

## THE DILEMMA OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE present crisis in America concerning the elimination of segregation in the public schools has brought into sharp focus, once again, the question of sovereign power and what legal rights the federal and state governments possess in fact. Also, the basic question arises in the absence of constitutional authority, to what extent, if any, can the congress vest in the federal government powers claimed by the states; by the people? Since ours is a federal, and not a central, government, there is much confusion over this matter.

As a method of socio-political organization, democracy was not originally intended to serve the great sprawling nation, or empire, but the city-state. In America, it was adapted to a large geographical area with small population. With the growth in population, a method of indirect democracy arose in the form of representative government. To the representative was delegated—temporarily, if periodically and regularly—the sovereignty of the people. He spoke and acted for them. He was answerable to the people whom he represented; he had no power *per se*, but acted under the power delegated to him by the people—a fact too often forgotten nowadays by some office-holders in legislative bodies.

Democracy differs from other methods of organization primarily in its dual political and social role. Thus far it has assumed no appreciable economic and religious role. Just where its social role begins and ends and to what extent it is limited, and how, is somewhat vague. It is this apparent fact that has led many segregationists to aver that the federal government is without power to act in the field of education, including public education. Certainly, this is a moot question and one not too easily resolved. While it is true that the Supreme Court

has assumed jurisdiction, this does not necessarily establish jurisdiction, in view of the silence of the Constitution on the subject. We must all acknowledge the ethical justice of the case, but these are legal questions to be answered one good day.

### I

Man created society as a shield against a neutral, but somewhat brutal, nature. Without society, man could not have survived in a "bloody fang and claw" nature, as Darwin puts it. Notwithstanding the questionable value of the Darwinian concept, it is fair to say that society provided the means of mutual aid and cooperation as basic and necessary factors in the survival qualities of *homo sapiens*.

While the social situation is a human situation, it is also a condition for living and requires recognition and acceptance of what Rousseau calls "the social contract." Men become parties to this contract and are required to be responsible thereto, and for their conduct as members of society. Society does not presuppose culture. This is an entirely different matter and a later invention (as is true of religion) of man as he struggled for meaning, expression and purpose in a neutral and amoral nature. Thus, man has his responsibility to, and benefits from, society. Modern man is actually a product of the social situation. Only at the peril of becoming anti-social—and paying the very real penalty therefor—man must fulfill his role as a social creature. Society has its checks, balances, rewards and punishments, quite apart from the civil and religious forms of authority.

Tabus, mores, customs, *et cetera*, are products of society. For the most part, the social laws may be considered the *lex non scripta*—the unwritten laws—of human behavior. They are

developed, adopted, changed and discarded without formal action of the parties to the contract. There are no such things as social equality and social rights, other than that vague, abstract recognition of fellows as members of the society of mankind. Society stratifies along many lines: economic, political, religious, ethnic, and so on. Status is achieved, not granted. No power known to man can impose upon this human situation. In a democratic society people cannot be forced to associate with those deemed by them to be unacceptable—for any, or no, reason. Man's relation to society is quite another thing than his relation to the state. The man and the citizen are two different entities entirely.

It is necessary to say that in a democratic society all members are recognized as rightful members of the social situation, but the relationship between members varies in accordance with the whims, caprices, likes and dislikes of individuals and groups. It is by no means assumed that all are born equal or live as equals, and the legitimacy and desirability of variety is affirmed. It is desired by the good society that all members be respected and accorded dignity if their conduct justifies this status.

In the social situation, as in any other situation, there is the constant danger of developing spurious values. Discrimination is the chief of these undesirable values of spurious nature, for it injures both parties thereto. The man who discriminates against his fellow pays a terrible price for his privilege. He is usually hurt more than the object of his anti-social act. While he may not admit it, the harm done to his personality is great. It is noticeable to others and creates a distorted sense of values, quite often leading to frustration, but always leading to the self-knowledge of one's inadequacy to meet life as it is and maturely adapt and adjust to it in an ethical sense.

Unfortunately, the state is without power to correct this social injustice and can concern itself

only with its citizens and their relationship with each other and with the state. This is the area of great concern in the contemporary world. Religions try to enter this area—and do—in an effort to influence men in their social relationships, but religion is historically barred, as is the state, and can only deal with man in the ethical and philosophical—or, if you prefer, the religious—area. Appeals can be made, and indeed are constantly being made, to direct the social animal into "the right way" of living—but to little avail.

In this brief study we cannot elaborate, but we can summarize man as a social creature in terms of his choices. He is indeed master of his own fate and if he keeps himself aware of his many obligations as a citizen and as a member of various groups, his social conduct remains within the bounds of society, to which alone (excepting himself) he must be answerable.

## II

As life became more complex, man found it necessary to create civil government—to serve him all the better. Thus, the state is man's creation and ultimately is answerable to him. It is a recognizable fact of history that man could, if he so desired, eliminate the state, but it is debatable if this is now actually possible except within the realm of theory. Man's role as a citizen relates itself to laws and order. He can have no private opinion as a legal fact and in relation to authority, since authority would disappear if exposed to private opinion. One cannot say that a law is unacceptable to one's particular opinion and one will therefore exercise his right to differ. Remedy is not to be had in this wise. Efforts should be made to change the law. Democracy is government by law and not by men.

The man who questions the legality of the federal government in assuming jurisdiction over the public schools should seek his remedy in clarifying by law this assumption. But, if we are to prevent anarchy, men or states cannot hold private opinions or attempt repudiation other than through the due process of law. In America,

nullification and interposition were settled at Appomatox. To amend, or reverse, laws and legal opinions, rulings and appeals of a federal nature, remedial action must be made at that level. In the same sense that local government cannot abridge state law, by the same token a state cannot abridge federal law.

As a political method, democracy declares that all citizens are equal before the law and possess the same rights and privileges. There can be no civil discrimination within a democratic state.

Any effort to prevent any citizens from exercising their equal rights as citizens of the democratic state must be legally prevented. All rights and liberties are guaranteed by the state and there can be condoned no discrimination whatever. There *is* such a thing as civil equality, rights and liberties and the prime function of the democratic state is to see that they are respected by all alike. The great error in contemporary America is that of confusing civil and social equality—the latter is non-existent and there is no power that can create this mythological status. So, as idealists dream of this utopian social situation—whether in terms of the Marxist "classless society," the religionist "heaven on earth," or the many other spurious concepts of the social creature in his society—they must come to terms with reality and seek "the greatest good for the greatest number" and rationalize the fact of variety. They must, likewise, be aware of what Erich Fromm so aptly calls, "the pathology of normalcy."

### III

So long as the democratic state injects itself into the field of education—at any level—there must be no segregation of students. This is basic to civil democracy and there is no gimmick by which states can legally or ethically dodge the issue. There is but one legal and honorable way for states to avoid the dilemma: withdrawal from the field of education as a public service. Whether or not this action would be "honorable" is a matter

of personal opinion. Any effort at voluntary segregation, tuition grants, support to private schools, *et cetera*, violates the function of the democratic state from a legal point and does violence to the democratic ethic from an ethical point. Thus, those states whose citizens do not believe in the basic ideals of democracy must, perforce, close their public schools and withhold tax funds for education. They cannot legally or ethically discriminate against their citizens. There is no way out of the dilemma for honest citizens to take. Segregation can be maintained by the state only at the price of debasing the coinage of citizenship and bankrupting the basic implications of democracy and ethical human relations.

### IV

There is a footnote to be added, in terms of education *per se*. It is less evil to have an illiterate citizenship than an indoctrinated citizenship. If children, or adults, are to be taught "a line"—political, religious, economic, or social—this cannot be called education. There is another name for it. This fact disqualifies churches—all of them—as educators. Ditto political parties, special interest groups, *et al.* The basic presuppositions of education are such that truth is relative and not absolute and any system or group purporting to discover, utilize and disseminate absolute truth is disqualified, by the very nature of education, from teaching people who seek knowledge. Indoctrination—even with good intent, purpose and ideals—can be justified only within the term and scope of the non-democratic society and state. It is for this reason that, at root, religion is actually antithetical to both democracy and education—the basic concepts of the nature of man and of the universe, and their relationship, are diametrically opposite. Without attempting to establish judgment values in terms of religion, we must say, if we are honest, that a democracy, of education, could never be Christian, or Mohammedan, or Communist, or Jewish, or what have you? The moment this happened there would exist neither democracy nor education.

It is possible to have a theocratic or communistic state. But neither could be democratic or scientific, by the very nature of things. This is a fact that far too many legislators forget as they insert "under God" into democratic utterances and laws. A democracy has no religious facets and every effort to inject any religious connotation into the democratic state—or into education—violates the very method itself.

Having said this, we have not said that there can be no religion within a democracy or within education. There can be every kind or none—but there cannot be *one!* Democracy is a method and not an end—so, too, education. Thus, educators and democrats are methodologists and not saviors. They teach people the how and not the why of living. To alter this concept—as so many now are trying—is to risk undermining the foundations of what men in every age have considered the good, the beautiful and the true.

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## *REVIEW* CRITICAL COMMENT

EDITORS: Perhaps the best single feature of MANAS has been devotion to the spirit of scientific inquiry. It would appear however, that this goes out the window entirely in the last paragraph of Review (July 11). This might be tenable if you were writing just after Freud had announced his theories and before there had been any opportunity to validate them. But many decades have passed and the Freudians have been content to sit back and rely on Freud's statement that "the teachings of psychoanalysis are based upon an incalculable number of observations and experiments, and no one who has not repeated those observations upon himself or upon others is in a position to arrive at an independent judgment of it." This is hardly a scientific attitude, but is an appeal to faith. And after all these years it seems to me inexcusable. The core of the scientific method is to evolve hypotheses and then test them. What would we think of the developers of the Salk vaccine if they announced their invention and then invited the public to rely upon them in faith, without testing? If therefore Dr. Bailey is appealing for scientific proof of psychiatric concepts, I would have supposed that that would be something which MANAS would wholeheartedly applaud, instead of retreating into a mystical "we'd rather be wrong with Freud" attitude which sneers at "system-builders."

Let me give you an example of the bad effects of this unscientific attitude. For decades courts have been using psychiatrists as experts to aid in the disposition of cases of crime and juvenile delinquency. In Philadelphia alone the psychiatrists of the juvenile court make 8,000 prognoses a year, and in Baltimore criminal courts this has been going on since long before the war. A tremendous amount turns upon these supposedly expert judgments, for the courts in many types of cases (especially juveniles and adult sex crime cases) tend to follow them unthinkingly. In many cities a sex offender either goes to the penitentiary for a long term or goes out on probation to be treated, the decision resting upon the prognosis of a psychiatrist. Obviously, therefore, this is a momentous decision which the psychiatrist has to make. Yet I don't know of a single attempt on the part of psychiatrists to try to validate what they are doing in a scientific fashion. This does not present an insuperable research problem, for it would be possible to follow up cases which have been given such

psychiatric prognosis to see whether or not the psychiatric conclusions have been valid. It is incredible that medical scientists, which psychiatrists claim to be, would not be the first to insist upon such study. If they were devoted to the spirit of scientific inquiry they would approach what they were doing in an open-minded way and insist upon getting the results in order to see whether or not their hypotheses were valid. Yet not only has this not happened, but the only drive in this direction today is motivated not by psychiatrists but by lawyers who are unwilling to continue sending men to prison on judgments which have never been tested and which society is asked to accept in blind faith.

AT the outset, let us say that MANAS would benefit considerably by more communications of this sort. No matter how appreciative we may be of Freud's pioneering efforts, and however friendly to the psychiatrists who are extraordinarily helpful to their patients, we have no doubt that the mantle of authority often corrupts the psychiatrist's judgment. This, however, is clearly a human problem, not to be laid entirely at Freud's door. Nor is it a thing of which psychiatrists are unaware.

Our contrast between Freud and the "system builders" was perhaps confusing, for Freud was doubtless arbitrary and opinionated about many of his theoretical constructs, and numerous of his disciples were thus encouraged to rigidities of opinion as "Freudians."

We must admit, then, that Freud was very much a "system builder" when it came to theory and interpretation. But he did *not* evolve a system of technics for tampering with the psycho-physical realm. He didn't do things to patients; he objected to hypnotic suggestion, as proceeding on the false assumption that anyone but the patient himself can effect a cure. Freud did not propose to change the individual human being arbitrarily, nor did he prescribe the manner in which men should live. We were thinking of "system builders" according to Macneile Dixon's use of the term—those who wish to impose a specific morality, a specific political pattern—in short, those who want to "make people over."

As we see it, Freud was principally concerned with demonstrating how much of the conventional human personality had *already* been molded according to the arbitrary standards of religion. He became involved with the intricacies of a theoretical system, but it was at least a system designed to expose the deleterious effects of those orthodoxies which insisted that the individual man could not cope with the disturbances of his own psyche, but must instead be led, cajoled and threatened to adopt a proper morality. Dr. Bailey, in blithely asserting that Freud had no "system of values," implied that Freud had *no* values, and this we found objectionable.

A section in Erich Fromm's *Psychoanalysis and Religion* is, we think, particularly helpful on this point. After explaining why Freud considered conventional religion to be neurotic, he expresses the further belief that religion *destroys* morality. In Fromm's words:

Freud's third objection to religion is that it puts morality on very shaky grounds. If the validity of ethical norms rests upon their being God's commands, the future of ethics stands or falls with the belief in God. Since Freud assumes that religious belief is on the wane he is forced to assume that the continued connections of religion and ethics will lead to the destruction of our moral values.

The dangers which Freud sees in religion make it apparent that his own ideals and values are the very things he considers to be threatened by religion: reason, reduction of human suffering, and morality. But we do not have to rely on inferences from Freud's criticism of religion; he has expressed very explicitly what are the norms and ideals he believes in: brotherly love (*Menschenliebe*), truth, and freedom. Reason and freedom are interdependent according to Freud. If man gives up his illusion of a fatherly God, if he faces his aloneness and insignificance in the universe, he will be like a child that has left his father's house. But it is the very claim of human development to overcome this infantile fixation.

To return to Dr. Bailey, by way of a May 14 *Newsweek* report of his diatribe against Freud before the American Psychiatric Association: Unless our correspondent had himself read the story, in addition to our quotes, Dr. Bailey may

have seemed simply to be making some much needed points. But Bailey was hardly scientific in his evaluation of Freud's contributions, and made his castigations without qualifications—terming Freud a "fraud" and "all of his celebrated theories hoaxes." The last of Freud's living pupils, leading British psychoanalyst, Ernest Jones, who is Freud's chief biographer, also came in for some harsh words. According to *Newsweek*, "Dr. Bailey called Jones' biographies of Freud 'one long paean of hero worship'":

"Its *leitmotif*," he charged, "is clearly apparent . . . one perceives in the dim, dark, recesses of Jones' unconscious, the vague outline of a hill in Palestine. Not for nothing does Jones come from a race of preachers. It was in his mind . . . the only *goy* in Freud's entourage. . . that the idea of organizing a band of faithful disciples was hatched. Of course, there were only six Freudian disciples, instead of twelve, but the idea was the same.

"Freud's ideas often were launched with great enthusiasm, like scare headlines in a newspaper, and then quietly dropped without retraction. Freud's writings are not scientific treatises, but rather, reveries, a sort of chirographic rumination . . . I ask, could much of Freud's writings have been a sort of occupational therapy?"

Dr. Bailey concluded his indictment of Freud with further charges that the great Viennese psychoanalyst had no religious faith, disdained women while admitting that he had never understood them, never appreciated music and ignored man's social nature.

So we reacted to Bailey's spectacular exaggerations, just as our correspondent reacted to some of ours—and we confess to being worried about the sort of "system builders" who believe, as Bailey apparently does, that "mental disease should be considered from the standpoint of organic disorders and not psychopathic behavior." According to the same *Newsweek* dispatch, Dr. Bailey is in league with the school of thought represented by Hans Selye, also a speaker before the Psychiatric Association. This point of view is intimated by the *Newsweek* summary, which remarks—

Dr. Selye, best known for his studies of "stress" in human disease, told the visiting psychiatrists that he had experimental proof that mental illness can result from the body's production of hormonelike chemical substances. At present, laboratory animals are being treated with "counteracting compounds."

We feel entitled to express a preference for "even the wildest psychological theories" over a possible state of affairs wherein "chemical" adjustments of mental disorder become the accepted thing. Bailey is interested in concepts of therapy which are proved "by scientific criteria to have scientific validity," but, being old-fashioned about much direct tampering with the psyche, we begin to have a nightmarish preview of a hygienic State wherein no one has theories any more, and everyone "knows" just what sort of treatment will clear up a neurosis. Freud held that a neurosis has a real existence of itself—is created, in a sense, by the patient, and that the patient alone can effect a cure by understanding the genesis of the disturbance.

The last portion of our correspondent's second paragraph seems to us to complete a cycle of overstating the case—begun by Bailey, and, we fear, continued here. While the negligence on the part of court psychiatrists to which he refers doubtless exists, the implication that not even "a single attempt" is known to be made by psychiatrists to validate what they are doing is erroneous. From all accounts, a trip to Topeka, Kansas, and a visit to the Menninger Foundation, should dispel this illusion. And there is Bruno Bettelheim's orthogenic school at the University of Chicago, where one will find abundant evidence that therapists insist on a follow-up of all cases "in scientific fashion."

In conclusion, we expressed only a personal feeling by saying that "we would rather be wrong part of the time with Freud than right most of the time with the system builders." We don't sneer at system builders—we are too afraid of them for that. Freudian theory is theory and everyone knows it. But the man who thinks he has proved everything by "scientific criteria" may encourage

his disciples to play God in an even more high-handed manner than that adopted by fanatical Freudians.

## *COMMENTARY* NO FINISHING TOUCH

IF YOU live anywhere in the United States and are up and around, washing your car or mowing your lawn of a Sunday morning, you will see scores of your neighbors going to church. You may even be going yourself.

Now we have no quarrel with going to church, or going anywhere, for that matter. We are curious, however, about the mood in which all these goings and comings take place. For most people, insofar as one can judge from facial expressions, dress, and the practice of the social amenities before and after these gatherings, going to church is an act which seeks completion. It is supposed to make people whole. It is supposed to give one the feeling of having tied up the loose ends in his life—a kind of "finishing touch."

There is a logic in wanting to have your feelings composed. We need confidence to face the struggles of daily existence. Beyond a certain point, uncertainties have a way of unmaning people. To be successful in ordinary terms, you have to make some sort of peace with yourself and with the System. "In the Army," wrote David Brown in *Kings Go Forth*, you learn to mistrust the "men who are fighting another war within themselves." It is the same in business. You get along better if you're "well-adjusted" and can do your job without a lot of torturing doubts.

Wanting peace of mind is something like wanting a good polish on your car, or a permanent and a manicure. These things are signs of being right with the world—they are finishing touches.

We can't do without this motive. Nobody would ever finish anything if there was not a strong drive in human beings toward the feeling of completion. But there is nevertheless something troubling in the way it works. A deceptive magic operates through the feelings—a magic which makes us capable of harboring illusions. Our feelings enable us to feel blessed when we are acting like fools. Intoxication is any kind of

feeling of completion which absorbs our attention without also giving warning that, eventually—maybe in an hour, maybe in a year—it will wear off.

But illusions, we must admit, are not intrinsically evil. Without them we couldn't ever have been children. Without them we would never have experienced happiness. Indeed, we need illusions, but as much as we need illusions we need to outgrow them. And this is the central paradox which should make us suspicious of all men and all religions which offer a "finishing touch."

Religion, to be any good, must offer a philosophy of illusions—an explanation of them, that is, and wise counsels for using and dealing with them.

The unfortunate fact about most religions—religions that can be named as having cultural identity—is that they represent the illusions about life which were natural and appropriate at some time in the past. A religion with an origin in the past must of necessity declare for the validity of past illusions. To deny this validity is to be a heretic.

A great religious reformer is a man who understands the nature of the human odyssey through one stage-setting of illusions after another. He is one who deals doubly with his time: first, in terms of the current set of illusions; second, in terms of the process of outgrowing any set of illusions—and this latter is his real teaching, which makes him, from the orthodox viewpoint, a man to be feared.

Most people feel able to cope with ordinary conflicts. They "understand" a war between two competing sets of illusions. If their side wins, its illusions will become the standard; if they lose, they will either become converts or go underground and "bore from within."

But a true reformer is not interested in such victories or defeats. He is interested in a temper of the mind which enables people to live without



hoping for some grand settlement of victory or defeat. He doesn't want any set of illusions to be looked upon as containing the final truth. And this is *his* final truth—that the finishing touches of feeling are both promise and betrayal: promise of an eternal progression in self-realization, but betrayal when any way-station of adjustment is accepted as a final resting place.

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## CHILDREN and Ourselves

THE title of this Department is supposed to suggest that we can learn a great deal about the needs of children by philosophizing about our own needs—and weaknesses. Similarly, that a sympathetic study of the child or youth may help us realize things about ourselves.

It comes to many parents as a seemingly original discovery that a young child's eagerness to explore the world about him is often directly dependent upon the sustaining atmosphere of the home. When the psychologists talk about "emotional security," this is what they have in mind. Some children are afraid to explore, afraid to enter wholeheartedly and joyously into experiments with life, because they lack assurance that, at the center of their existence—in relation to parent or parents—there is a certain and sure place for them. Now, the proclivity for adventurous experiment in early childhood may not seem very important, since the breaking or defacing of adult property is often involved, along with troublesome minor injuries to the child himself. But the *psychological attitude of exploration* is one of the most important needs of the very young.

The child who is afraid to explore is all too apt to become the adult who trembles at the thought of a revolutionary concept, or will allow himself to live year after year with the same prejudices, simply because he has no confidence in his capacity to find a new orientation.

The child who instinctively knows that he gives and receives enjoyment of life knows that his existence is justified. He has a place, and from that place he can move outward to discover what else of interest, joy and beauty may be found. (As a curious footnote to this, it is seldom the fearful, insecure child who is the most cautious. Intelligent caution is a normal result of alertness, and the kind of prevision which alertness brings. The fearful child, while attempting far less

strenuous pursuits, may actually suffer a great many more injuries simply because he is *not* alert; and, moreover, injuries received because of inattention or distraction will terrorize the mind still further, the cause being only vaguely understood. A healthy explorative youngster will learn from his hurt, and confidently enter the same situation again on the basis of the experience gained.) These are fundamental facts of life in childhood easily verifiable by any parent.

How can we apply these observations to adult existence? Often, adults endeavor to recapture with a lover or marital partner the sort of feelings provided for them as children in a happy home. But since it is easier to "love" an innocent and attractive child with a fair degree of consistency than to love another complicated adult, the latter state is hard to attain. This is partly for the reason that the explorations of the man or woman may be so varied—and sometimes in partial opposition to those undertaken by the other party to the relationship—that overt conflict sets in. An adventure of the mind for one may be a rejection of all accepted truth for the other. And, therefore, for many adults, alliance with a political party or with a religious institution becomes a substitute for what they may have wished to find at the level of personal interrelationship.

This returns us to the subject of our discussion last week, regarding the difference between an imitative life and a true "calling." The man who becomes "institutionalized" because he fails to find an adequate personal relationship becomes more and more indrawn, so far as his prejudices are concerned. And it is for this reason, we suspect, that, out of stark necessity, our age turns to psychiatry as a better hope than politics. Whether or not men should be as "personal" as they are, it is certain that the best way to be *personal* is in terms of a truly intimate relationship, as in marriage, or as with close friendships. The "personal" man in politics is a menace, not only to his constituents—whom he is always likely to betray when his pride is assailed—

but also to himself. Along with some of our more appalling religionists, he makes the supreme blunder of imagining himself greatly devoted to "principle," while actually he is only trying to find a secure mooring for his unfulfilled emotional nature.

At this point it is easy to make room for a passage from Dwight Macdonald's *The Root is Man*. In an effort to get behind institutional mores, Macdonald quotes a letter he received when he was at work on the *Root*:

So long as morality is all in public places—politics, Utopia, revolutions (nonviolent included), progress—our private mores continue to be a queasy mixture of chivalry and cynicism: all in terms of *angles*, either for or against. We're all against political sin, we all love humanity, but individuals are sort of tough to love, even tougher to hate. Golden-haired dreams, humanitarian dreams—what's the difference so long as they smell good? . . . Don't you agree that one can't have a moral attitude toward Humanity? Too big.

Thereafter Macdonald goes on to point out that one weakness of the radical movement, in all its phases, has been the failure of the individual radicals to create real *human relations*—socialist values, like capitalist values, tend to confusing stereotypes. The psychiatrist, of necessity, must tell us that unless we belong to those few who seem genuinely able to live and cooperate on a basis other than that of compensation for personal inadequacy, we simply have to get our personal lives straightened out before we can trust ourselves as politicians, educators—or even authors. This can be done, they inform us, only when we are fully willing to recognize the nature and depth of the problem. To *pretend* that ours is a happy home, a fully happy relationship, is to become the sort of parent who doesn't realize how badly his children need security, "a place to go out from," for adventurings in the world.

In moving towards a completeness of understanding in any strictly *human* affair, we are put upon our mettle far more than we are by official alignments with "groups." Here, it is so

much more difficult to mistake the prize for something it is not, and the question is, simply, how hopeful, how persistent and how courageous can we be? Since these are the general qualities which children need to see demonstrated in action by parents, teachers, and other adult acquaintances, part of the work of the world revolves around the recognition that proper balance in one's "personal life" is of great moment. Both we and our children need to be able to "go outward" from some central base and, since this is an age wherein that peculiar combination of emotion and metaphysics known as religion is in serious decline, it appears that a number of our metaphysical problems must be integrated with the field of inter-personal relations. Once upon a time—when we took our "personal" lives on the one hand and our religious lives on the other—we left our children no alternative but to accept this dichotomy as a part of the natural order of things. But now, somehow, as a kind of natural "karma," our religious life, our political life, our lives with our children, our lovers or our wives *have all drawn in closer to one another*, psychologically. Especially, in such a milieu, a child needs some help in acquiring the kind of personal rapport which makes solution of the other problems easier. It is even less possible for him than for us to tie himself to a kite of factional, institutional opinion. The institutions are dead or dying. Long live Man! But since it is hardly possible to expect an immediate transition from dependence upon institutions to dependence upon nothing save oneself, let us regard the establishment of close personal relationships as part of the work of the world and part of our work. However, to move in this direction according to sentiment is rather ghastly, and involves us in something like the Dale Carnegie approach. It is for this reason that we recommend a blend of philosophical and psychiatric reading—especially for those who want to help their children help themselves.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Argument about Astrology

ON the whole, we're against it. That is, while we're as open as the next man to the suggestion that there may be something to astrology, the question is, what are people likely to do with that something?

As for the reality of the "something," it seems reasonable enough, if we are affected by everything in the universe, that the planets affect us, too. If cosmic rays may cause mutations in the genes; if different sorts of people are born at different times of the year; and if, finally, Bart J. Bok of the Harvard Observatory, an eminent astronomer, was willing to speak respectfully in 1942 of work done in the field of statistical astrology (the study of large groups of individuals), then why should we reject it out of hand?

At any rate, there is more reason to await further evidence than there is to insist that the whole pursuit is nothing but wild superstition.

This subject comes up, however, not from any fondness for astrological predictions, but from a reading of an attack on contemporary astrological practice in a paperback by Henry Miller, *A Devil in Paradise* (just issued by Signet, being a section from Miller's new book, *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch*, to be published by New Directions). Perhaps it should be called a declaration of independence of astrological portents, rather than an attack, since Miller is not concerned with denying that the future may in some measure be foretold. As critic of astrology, however, he joins a company of sagacious men who took very much the same view, among them Pico della Mirandola, and Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas' views are aptly summarized by Lynn Thorndike in his *History of Magic and Experimental Science*:

Aquinas declares that the human will is free and that the soul as an intellectual substance cannot be coerced by corporeal substances, however superior. . .

Aquinas is also aware, however, that the astrologers themselves agree that the wise man rules the stars, and conversely he himself recognizes that man is not purely an intellectual being, that he often obeys sensual appetite, and that even the mind derives its knowledge from the senses and consequently in a condition disturbed by phantasy. Thus the stars may indirectly affect the human intellect to a considerable extent. Aquinas is also ready to admit that astrologers often make true predictions in events where large numbers of men are concerned and the passions of the majority override the wisdom and will of the few who are able to resist such impulses. On the other hand, astrologers often err in their predictions concerning individuals. (II, 609-10.)

Aquinas contributes a kind of "measure" to whatever subject he examines. The same may be said of Miller, although the measure is of another sort—more instinct with the breath of unrepentant life. In *A Devil in Paradise*, Miller describes an interval—very nearly the last—in the life of Conrad Moricand, a Swiss astrologer whom Miller had known in Paris. In this somewhat grisly chronicle of human decay, we take no particular pleasure, and need only report that Mr. Miller must be a man of extraordinary sympathy and patience with old friends, to have endured the experience as well as he did. Our present concern is with what Miller said to Moricand when the subject of Miller's declining interest in astrology came up between them. When Moricand complained that Miller seldom spoke of astrology any more, the latter gave this explanation:

"True," I replied, "I don't see: what it would serve me to pursue it further. I was never interested in it the way you are. For me it was just another language to learn, another keyboard to manipulate. It's only the poetic aspect of anything which really interests me. In the ultimate there is only one language—the language of truth. It matters little how we arrive at it."

Moricand suggested that Miller would be helped by astrology to understand his "problems" better:

"But I have no problems," I replied. "Unless they are cosmological ones. I am at peace with myself—and with the world. It's true, I don't get

along with my wife. But neither did Socrates, for that matter. Or . . ."

He stopped me.

"All right," I said, "tell me this—what has astrology done for *you*? Has it enabled you to correct your defects? Has it helped you to adjust to the world? Has it given you peace and joy? . . ."

"I'm sorry," I said, "but you know that I'm often rude and direct for a good reason. I don't mean to belittle you or make fun of you. But here's what I would like to know. Answer me straight! What is the most important—peace and joy or wisdom? If to know less would make you a happier man, which would you choose?"

Now comes Miller's magnificent retort to the believers in astrology, in which he, after all, does not really disbelieve, but which he regards as largely irrelevant. Moricand intimates that men cannot choose between wisdom and happiness. Miller disagrees violently:

Like it or not, I am a product of this land of plenty, a believer in superabundance, a believer in miracles. Any deprivation I suffered was through my own doing. I blame nobody but myself for my woes and afflictions, for my shortcomings, for my transgressions. What you believe I might have learned through a deeper knowledge of astrology I learned through experience of life. I made all the mistakes that it is possible for a man to make—and I paid the penalty. I am that much richer, that much wiser, that much happier, if I may say so, than if I had found through study or through discipline how to avoid the snares and pitfalls in my path. . . . Astrology deals in potentialities, does it not? I am not interested in the potential man. I am interested in what a man actualizes—or realizes—of his potential being. And what is the potential man, after all? Is he not the sum of all that is human? *Divine*, in other words? You think I am searching for God. I am not. God is. The world is. Man is. We are. The full reality, that's God—and man, and the world, and all that is, including the unnameable. . . .

There is so much wisdom in this that we are reluctant to make the obvious comment—that a kind of study and a kind of discipline are necessary to this kind of seeing, despite the somewhat romantic doctrine of overtly seeking Experience, and living it up and down.

In another passage, he says to Moricand:

"Just be patient with me. You'll have your turn. . . . Every so often I revolt, even against what I believe in with all my heart. I have to attack everything, myself included. Why? To simplify things. We know too much—and too little. It's the intellect which gets us into trouble. Not our intelligence. *That* we can never have enough of. But I get weary of listening to specialists, weary of listening to the man with one string to his fiddle. I don't deny the validity of astrology. What I object to is becoming enslaved to any one point of view. Of course there are affinities, analogies, correspondences, a heavenly rhythm and an earthly rhythm . . . *as above, so below*. It would all be crazy if it weren't so. But knowing it, accepting it, why not forget it? I mean, make it a living part of one's life, something absorbed, assimilated, and distributed through every pore of one's being, and thus forgotten, altered, utilized, in the spirit and the service of life. I abhor people who have to filter everything through the one language they know, whether it be astrology, religion, yoga, politics, economics, or what. The one thing about this universe which intrigues me, which makes me realize that it *is* divine and beyond all knowing, is that it lends itself so easily to any and all interpretations. Everything we formulate about it is correct and incorrect at the same time. It includes our truths and our errors. And, whatever we think about the universe in no way alters it."

The trouble with Miller is that he acknowledges no authorities. That is, the authority in his writing is its own appeal. This delights some people, and frightens others. Some readers will note that he is willing to concede some sense to astrology and will thereupon say Miller is not worth reading. Sectarians of astrology will dislike him because he refuses to *depend* upon astrology. We like these passages because the strength that is in them compels attention to matters that, with a weaker advocate, might be brushed aside as of interest only to the lunatic fringe—the cultists and the visionaries. The point is that the dull mediocrity of our culture drives many good ideas into the hands of the lunatic fringe, so that it takes a man of courage and imagination to write about them at all. Men like Miller recover these ideas for their more timid contemporaries to mull over.

Astrology now gets put in its place:

Sometimes I think that astrology must have had its inception at a moment in man's evolution when he lost faith in himself. Or to put it another way, when he lost his wholeness. When he wanted to know instead of to be. Schizophrenia began far back, not yesterday or the day before. And when man split he split into myriad fragments. But even today, as fragmented as he is, he can be made whole again. The only difference between the Adamic man and the man of today is that the one was born to Paradise and the other has to create it.

As to whether astrology may help us to get along with one another, Miller says:

One doesn't have to know a thing about astrological types, the complexity of their reactions to this or that. There is one simple, direct way to deal with all types, and that is truthfully and honestly. We spend our lives trying to avoid injuries and humiliations which our neighbors may inflict upon us. A waste of time. If we abandoned fear and prejudice, we could meet the murderer as easily as the saint. I get fed up with astrological parlance when I observe people studying their charts to find a way out of illness, poverty, vice, or whatever it may be. To me it seems like a sorry attempt to exploit the stars. We talk about fate as if it were something visited upon us; we forget that we create our fate every day we live. And by fate I mean the woes that beset us, which are merely the effects of causes which are not nearly so mysterious as we pretend. Most of the ills we suffer from are directly traceable to our own behavior. Man is not suffering from the ravages wrought by earthquakes and volcanoes, by tornadoes and tidal waves; he is suffering from his own misdeeds, his own foolishness, his own ignorance and disregard of natural laws. . . .

Miller says he is interested in the "poetic" content of all subjects. Poetry, to make another definition, is the kind of truth which has to be recognized while it is still alive. This makes poetry, when it is real, both difficult and great. The poet, in these terms, is a man who does not require of life that it be a "sure thing." He knows that the "sure things" are the embalmed and painted things and will have nothing to do with them.