Rosenthal's insight than with Rexroth's poetry. The following concerns Rexroth's memorial to Dylan Thomas—"Thou Shalt Not Kill":

> [It] has a magnificently passionate and bitter beginning whose power carries over to, and is taken up by, the later *ubi sunt* stanzas which call the roll of the modern poets who have died, sickened, given up, been imprisoned, or gone mad; it carries over still further to the passages on the suicide of Hart Crane and the murder of the Bodenheims. Yet the poem as a whole is sacrificed to the self-indulgent pleasure of the poet in love with his own oratory: Our Dylan (he shouts) is dead! Who killed him? The bosses killed him! The warmakers killed him! The crucifiers of Jesus killed him! The U.N. killed him! The psychoanalysts killed him! The psychoanalysts, the publishers, *The Nation*, and the *New Republic*, and scientists, *everybody*—Einstein, Eliot, Oppenheimer, Hemingway everyone and everything but Kenneth Rexroth and Allen Ginsberg killed him! And then the critics and the professors "crawled off with his bowels to their classrooms and quarterlies."
>
> So be it. We are all slain by this universal blunderbuss, and meanwhile the poet has accidently killed his poem with its butt.

This is the high and all-too-aimless rage of the men who regard themselves as Keepers of the Flame. We should be poorer without Rexroth, much poorer, but his wrath is cheapened by lack of an object. He is mad, but not sure whom to blame, so he fires both barrels in every direction, and his loads are only yesterday's slogans.

It is better to be wrathful than apathetic. It is better to explode like a firecracker, in every direction, than to fizzle and die. A man ought to show the rich blood of passionate commitment. And it is doubtless hard to write poetry which denounces an enemy who has dissolved into a universal psychological complex. To go to war, you need a poster of the Enemy, some evil creature who stares at you vindictively from behind an ugly snout, his hands (claws) bloody, his saliva dripping with a lust to kill (and worse), his long, sharpened teeth unable to fit inside his malevolent mouth. And to give your soaring contempt for the System the form of a weapon that will flash in the sun, you need well-defined symbols of the Evil you are about to attack.

But we know in our hearts that the enemies that can be named are not the *true* Enemy. It is a

mournful situation. The radical movement, John Reed said, is a great thing, but it sure plays hell with your poetry. Tom Paine was lucky. He could lash out at the British regulars and George III. Paul Revere was lucky. He had a ride to make, and only one way to go. The Red Queen was lucky. "Off with their heads!"

How shall we characterize our time? The Great Obsession, let us say, is over. The Age of Evil Men is passing away. To kill the evil men, you have to kill everybody. That is the moral of the nuclear war-head. No more crusades. No more purges. No more angry and victorious righteousness. No more personification of Evil.

You can still get mad, of course, but only if you are blessed with immaturity; only if you are willing to indulge yourself with the rhetoric of a passion than can never work itself out. For what, exactly, are you going to do with your resentful energy? Are you going to reach some man's heart with a bullet or do you hope to penetrate his mind with a reason?

If you hate the capitalist system with a large and expansive anger, what are you going to do about it? If the arrogant follies of bureaucracy disturb your calm, how are you going to whittle the government down to size? How are you going to *attack* all these problems?

Are you any better off than the rebel without a cause, if you permit yourself anger without an object? It may be confusing to say that history "does" anything, but we should nevertheless like to argue that history—current history—has depersonalized the Enemy, that this is the practical effect of modern weapons. There are times, of course, when to argue that the impersonal weaknesses of humankind are the only enemy seems a species of sentimentality, an evasion of responsibility. We are willing to agree that Louis XVI had to go, that the British did not understand America and were incapable of giving the colonies proper administration. But times have changed. Our ills are structural and cultural rather than political and tyrannical. In times like the present, it becomes sentimental to blame individuals or classes of individuals for our troubles. The ugliness you see about you is not the work of upper-class rulers. The triviality and mendacity of popular reading-matter springs from no political advantage or special privilege, but from the actual *preferences* of the reading public. A more responsible attitude among publishers, it is true, might remedy the situation somewhat, but the market for junk is seldom abolished by the high principles of vendors. In a free society which rejects censorship it is the buyer who must exercise choice and create the demand for a better quality of merchandise. It is the consumers, ultimately, who are responsible. If, according to our democratic principles, the individual must be free to choose, and if, agreeable to the dogma of Free Enterprise, the Consumer is King, then let the Consumer exercise his royal prerogatives and reject the bad, the indigestible and the salacious. How else are things to be changed?

If the people do not choose and buy more intelligently, now, when they have the power, just how is a revolution going to help? Or do you plan that an *elite* will "manage" all these matters properly, appointing a cultural Commissar to look after the taste and discrimination of the masses?

So you don't like the bankers? You don't like anybody who waxes fat from usury, who perspires only from anxiety over the current interest rate or concern about the menace of inflation? And you don't like the apologists of the press and the market-place who keep on telling us that never before in the world have so many had so much. Well, do you envy these people their artificial lives, their empty values, and their petty religion of acquisition? Can they really be stripped any nakeder than they already are? Surely you don't want what *they've* got!

The only real victory that is possible against these people is to make them realize that what they have, nobody of any individual distinction or intelligence wants or cares about. You may say that this kind o£ revolution is too "slow"—that

there are not enough people of distinction and intelligence to get the idea across. Perhaps not, but what kind of a revolution are you going to have—a revolution for people without any distinction or intelligence? And how are you going to arrange such a revolution without using guns and bombs and tanks? Just where do you expect to get, with your- righteous anger and your impatience?

It is time for us to hang up one of those "Not a Through Street" signs at the intersection of every thoroughfare which begins with anger and impatience. We are surfeited with indictments, buried in jeers and catcalls at the Bad, the False, and the Ugly. We have the Dream of a new revolution, but keep weighting it down with the emotional attitudes and clichés of the old revolution. The spirit of the new revolution is too loaded with Enemies to ever get off the ground. Anger and accusation, after all, are a left-handed tribute. There may be a time when you have to fight Evil, but that is only when you can isolate it. There are other times when it should be rendered powerless by indifference.

Today's Enemies, insofar as they can be identified at all, are not noisy tyrants and dictators. They are the Beguilers, the Insinuators, and the Manipulators. They get their power by the Engineering of Consent, as the phrase goes. They fear only one thing—unresponsive indifference.

The fact of the matter is that modern society has grown too big and too complicated for any kind of revolution except the revolution of indifference and boycott. Guns and bombs no longer give power. They bring only paralyzing fear and cringing conformity. We fear our own bombs, or ought to, as much as we fear the bombs of other people. Bombs have become like earthquakes, tidal waves, and death. They strike all alike. Possession of weapons affords no immunity. We might as well forget them, and forget, also, everything that we once hoped to win with them. They are now dead things, belonging to the past. We must learn to be indifferent to them, and through indifference, make them powerless over us.

There is of course one danger of which we must take account. It is possible that the man who puts away hate and righteous anger will have nothing left in his life to make him feel good. And so, no longer hating, he may tend to feel guilty, ineffectual, as though he had let the movement down. But righteous anger is no fit career for a human being. A little guilt may be a good thing for people who are vulnerable in this way. In this epoch, we may need to have the "period of reconstruction" before we have the revolution. Maybe the revolution will come after the reconstruction, this time.

REVIEW
SYMBOLIC PILGRIMAGE

HERMANN HESSE'S Siddhartha, the story of a gifted young man who attempts a Buddha-like quest in the days of the Enlightened One, is showing a claim for permanent attention. Published by New Directions in 1951, this simply written, 150-page book is kept in print by the demand of readers. Well known in Europe among intellectuals, *Siddhartha* is now gradually finding its way around the universities of the United States.

The central theme first gains clear expression in a conversation between the young Brahmin, Siddhartha, and the Buddha. As reviewers have pointed out, the choice of the name Siddhartha—also the Buddha's given name during his early life as a young, handsome prince—may have been Hesse's way of suggesting an interpretation of Buddha's quest without alienating readers whose views might be different. Siddhartha and the Buddha are not here set in opposition, however, but seem rather to represent different attitudes toward the same principles.

After Siddhartha has listened to the Buddha preach, he asks to speak with the Illustrious One, since he wishes to explain why he does not become one of Buddha's disciples:

> You have learned nothing through teachings, and so I think, O Illustrious One, that nobody finds salvation through teachings. To nobody, O Illustrious One, can you communicate in words and teachings what happened to you in the hour of your enlightenment. The teachings of the enlightened Buddha embrace much, they teach much—how to live righteously, how to avoid evil. But there is one thing that this clear, worthy instruction does not contain, it does not contain the secret of what the Illustrious One himself experienced—he alone among hundreds of thousands. That is what I thought and realized when I heard your teachings. That is why I am going on my way—not to seek another and better doctrine, for I know there is none, but to leave all doctrines and all teachers and to reach my goal alone—or die. But I will often remember this day, O Illustrious One, and this hour when my eyes beheld a holy man.

As the book makes clear, Siddhartha descends from his Brahmin training and his ascetic conditioning in the forest to live the life of less controlled beings at their own level. His finer sensibilities become dulled for a time, and his body weakened as he contracts a partial bondage to sensual pleasures. Subsequently, he even becomes something of a slave to wealth, and only with great difficulty finds his way back to a sense of the serenity the Buddha had displayed on their first meeting. But he must first pass through despondency. Feeling his life wasted, and knowing not where to turn, Siddhartha wanders to the bank of a river. Here he encounters a venerable ferryman who has learned much of what Buddha learned—from the river. For the river moves, yet is unmoved; is periodically polluted, yet also always is able to regain a pure state under the right conditions.

Though the great question as to whether it is necessary to become sullied, to be monstrous and sinful in order to acquire knowledge, is left unanswered, Hesse seems to think that degradation, too, must be embraced for a time, if one is to become a sage. When the son born to Siddhartha from his liaison with a courtesan refuses to take his father's well-meant advice, the sage-like ferryman counsels Siddhartha not to despair, but to accept wrong-doing as a necessity in human existence:

> The ferryman smiled again. He touched Siddhartha's arm gently and said: "Ask the river about it, my friend! Listen to it, laugh about it! Do you then really think that you have committed your follies in order to spare your son them? Can you then protect your son from Sansara? How? Through instruction, through prayers, through exhortation? My dear friend, have you forgotten that instructive story about Siddhartha, the Brahmin's son, which you once told me here? Who protected Siddhartha the Samana from Sansara, from sin, greed and folly? Could his father's piety, his teacher's exhortations, his own knowledge, his own seeking, protect him? Which father, which teacher, could prevent him from living his own life, from soiling himself with life, from loading himself with sin, from swallowing the bitter drink himself, from finding his own path? Do

> you think, my dear friend, that anybody is spared this path? Perhaps your little son, because you would like to see him spared sorrow and pain and disillusionment? But if you were to die ten times for him, you would not alter his destiny in the slightest."

We wonder. There is something poetically grand about "loading" oneself with the weight of every sin and then transcending entire the degradation, but is it not possible to adventure and misadventure without corruption and distortion, and without vengeful thoughts? The character of Siddhartha stands somewhere in between here; while during his worst periods he becomes a greedy and impatient man, a competitor against some of his fellows, he never hates nor wishes to destroy.

Out of all this come questions worthy of much discussion. We have a dramatic meeting between the spirit of adventure and the ethic and moral injunctions of those who preach a straight and narrow path. Perhaps, as in Hesse's terms, it is never possible to see the truth of good and evil from any one vantage point, and possibly no conclusion can be reached. Or it may be that a higher synthesis between the ascetic, the ethical, and a vivid touch with life can be achieved with great difficulty and great subtlety. Certainly Hesse is convincing in his suggestion that truth, if made doctrinaire, loses its savor. In the final chapter we find Siddhartha instructing a friend of his youth, and this is as close as he is able to come to *his* "synthesis":

> "Listen, my friend! I am a sinner and you are a sinner, but someday the sinner will be Brahma again, will someday attain Nirvana, will someday become a Buddha. Now this 'someday' is illusion; it is only a comparison. The sinner is not on the way to a Buddha-like state; he is not evolving, although our thinking cannot conceive things otherwise. No, the potential Buddha already exists in the sinner; his future is already there. The potential hidden Buddha must be recognized in him, in you, in everybody. The world, Govinda, is not imperfect or slowly evolving along a long path to perfection. No, it is perfect at every moment; every sin already carries grace within it, all small children are potential old men, all sucklings have death within them, all dying people—eternal life. It is not possible for one person to see how far another is on the way; the Buddha exists in the robber and dice player; the robber exists in the Brahmin. During deep meditation it is possible to dispel time, to see simultaneously all the past, present and future, and then everything is good, everything is perfect, everything is Brahman. Therefore, it seems to me that everything that exists is good—death as well as life, sin as well as holiness, wisdom as well as folly. Everything is necessary, everything needs only my agreement, my assent, my loving understanding; then all is well with me and nothing can harm me. I learned through my body and soul that it was necessary for me to sin, that I needed lust, that I had to strive for property and experience nausea and the depths of despair in order to learn not to resist them, in order to learn to love the world, and no longer compare it with some kind of desired imaginary world, some imaginary vision of perfection, but to leave it as it is, to love it and be glad to belong to it. These, Govinda, are some of the thoughts that are in my mind."

COMMENTARY

THE ENVIRONMENT OF FREEDOM

IT appears that we shall never tire of quoting Dwight Macdonald's *Root Is Man.* The present occasion for referring to this work is the discussion of Camus' *The Rebel* in Frontiers, and the French thinker's idea of the "limit" which is implicit in all acts of rebellion or protest.

John Dewey, Gandhi, Macdonald, and Camus all elaborate a central conception which might be affirmed as the great discovery of the twentieth century. It is, as Dewey said, that means must be consistent with ends; or, as Gandhi said, that deception and violence can bring no peace.

Macdonald's analysis, in *The Root*, concerns the need for a new political vocabulary. The radical, Macdonald points out, when he loses sight of the "limit" implicit in all rebellion, is no longer a radical. He has forgotten that the revolution is in behalf of *Man.* As Camus says:

> Immediately rebellion, forgetful of its generous origins, allows itself to be contaminated by resentment, it denies life, dashes toward destruction, and raises up the grimacing cohorts of petty rebels, embryo slaves all of them, who end by offering themselves for sale, today, in all the market-places of Europe, to no matter what form of servitude. It is no longer either revolution or rebellion but rancor, malice, and tyranny.

This is Camus' generalized account of what happened to the Russian Revolution.

Macdonald finds in Stalinist apologetics the rationalizations by which the "grimacing cohorts" justify themselves:

> By "Progressive" would be understood those who see the Present as an episode on the road to a better Future, those who think more in terms of historical process than of moral values; those who believe that the main trouble with the world is partly lack of scientific knowledge and partly failure to apply to human affairs such knowledge as we do have. . . .
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> "Radical" would apply to the as yet few individuals—mostly anarchists, conscientious objectors, and renegade Marxists like myself—who reject the concept of Progress, who judge things by their present meaning and effects. . . . They, or rather we, think it is an open question whether the increase of man's mastery over nature is good or bad in its actual effects on human life to date, and favor adjusting technology to man, even if it means—as may be the case—a technological regression, rather than adjusting man to technology. . . . And we feel that the firmest ground from which to struggle for that human liberation which was the goal of the old Left is the ground not of History but of those non-historical values (truth, justice, love, etc.) which Marx has made unfashionable among socialists.
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> The Progressive makes History the center of his ideology. The Radical puts Man there. . . .

The great question which simple Rebellion leaves unanswered is the question of *Means.* For the rebellion is always against some form of "means" which is being used to reach the goal that men hold to be desirable. The act of rebellion is always in recognition of some immediate truth. It is a spontaneous declaration, "which unhesitatingly gives the strength of its love and without a moment's delay refuses injustice." Its merit, as Camus says, "lies in making no calculations, distributing everything it possesses to life and to living men."

How can you make a "system" out of what is spontaneous, or plan for behavior which refuses to make "calculations"?

For a century or so, the West has placed its faith in "organization." If you are going to get "results," we have been told, you must organize. We are now beginning to realize that organization *tends* to destroy every opportunity for spontaneous action. The principle of organization *tends* to mean the elimination of the unexpected, the suppression of the unpredictable. Hence the apparently irreconcilable conflict between individual values and social values, and the slowly spreading popularity of anarchism in politics and mysticism in religion.

Must we, then, stop with the act of rebellion? If so, what are we to make of the vast

technological apparatus we have inherited from the days of belief in organization?

It may be that the reconstruction of society along new lines which permit and allow for continuous "rebellion" will be similar to the long and painstaking process by which the human body was evolved. Perhaps we don't need any "big" blueprints for the changes which are required, but only the alertness of spirit which brings endless microscopic adjustments and revisions of our social forms. Perhaps we have only to become aware of the true versatility of the human spirit and its capacity to turn almost any form or instrument into a vehicle of originality. The creative impulse has never needed, never had, a "perfect" environment. The creative impulse needs only the nourishment of men who believe in themselves.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

OUR recent discussion of the "Religion of Nature" has brought some appreciative comment. One subscriber sent a paper by Dr. Robert Hatch, "Cornerstones for a Conservation Ethic," printed in the *Atlantic Naturalist.* Dr. Hatch says things that cannot be repeated too often:

> Our concern for conservation should embrace a vision that sees beyond mere economics and gives expression to values that cannot be measured in terms of money. I am reminded of the long struggle to end the persecution of our hawks and eagles. So often the argument has rested on the economic value of these birds, showing how the stomach contents of certain species prove that many hawks and eagles are the allies of man in his war on the rodents that destroy his crops. This is true, but an even more telling argument is that they are beautiful to watch, that they add a touch of wildness to any landscape, and that the growing army of our outdoor-loving citizens has a right to the spectacle of these majestic birds.
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> Our forests, our national parks, our mountains, lakes and rivers embody values that help to undergird man's spiritual life. One is the element of beauty. Man needs the beauty of the natural world. He needs to have his heart stirred by forests that may be harvested but that are not slashed and pillaged into ugliness, by wild places untouched by roads and buildings, by lakes and rivers that are allowed to retain much of their primeval loveliness. He needs the thrill of listening to the tom-tom of a ruffed grouse and the blowing of a deer. He needs the exhilaration of standing on a mountain ledge and seeing great tracts of unspoiled wilderness outspread before him. All of these fulfill his life and answer an ancient hunger in his soul. Man's need for beauty is one of the strongest reasons for conservation.
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> Closely allied to this is his need for self-reliance. Camping in a lean-to of his own making, canoeing the length of a wilderness river, casting for native trout on a dawn-lit pond—these sharpen a man's zest for life, help him to know himself, and take him down to the deeper levels of thought and feeling where a philosophy can be built. Most of us today live our lives in herds. We swarm to work, bumper to bumper. We spend weekends on packed highways. We confine our pleasures to canned entertainment and spectator sports. We are seldom alone, rarely beyond the reach of human voices or the din of man-made sounds. There is hardly a chance for a man to know himself or build a philosophy.
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> The outdoors is an outside antidote to all this and to many of the complexes and neuroses that go with it. The conservation of our natural resources, especially of our forests, parks and wildlife, gives us a chance to regain values that our civilization has lost. Many outdoor activities, such as hunting, fishing, canoeing and mountain climbing, can teach us the blessings of solitude. Alone or in the company of a close friend or two, we can slough off tensions and learn to think. We are given time to separate the trivial from the significant and the false from the true. We discover that solitude is not an enemy to be avoided at all costs but, rather, a friend who helps us to reorient our lives at regular intervals and who invests them with a fresh scale of values.
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> The exhilaration of adventure is largely absent from modern life, but it can be recaptured in unspoiled country. It is the secret of the mountain climber's devotion to his sport and the veteran angler's addiction to remote places where he walks many miles for his fish and works a stream that has never been stocked. It can be found by listening to a loon in a solitary inlet or watching a ten-point buck at the edge of a clearing. It can be had by a man who seeks nothing more than a glimpse of a rare plant in a marsh or an unfamiliar warbler in a treetop. Those who have experienced it must recapture it again and again. For them it is as necessary to life as drawing breath.

Dr. Hatch is a "Reverend" with a lively appreciation of the "exhilaration of adventure." Not once does he try to prove the existence of God by way of "nature's wonders," nor is he sentimental in his approach. Copies of "Cornerstones for a Conservation Ethic" are available from the offices of the *Atlantic Naturalist*, Washington, D. C.

Another reader has provided some interesting paragraphs from a long-ago book on Bronson Alcott by Elizabeth P. Peabody. Alcott's belief that all "natural" education, whether for children or adults, begins with spontaneous conversation, is illuminated by Miss Peabody:

> Mr. Alcott's plan is to follow the natural order of the mind. He begins with analyzing the speech the

children use. In doing this, they are led immediately to consider the action of the imagination, since it is this faculty which has formed language. We find that language clothes thoughts and emotions with the forms of nature—its staple being the imagery of outward nature, as truly as the staple of sculptures and paintings is the material of outward nature, and all are Psyche's drapery.

Mr. Alcott asks a child questions, in order to turn his attention upon what passes within his own mind; and what the child says, when making this inward survey, will determine what faculties are most active in his nature . . . Or, if his words must be taken with caution—and it is true that they sometimes must, since some children learn words by rote so easily—his inward state can be determined, by taking a wide range of reading and constantly observing what character of books interests him most strongly. He will like those books best which exercise the faculties and feelings that are already in agreeable activity; and these should be cherished and nurtured, in a full confidence that they will wake up in due time the other faculties of the soul. Mr. Alcott, by pursuing this course faithfully, has found that the imagination is the first faculty which comes forth, leading all the others in its train. He has therefore not failed to meet it, and give it food. If he were to give it other than the healthy food supplied by Nature, Providence, and that true Genius which embodies Nature and Providence in its creations; or if he were to allow it to degenerate into fancy, or phantasy, or stray from the Principle of Beauty, which is the law of the imagination, I should be the last to defend it. But, wisely fed and governed, the imagination need not be feared. It is the concentration of profound feeling, reason, and the perception of outward nature into one act of the mind, and prepares the soul for vigorous effort in all the various departments of its activity.

Gandhi, like Emerson and Thoreau, was a firm believer in this approach to the education of the young and both Alcott and Gandhi, tried to encourage "educational conversation" in the family and community. Sociologists, as well as disdainful intellectuals, have had quite a bit to say lately about the decline of serious conversation in the home. Why has it become so hard for people just to talk to each other? An increase in captivating entertainment doubtless provides part of the explanation. But there may be a more fundamental reason: perhaps the "age of the experts"—which is also the age of analytical psychology—is a time when we have come to believe that none but experts have anything really important to say. And this means an almost complete loss of faith in the power and wonder of the unaided imagination of the individual. Bronson Alcott was a great conversationalist for the reason described by Miss Peabody; Alcott knew that the imagination, rather than being feared, should be worshipped.

FRONTIERS
Man As Rebel

IT is probably naïve to wish that the capacities of French intellectuality could manifest in the United States, but having read Albert Camus' *The Rebel* (Vintage, 1956), we are overtaken by longings of this sort. There are times when it seems that the mature European understands far better than the American writer what human life is about—or not about; Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots* was a book which made this feeling inescapable, and now, Camus, with a power of sustained philosophical reasoning that has few parallels in modern thought, does something of the same again.

Camus is able to create a sense of powerful reality for the human spirit. Camus' thought has its own validity and is not to be disposed of or explained away by pseudoscientific theories of man's nature. This book has a grandeur which announces the primary reality of mind in human affairs. It establishes the fact that nothing is more important than a man's thoughts about himself, his fellows, the world, and his life in the world.

All philosophical writing must generate this conviction, or it can gain no attention. It has, so to say, to rise from the level of ordinary communications and to inspire respect for mankind, in order to be heard. A certain tension, therefore, must be maintained in philosophical thinking, preserving the shape and metaphysical countenance of man-as-thinker. Camus has genius for this task.

The Rebel is a book about the inextinguishable fire of protest which rises in human beings. In the act of rebellion, Camus finds evidence of the nature of man. The rebel is one who discovers that some portion of his being is violated, and he acts to resist. Rebellion, then, is an act of self-consciousness. "Rebellion, though apparently negative, since it creates nothing, is profoundly positive in that it reveals the part of man which must always be defended."

The Introduction is a profoundly moving although wholly dispassionate examination of our times. This is a period, Camus points out, in which crime—and by crime Camus means killing people, taking away their freedom, and misusing them—has been honored by legality.

> The purpose of this essay is once again to face the reality of the present, which is logical crime, and to examine meticulously the arguments by which it is justified; it is an attempt to understand the times in which we live. One might think that a period which, in a space of fifty years, uproots, enslaves, or kills seventy million human beings should be condemned out of hand. But its culpability must be understood. In more ingenuous times, when the tyrant razed cities for his own greater glory, when the slave chained to the conqueror's chariot was dragged through the rejoicing streets, when enemies were thrown to the wild beasts in front of the assembled people, the mind did not reel before such unabashed crimes, and judgment remained unclouded. But slave camps under the flag of freedom, massacres justified by philanthropy or by a taste for the superhuman, in one sense cripple judgment. On the day when crime dons the apparel of innocence—through a curious transposition peculiar to our times—it is innocence that is called upon to justify itself. .
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> Ideology today is concerned only with the denial of other human beings, who alone bear the responsibility of deceit. It is then that we kill. Each day at dawn, assassins in judges' robes slip into some cell: murder is the problem today.

But if we revolt, shall we not do the same? Revolt bespeaks a longing for order, and in the name of "order"—as with the legal crimes of the present—may we not be led to institute precisely those crimes against which we now protest? Such questions make Camus pursue his study of the anatomy of rebellion.

It begins, he thinks, with a declaration on human nature:

> Analysis of rebellion leads at last to the suspicion that, contrary to the postulates of contemporary thought, a human nature does exist, as the Greeks believed. Why rebel if there is nothing in oneself worth preserving? It is for the sake of everyone in the world that the slave asserts himself when he comes to the conclusion that a command has infringed on something in him which does not belong to him alone, but which is common ground where all men—even the man who insults and oppresses him—have a natural community. . . . the individual is not, in himself alone, the embodiment of the values he

> wishes to defend. It needs all humanity, at least, to comprise them. When he rebels, a man identifies himself with other men and so surpasses himself, and from this point of view human solidarity is metaphysical. . . .
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> Man's solidarity is founded upon rebellion, and rebellion, in its turn, can only find its justification in this solidarity. We have, then, the right to say that any rebellion which claims the right to deny or destroy this solidarity loses simultaneously its right to be called rebellion and becomes in reality an acquiescence in murder. In the same way, this solidarity, except in so far as religion is concerned, comes to life only on the level of rebellion. And so the real drama of revolutionary thought is announced. In order to exist, man must rebel, but rebellion must respect the limit it discovers in itself—a limit where minds meet and, in meeting, begin to exist. Rebellious thought, therefore, cannot dispense with memory: it is a perpetual state of tension. In studying its actions and its results we shall have to say, each time, whether it remains faithful to its first noble premise or if, through indolence or folly, it forgets its original purpose and plunges into a mire of tyranny or servitude.

Camus' primary interest is with something he calls "metaphysical rebellion." This he defines as "the movement by which man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation."

What stirs this movement? The demand for justice. The suffering of innocent people is the primary cause of this revolt. Until a man questions the authority of the "divine order," he is incapable of being a rebel. Metaphysical rebellion begins when he finds the circumstances of the supposed "divine order" intolerable. Horrified by the plight of man, he questions God. "Rebellion, after all, can only be imagined in terms of opposition to someone. The only thing that gives meaning to human protest is the idea of a personal god who has created, and is therefore responsible for, everything. And so we can say, without being paradoxical, that in the Western World the history of rebellion is inseparable from the history of Christianity."

We may agree, provisionally, with M. Camus, since he writes almost entirely in a context of Western history. Only the Europeans have dared to indict the universe, to declare it alien territory for the human spirit. Some day, perhaps, the drama of rebellion will be spread upon a larger canvas, but for ourselves and our time, the diagnosis seems correct enough.

Prometheus and Ivan Karamazov are types of the rebel in whom Camus finds rich suggestion. Both are rebels in behalf of man. Dostoievsky's hero brings the dilemma of the rebel to a climax. Ivan challenges the claim that the suffering permitted by God is *necessary*. Even if it is true, he will have no part of such a "truth." He prefers damnation to collusion with such arrangements. "All the knowledge in the world is not worth a child's tears." Ivan is not arrogant. His feeling of solidarity will permit no compromise:

> Faith leads to immortal life. But faith presumes acceptance of the mystery and of evil, and resignation to injustice. The man who is prevented by the suffering of children from accepting faith will certainly not accept eternal life. Under these conditions, even if eternal life existed, Ivan would refuse it. He rejects this bargain. He would accept grace only unconditionally, and that is why he makes his own conditions. Rebellion wants all or nothing. . . . Ivan does not say that there is no truth. He says that if truth does exist, it can only be unacceptable. Why? Because it is unjust. . . . Ivan is the incarnation of the refusal to be the only one saved. He throws in his lot with the damned and, for their sake, rejects eternity. If he had faith, he could, in fact, be saved, but others would be damned and suffering would continue. There is no possible salvation for the man who feels real compassion. Ivan will continue to put God in the wrong by doubly rejecting faith as he would reject injustice and privilege. . . . The question that Ivan finally poses, the question that constitutes the real progress achieved by Dostoievsky in the history of rebellion, is the only one in which we are interested here: can one live and stand one's ground in a state of rebellion?

Ivan's mind is a luminous arena in which proceeds the struggle between truth and justice. He is unable to resolve the contradictions, but, as Camus observes, "a few decades more and an immense political conspiracy will attempt to prove that justice is truth."

This is the problem and the tragedy of the rebel: where to find and how to realize the "limit" which

rebellion implicitly represents. In the name of justice, God was overthrown and then his traditional representative on earth, the King (in Russia, the Czar). But the new order created in the name of justice soon gave shape to the legal crimes which provoked Camus to write this book. Hence the question: "Can one live and stand one's ground in a state of rebellion?"

Camus pursues this question throughout his book, bringing no other answer than that, although the rebel can never wholly succeed—indeed, he seems to succeed very little—he must still continue to rebel:

> We understand that rebellion cannot exist without a strange form of love. Those who find no rest in God or in history are condemned to live for those who, like themselves, cannot live; in fact, for the humiliated. The most pure form of the movement of rebellion is thus crowned with the heart-rending cry of Karamazov: if all are not saved, what good is the salvation of one only? Thus Catholic prisoners, in the prison cells of Spain, refuse communion today because the priests of the regime have made it obligatory in certain prisons. These lonely witnesses to the crucifixion of innocence also refuse salvation if it must be paid for by injustice and oppression. This insane generosity is the generosity of rebellion, which unhesitatingly gives the strength of its love and without a moment's delay refuses injustice. Its merit lies in making no calculations, distributing everything it possesses to life and to living men. It is thus that it is prodigal in its gifts to men to come. Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present.
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> Rebellion proves in this way that it is the very movement of life and that it cannot be denied without renouncing life.

The great virtue of this book is that it shows that Man in the stance of Rebel is his truest portrait. We are most alive, most human, when we are declaring ourselves for justice and with love. For these qualities are themselves expressions of the primeval unity which lives in the human heart.

Some readers may feel that Camus leaves his great questions without solution. But there is immeasurable value in displaying the human situation as it is, and man as he is, today, here and now, in our lives. And there is archaic vindication for the tragic drama as Camus portrays it. The origin of evil, according to ancient metaphysics, came with the sundering of the One into the Many. Man, an expression of both the One and the Many, can avoid neither the pain of separation nor the longing for restoration. Nor will half-measures or artificial unities bring him peace. It is much to recognize this, and to share with Tolstoy the agony of indecision, to cling with absolute determination to the undivided truth of uncertainty, refusing to embrace those calculating settlements which always turn out to be betrayals, in the end.

To think that the agony of Europe has finally gained a light of meaning which wants no complacency, which rejoices in the Promethean mission, and which is fearless in the midst of failure and despair—this is all that any contemporary man can ask of his age. Herbert Read, who writes the Foreword, says that in his last pages Camus rises to heights of eloquence. This is no idle praise. Rebellion is for Camus the breath of human life:

> Its purest outburst, on each occasion, gives birth to existence. Thus it is love and fecundity or it is nothing at all. Revolution without honor, calculated revolution which, in preferring an abstract concept of man to a man of flesh and blood, denies existence as many times as is necessary, puts resentment in the place of love. Immediately rebellion, forgetful of its generous origins, allows itself to be contaminated by resentment, it denies life, dashes toward destruction, and raises up the grimacing cohorts of petty rebels, embryo slaves all of them, who end by offering themselves for sale, today in all the market-places of Europe, to no matter what form of servitude. It is no longer either revolution or rebellion but rancor, malice, and tyranny. Then, when revolution in the name of power and of history becomes a murderous and immoderate mechanism a new rebellion is consecrated in the name of moderation and of life. We are at that extremity now. At the end of this tunnel of darkness, however, there is inevitably a light, which we already divine and for which we only have to fight to ensure its coming. All of us, among the ruins are preparing a renaissance beyond the limits of nihilism. But few of us know it.