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A LIVING UNIVERSE

THE reading public has been well fed—almost sated—with the mystery, the romance, and the terror-producing potentialities of the atom. Ours, we are told, is the "Atomic Age," the beginning of which was marked by explosion, the future of which is darkened by unpredictable horror. One would think that the genius of science had unfolded no larger meanings of Nature than those discovered by bombardment—the bombardment of the atom-smashing cyclotron—and which have led, when applied to "practical" matters, to little more than bombardments of another sort. The triumphs of science which impress us most have been, it seems, triumphs of violence, from beginning to end.

But modern physics has at least taught us something of the quasi-omnipotence of natural forces. The old billiard-ball atom of the nineteenth century—the bouncing atom of Leucippus, Epicurus, and Lucretius—which was the inert mite acted upon by Newtonian law, has been transformed into Jovian thunderbolts. To speak of the atom is to speak of the portal to mysterious and almost incalculable energy. It is as though the universe were constructed of an infinitude of infinitesimal volcanoes, ready to belch ruin whenever the proper chain reaction sets free their potency. This, perhaps, is a morbid version of the world we live in, yet it is a version in which the scientific manipulation of nuclear energy instructs us, and it is a version, also, which has had an excellent press.

But during the epoch in which the physicists smashed their way to knowledge of atomic fission, the biologists have been pursuing researches which, if not of parallel drama, have at least disclosed that the mystery of life is as extensive and every bit as extraordinary as the mystery of matter. Life, too, has its potencies—potencies of formative intelligence—which were hardly dreamed of in the nineteenth century. A review of some of the highlights of biological discovery during the past twenty years gives promise that our knowledge of the synthesizing intelligence of life may eventually overtake and surpass the dark secrets of destruction uncovered by atomic research.

In 1860, the famous chemist, Berthelot, declared: "The objective of our science is to banish 'Life' from the theories of organic chemistry." Today, an objective of this sort would be virtually meaningless. For Berthelot, "Life" meant some sort of mystical intrusion into the orderly mechanical processes of nature. Today, those mechanical processes seem to be little more than the external operations of omnipresent *life.* It might almost be said that biologists have dropped the old metaphysical distinction between "living" and "dead" matter, for the reason that it contributes nothing to their understanding of the phenomena of nature.

A few years ago, Dr. Wendell M. Stanley of the Rockefeller Institute showed that certain crystals, when placed in the proper environment, would develop into the tobacco mosaic virus and multiply and propagate as all other living things. "Crystallinity," he said, "is simply a structural regularity . . . and actually there need be no incompatibility between the living and the crystalline state." A little later, Prof. Basile J. Luyet of St. Louis University conducted a well-directed attack on the Cell Theory, the doctrine that *all* living matter must be cellular. He concluded:

> . . . the more we learn about life, the more the cell theory loses its chances of being true. The discovery, or the more complete observation of a number of facts during the 100 years which have elapsed since the formulation of the cell theory, as well as a more synthetic comprehension of these facts,

> make it now highly probable that the cell is not the necessary structural unit of any living matter. (*Science,* March 15, 1940.)

Dr. Stanley suggested that "the principle of vital phenomena does not come into existence suddenly, but is inherent in all matter," and John J. O'Neill, science editor of the New York *Herald Tribune,* summed up the disappearance of the distinction between "living" and "dead" matter:

> This new conception has resulted from research in which biologists sought to find life in its simplest form and chemists attempted to determine at which point the properties of life first appeared.
>
> The biologists and chemists eventually found that they were studying the same substance, one calling it living, and the other calling it dead, and so agreed that there is no dividing line between so-called living and dead matter.

Life, therefore, is everywhere, now *in posse,* now in *actu,* and there is strong likelihood, as one researcher put it, that life is an expression of electricity, or that electricity is life.

The further discovery of the biologists is that life (or electricity?) is *intelligent.* Prof. Edmund W. Sinnott, a pioneer in the study of morphology, set the problem briefly in *Science* for Jan. 15, 1937: The "fundamental paradox," he said, is "that protoplasm, itself liquid, formless and flowing, inevitably builds those formed and coordinated structures of cell, organ and body in which it is housed." Life has a patterning genius as wonderful, in its way, as the destructive power locked in the atom. "Form," says Prof. Sinnott, "is merely the outward and visible expression, fixed in material shape, of that inner equilibrium which we are seeking to understand." No mechanical or chemical theory has proved adequate to account for the way in which the initially structureless protoplasm builds the complicated and infinitely differentiated structures which we call organisms; instead, biologists have adopted the *field theory* of life, in which all growth and development seem to result from the following of some hidden pattern or master-plan. Speaking of the growth-process of chick embryos, Nelson T. Spratt, Jr., zoologist, has said: "Development of the forebrain and eyes seems to be the expression of an already existing but invisible structural organization." There is reason to think that the guiding principle in such growth-processes is a function of electrical polarity. Every living cell possesses electrical energy, and some biologists have concluded that the only difference between living and dead protoplasm is in the lowered magnetic susceptibility of the latter, due to altered electrical tensions. Dr. Grace Kimball has shown that the growth rate of yeast cells can be retarded by placing the cells in the field of a permanent magnet, and Drs. Cole and Curtis of Columbia have shown that the water plant, Nitella, propagates "nerve impulses" through its ordinary cells, and that the cells of the Nitella have an electrical "skin" which separates the electrical structure inside the plant from the electrical conditions of its water habitat.

In germ cells, the effect of electrical polarity is conspicuous in the grouping of the contents of the cell—the nucleus, mitochondria, golgi bodies, etc.—with respect to the electrical axis of the cell. The position of these bodies does not determine the polarity, for the axis of polarity remains unaffected when they are displaced by centrifuging or mechanical pressure. Cell polarity seems also to govern growth. Metabolic rates within the cells parallel the gradients of polarity, the "levels of high metabolic rate," according to Prof. Edmond Wilson, "being electronegative to those of lower." But he adds:

> Fundamentally, both the nature and origin of polarity are unknown. We know only its visible expression, which in most cases *is* both structural and functional, appearing on the one hand in a polarized grouping of the cell-components, on the other in differences of functional or metabolic activity with respect to the axis thus marked off. (*The Cell in Development and Heredity.*)

Biologists, Prof. Wilson concludes, must fall back "upon the assumption of a 'metastructure' in protoplasm that lies beyond the present limits of microscopical vision."

An astonishing discovery by Dr. Ethel Brown Harvey, of Princeton, lends confirmation to the "metastructure" idea. She found that a sea urchin egg fertilized by hypertonic sea water would develop into a normal blastula (early embryonic form), even though all the chromosomes of the egg had been removed by centrifuging! According to orthodox genetic theory, the chromosomes are supposed to be the carriers of heredity, yet in this case development took place and continued "to an embryo containing about 500 cells with a certain amount of differentiation." As Dr. Harvey says: "It must therefore be the 'ground substance' which is the material fundamental for development—the matrix which is not moved by centrifugal force and which, in the living egg, is optically empty."

A climax to these various investigations and discoveries was reached in 1936, when a group of scientists working at Yale University reported the successful measurement of the "electrical field" of living things. As described by Waldemar Kaempffert, science editor of the New York *Times:*

> Thousands of tests already made show that living creatures all generate electricity in measurable amounts and that each species has its characteristic, rather stable electrical pattern. That pattern changes minutely and thus reflects variations in the process of living. . . .
>
> . . . living things are amazingly constant. Flesh is cut open and bleeds and heals; tissues fall a prey to disease but cure themselves. Somehow the integrity of the whole organism *is* never lost.
>
> No one knows why this should be so. In the field, thinks Prof. Burr [Yale anatomist], may lie the causative factor that gives meaning to the unity of nature and that explains why wholes tend to remain wholes and atoms to form wholes, whether bits of wood or men. . . .
>
> Some years hence it may turn out that this instrument [the microvoltmeter developed at Yale] has revealed a crucial element or pattern in the design of living things. So it will be possible to explain how an animal grows from a single egg into a complex man with arms, legs, a brain and heart, and possible, also, to explain how the chromosomes in the cell determine why our faces are what they are and why eyes are blue, brown or black. In a word, "animal electricity," scoffed at since Galvani's time, may manifest itself as life. (*Times*, Nov, 15, 1936.)

Later experience revealed that Mr. Kaempffert's predictions were by no means too optimistic, for after several years another report of the Yale experiments spoke confidently of "the electrical architect" which remains constant throughout life, and, having its own pattern, "fashions all the protoplasmic clay of life that comes within its sphere of influence after its image, thus personifying itself in the living flesh as the sculptor personifies his idea in stone." The creative power of life, it seems, is as omnipresent as the destructive power of matter, for where there is matter there is life, and where there is life there is formative intelligence, working through the patterning artifice of electromagnetic fields. It remains for the science of the twentieth century to achieve some fundamental discoveries concerning the character and reach of the mind—the mind in nature as well as in man. But here, too, there have been major steps of progress. Conceivably, a grand synthesis of all these new findings may be possible in the not too distant future, in which the principle of mind may play the role of the integrating intelligence in all the variety of living forms.

Letter from **JAPAN**

TOKYO.—With the outbreak of fighting in nearby Korea, the question of national security has loomed large—and in many respects, menacingly—before the Japanese people. Life has settled down to its usual pitch after the first scares of a possible World War III. Of course, there is some hoarding and speculation (mostly in stocks), but the people haven't enough cash on hand to indulge too much in such pursuits, preparatory for an outbreak of war.

The big question of the moment, however, is whether the Japanese will be asked to bear arms to defend themselves, or to aid the United Nations' cause on the Korean battlefield? With a sense of traditional resignation, the people are asking themselves if they will be given a choice to decide one way or the other.

Certainly, there is strong pressure being exerted by certain classes of Japanese to push this nation, whose Constitution forbids forever the bearing of arms, into the forefront of the Korean conflict on the pretext of "self-defense" in joint action with the United Nations. But there is at present even greater influence being funneled into a marshalling of public opinion against the active and direct participation of Japan in the unfortunate clash on the Korean peninsula.

Some frank views have also been expressed that Japan should take advantage of this situation to extricate herself as much as possible from the disadvantages of a military occupation. This viewpoint has apparently been endorsed most enthusiastically in business circles which are already happily counting the profits from the "Korean war boom." Politicians have also hinted that the chance has come to regain some of the national pride which Japan lost as a defeated nation.

The people have thus come out of the initial shock and fear that their closest neighbor might become at once a Communist-dominated nation, and that the Korean conflict might spread into a global war. But the nation is divided on the question of Japan's part in the war in Korea and the issue of her future protection.

The recent SCAP authorization of the formation of a police reserve force of 75,000 men has raised the fear in Japan that it may become the starting point of an army. But this action has also emphasized the fact that the Allied Powers which gave Japan her "war renunciation" Constitution can also arm her any time they so desire. Even one year ago, the increasing of the Japanese police force by 75,000 men would have called for heated cries of alarm from many nations. Today, in the face of the Communist threat, the announcement caused not even a ripple of comment.

Many things, condemned by the Allied Powers only a short time ago as peculiarly militaristic, are being performed today in the name of both democracy and communism. The conclusion may be reached that when the chips are down, men react in a surprisingly similar pattern. What can be condemned at one time can be done at another time with full "respectability."

War never brings out the best in men—only apologists say it does. The North Korean aggression may be considered inexcusable; but that evil has been aggravated by the use of force to repel it. But to the Japanese, war-battered and thus wiser than they were ten years ago, the sight of nations hammering each other—divested of the mantle of righteousness on both sides—seems like that familiar old story of men and wars being inseparable.

JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
KAKEMONO

TO DATE, the most valuable book for the average reader on post-war Japan is probably Honor Tracy's *Kakemono* (London, Methuen). We would like very much to see this book published and distributed by a large publishing house in this country, yet it is just possible that such a venture would bring the firm into GHQ disfavor, and therefore will not materialize.

Honor Tracy has been a radio broadcaster, and a foreign correspondent for *The Observer*. In this, her first book, she does a remarkably fine job of developing the same theme as that which, among other things, distinguishes Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia*. Those who have profited by Taylor's analysis of Western cultural delusions will especially appreciate *Kakemono*. Miss Tracy may not delve as deeply as Taylor into the psychiatric tangles of cultural schizophrenia, but her corresponding virtue is the easy readability of her style and the comparative brevity of the book. It seems best, however, to let Miss Tracy speak for herself. Her second chapter, entitled "Democracy,?' while not exactly disarming, is probably unanswerable:

> What did the "democratization" of Japan precisely mean? It was very soon apparent, at least, that democracy here did not mean the government of the country according to the wishes of the majority of the people, the only sense in which most of us find it intelligible. Someone knew what the Japanese wanted better than they did themselves, and was giving it to them in instalments, and by means of directives, written or spoken, which their leaders were required to carry out on pain of losing their jobs. Democracy in Japan, therefore, was really despotism.
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> These benevolent despots were proceeding on the assumption that the Japanese way of doing things was wrong and that theirs was right: indeed, that there was only one way of doing things at all. The recent *furor japonicus* in East Asia they attributed not to historic and economic causes, but, in some mysterious fashion, to the fact that the Japanese had an Emperor and a social hierarchy, that the women did not vote, that the people thought in terms of the family and not of the individual, and that there was a general readiness to accept authority. To use the ultimate term of disparagement, they were "fee-yoodle." Everything in Japan was fee-yoodle. To this day, I cannot hear the word but a fog rises and curls about my mind, while to the reformers it was as a red rag to a bull. No sooner was a custom or an institution pronounced fee-yoodle than they turned the full force of their noble rage against it.
>
> It was not, however, while paying visits in the mahogany foxholes of GHQ that I became aware of these undercurrents, slight but increasing, of perplexity. That came later, when I went into the provinces and talked to some of the military government teams, whose task it was to make the blueprint into a living thing. In Tokyo the official note was one of a happy, almost a sublime confidence. They were going from success to success, and there were copious written materials to prove it. Everyone was keen, all were alert: they sat in their comfortable offices, centrally heated or air-conditioned as the season required, with the radio crooning in the background and handsome secretaries jitterbugging slightly and alluringly as they brought in the mail for signature, refreshing themselves with tubs of ice cream and bottles of coca cola, while outside the greatest spiritual revolution in the history of man smoothly proceeded.

This is not quite caustic or vitriolic writing, but something a lot better. Somehow, here, as throughout *Kakemono*, Miss Tracy enables us to feel as though we are, at the same time, both the presumptuous idiots involved in "democratizing Japan" and the Japanese who find themselves both amused and terrified at proceedings. Occasionally there is uncompromising criticism, on principle, of persons, as when Miss Tracy discusses "the hard and alien core of the Old Officers." She obviously objects to men with military-clique minds who inject especially blatant hypocrisy into what at best would be an extremely strained situation. This clique is, psychologically, the Gestapo of Japan: they want wage-earners to know that while they have been generously given the right to bargain collectively and to strike, "it would be the worst for them if they did so." For there is, presumably, no such thing as an economic grievance in this country: there is only unscrupulous Red propaganda taking advantage of political

innocence. Although Miss Tracy does not dwell on these "Old Officers," she plainly considers them to be *agents provocateurs* of tragic hates and fears, and expresses the conviction that intelligent Japanese will have considerably less difficulty reconciling themselves to the atomic bomb unnecessarily dropped on Hiroshima than to the activities of the post-war MG.

But the most interesting thing about *Kakemono*—and this is the subject, really, of most of its pages—is its illumination of traditional American over-simplification of all cultural issues. The captain who believes he is setting a good example in politeness to his Japanese host by calling his wife "sugar" and treating her kindly even when she collapses on the floor from too much sake, is but one of innumerable examples of the sort of small-boy delusions of grandeur which seem to saturate the Occupation. Busybodies in charge of democratizing the Universities, the Women's clubs, the hospitals, and so on, crowd around, armed with psychiatric degrees, yet remain in complete ignorance of those ancient traditions of courtesy and politeness which underlie all social contact and make even a street accident a courteous and friendly affair for the Japanese.

We have saved until last a fantastic description of the "functional" ignorance displayed by those well-meaning Americans who decided it was time for Japan to have a labor movement:

> No attempt, I gathered, was made to distinguish between the good things and the bad in the Japanese system. Only a few people in the occupation were ready to admit that a certain amount of good existed there. A good example of this was their attitude to the relationship between management and labour. The reformers had been distressed to discover that the labour movement had been firmly kept down in Japan. They spared no pains to remedy this, and in no time at all they had shepherded some six million workers into a thousand odd unions. So far so good, but they perhaps forgot that the trades union movement in all countries has grown up in all countries as a defence against the selfishness and irresponsibility of capital. In Japan, despite bad conditions and low wages, the workers knew that management would look after them. They did not sell their labour in exchange for subsistence, but gave their loyalty in return for protection. They had no rights in the western sense, but when they were sick or when they had private troubles, the employer expected to take their problems on himself. If there was a slump, or the firm fell on evil days, he did not start at once turning hands away but kept them on at full wages, often at a great loss to himself, until better times came back.
>
> Japanese management was probably unique in the world in this sense of obligation to the worker, but it failed to please the reformers, being so hopelessly and indisputably fee-yoodle. At one moment, they would encourage the men in a factory to organize and demand better treatment and, in the next, they would urge the directors to sack half of them and get their enterprise running on a rational basis. They could not believe that to employ unnecessary hands might be as sound a way of meeting a difficulty as to throw them all on to a relief from the state. Things were run back home, they recollected, very differently. As for the capers the management cut in their dealings with the new labour organizations, subsidizing their activities, continuing their wages when they went on strike, paying the printer's bill for inflammatory leaflets directed against themselves and even, in one notable case, supplying free meals to some men who had seized the works and barricaded themselves inside, and listening patiently while they abused them for the poor quality of it, one could only throw up one's hands and conclude that one had fallen among a race of eccentrics.

This is certainly a time when there should be great value in studying our cultural weaknesses and our ungainly pretensions as a qualified arbiter of the morals of the world. Miss Tracy's book, written without rancor, rather with sympathy, is an outstanding text for such study, and well worth owning.

COMMENTARY
PROOF AND PRINCIPLES

RECENTLY, in this column, we spoke of principles as being, essentially, non-transferable. Not to seem unfriendly to "rival metaphysicians," we should perhaps explain that we do not consider any convictions to be personal property, for we do not place dependence upon private views. It is the rare thinker—we would almost say, the freak of human nature—who has not found "his" ideas expressed by other men, who has not discovered, one by one, here and there in time and space, a community of minds of which he is grateful to be a part. The crude independence of the sophomoric thinker soon wears off, and we confidently expect that those who long for personal authority instead of impersonal validity will some day become an extinct species.

The ancients, it may be recalled, knew nothing of what in modern times we call "plagiarism." They borrowed freely from one another, disregarding questions of "priority." They never indulged in wars of words over who originally formulated an idea. A controversy such as went on between the followers of Leibniz and Newton, as to which of the two should be honored for having "invented" the mathematical theory of the calculus, was unknown to the ancients. For them, the idea, and not its author, had the major importance.

Meanwhile, MANAS tries to fulfill what its editors conceive to be the individual's responsibility to the principles, the living ideas, in his own mind. The magazine is an effort to share the use of principles, not a belief in them. This effort is not real unless it is shared, for principles which have only private value may as well not exist. Although the facts of human experience must finally be resolved into meaning by each man for himself, the facts must be accurately judged and impartially determined. It can be postulated that knowledge is not learned alone, any more than life is lived alone, notwithstanding the incontrovertible fact of man's integrity.

Might we not take the liberty of ignoring the conventional emphasis on "proof"? And this, precisely because proof is an individual matter, whereas principles, insofar as they are true, are universal. Reversing the usual practice, MANAS makes no avowal of its "authorities." Let each man determine his own. An idea which is not strong enough to stand alone until evidence is assembled on its behalf has no function in practical affairs. A principle is *designed to explain:* we have only to try the explanation ourselves: there is no better proof.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

A FEW weeks ago someone presented us with a slim volume of poetry on the combined wonders and terrors of high school teaching. Though we are a bit reluctant to commend this book to parents and teachers, since experience indicates that one may easily become deluged by the verses of aspiring poets, it is nonetheless an obligation to do so. The book, which sells for one dollar, is *Teachers Are People*, by Virginia Church, and is published by Wallace Hebberd of Santa Barbara.

The opening paragraph of a review of this book in the *Christian Science Monitor* amply justifies its publication, and the time which readers may spend in enjoying it:

> Why don't more teachers write about their experiences with children? Why don't we hear more about their day's work, with its hopes, and discouragements, and infinitely rewarding little successes? Plenty of teachers write. Most professors seem to be authors of books. But how seldom do we learn from them what it is like to teach, what makes them stick it out in spite of everything, how the schoolroom and the conference room feel. If you have ever taught, you will find your own teaching experience mirrored in these verses. As verses they may not be great poetry, but as recaptured teacher experience they are gems, every one of them.

Though not all Miss Church's verses are devoted to generalized themes, many of them, rather, with rare perceptiveness, throwing light on some specific psychological problem of the classroom, the two poems following are indicative of a good teacher's capacity to combine philosophical insight with a youthful spirit:

> Each day I learn more
> Than I teach;
> I learn that half knowledge of another's life
> Leads to false judgment;
> I learn that there is a surprising kinship
> In human nature;
> I learn that it's a wise father who knows his own son
> I learn that what we expect we get;
> I learn that there's more good than evil in this world;
> That age is a question of spirit;
> That youth is the best of life
> No matter how numerous its years;
> I learn how much there is to learn.
>
> It is a strenuous world
> That has been wished on the present-day youth.
> Problems
> Industrial, political, moral,
> Surge in the air.
> Moving picture, radio, and automobile
> Have helped to create an environment
> That, like a mighty rushing torrent,
> Is sweeping the world.
> The younger generation
> Knee-deep in its waters
> Is trying valiantly
> To utilize the energy of the current,
> While we stand on the shore,
> Wringing our hands,
> And criticize their bathing-suits.

The concluding section of *Teachers Are People* strikes us as having some nicely balanced feelings about the relationship of high school children to war. Miss Church wrote these verses at a time when a good many of "her" very recent teen-agers were overseas. It is usual either to be ecstatic over the nobility of participation in war, or to see nothing but Destruction of the beauty of young lives in a situation to be abhorred. But here a fine distinction is made. Miss Church feels the idealism and the bravery of the young, all right—and lets us see it for ourselves by courtesy of her inclusion, in verse, of letters sent to her from the front. But this does not make her "endorse" the war, nor even quite feel she must agree that it was a political necessity. Participation in even a modern war can, for the individual, have a symbolic meaning. In such rare occasions it is well to see "the seed beneath the snow," no matter how destructive and degrading the war situation itself.

Last but not least, one recommendation for Miss Church's book is that her older students will be quite capable of reading and appreciating her artistry. When Miss Church is "interpretive," she

manages this without removing herself from an identification with the world she knows and loves.

We have written a good deal in this column on the need for parents to learn to bridge the age-gap which so often unnecessarily separates them from their children. And if we accuse parenthood of often being a sort of ignorantly stilted affair, we must here broaden our accusation to include many teachers of the elementary and secondary schools—and last, but not least, of the universities. If we need any evidence that few schools manage to be organic communities of learning, we have only to note the scarcity of human-interest books by teachers, dealing directly and warmly with teacher-pupil relationships. College professors don't seem to know enough about their pupils to write books about them, and yet, when we come to think of it, there should be no more interesting subject for the man who likes to write. In the high schools and the universities, where, of all places, we might hope to see a removal of the barriers of age, we often find these barriers the highest. A member of a labor crew often stands a far better chance of knowing his superintendent's real "mind" and personality than does the college student his professor's, and this is not to be explained solely by the fact that universities "must have large classes." The truth of the matter is, perhaps, as Dr. Franz Schneider implied in a radio talk recently mentioned here, that the university has not overcome its medieval heritage, and the custom of wanting teachers to be considered a race apart, as Revelators possessed of Special Authority, still persists. The reasons are numerous, but one is that a considerable number of teachers temperamentally prefer an isolated life to one of unsettling give-and-take with their pupils. This is sometimes called the "Conservatism" of the university, but the term is far too polite.

In any case, we should like to suggest that there are two fields of writing as yet practically untouched. The first, to which Miss Church's modest effort may be said to belong, is the writing of a teacher about pupils in some manner able to bring increased mutual understanding for the problems of older and younger generations.

The second unexplored field for writing might be entered by budding authors among the students of a university if they have a natural talent for capturing the mood of the average classroom inmate, and the specific impressions gathered in most of the courses he is obliged to pursue. Humorous asides on college work are usually written, when they are written at all, by men who mentally return to their own school days during later life in a nostalgic mood. How much more important school novels could be if they filled the requirements of being written by a participant in college life.

A great many young fiction-writing aspirants are winning acclaim for war novels. Some of similar caliber are presently finishing their university studies. If the move toward the humanizing and genuine democratization of our universities continues, we might find the scholastic environment a plausible setting for interesting and event dramatic stories.

FRONTIERS

Search for Social Principles

ONE of the consequences of the emergence of Soviet Russia as a modern Power-State with less, rather than more, promise for the common man than the so-called "capitalist democracies," has been the return of thoughtful humanitarians to the quest for first principles of social organization. The Marxist dream, expressed in the *Communist Manifesto,* of "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all," has been transformed into a nightmare of compulsion, typified by the *lagiers* (forced-labor camps) of Siberia and other regions of the vast Soviet domain, in which literally millions of political and other prisoners are wearing out their miserable lives.

If Capitalism means exploitation of class by class, Communism means the bondage of all classes to the State; and Socialism, today, save for its unrealized ideals, means for most some sort of arrested development of both Capitalism and Communism—which is hardly a conception to attract the devotion of very many people. In what direction, then, is the "arrested" idealism of social thinkers to flow?

Two developments may be recognized as growing out of this situation. First, there is the revival of Anarchism—not the bomb-throwing type of anarchism associated in the public mind with Johann Most and Alexander Berkman, but an anarchism which is usually united with war resistance and non-violent methods of revolution. This movement is represented in both England and the United States by a growing number of young men and women who challenge the increasing controls of government over their lives. At its fringes—and an anarchist movement, being relatively unorganized on principle, always has very large fringes—anarchist thinking blends imperceptibly with a variety of anti-state schools of thought. Albert Jay Nock's *Our Enemy, the State* has found many enthusiastic readers during recent years (originally published in 1935, this volume was reprinted in 1946 by the Caxton Printers, of Caldwell, Idaho), and Herbert Spencer's essay, *Man and the State* (also reprinted by Caxton), is winning new converts to *laissez faire* theories of government and economics. In fact, somewhere at about this point, the search for first principles leaves the anarchist camp and pursues its devious way through *Saturday Evening Post* editorials and the pamphleteering efforts of Garet Garrett. As Dwight Macdonald pointed out in *The Root Is Man,* the new "radical" outlook has certain views in common with traditional Conservative doctrine, an association which causes "a good deal of confusion." But while anarchists fear the loss of their freedom at the hands of the State, the modern advocates of *laissez faire* economics fear the loss of or interference with their property—and Freedom and Property, John Locke to the contrary, are not the same thing.

It would be a mistake, however, to neglect the searchings that come from the economic and political Right on the supposition that there is no impartiality to be found there. To argue that property or riches are necessarily corrupting is to succumb to the same sort of determinism as that which asserts that the unemployed are invariably shiftless and lazy. No one can read Rose Wilder Lane's *Discovery of Freedom* without being impressed by the passionate sincerity of this volume. If there are factors in the social equation which Mrs. Lane has overlooked, this is a criticism which applies in many directions, and the idea of self-reliance, upon which her book is based, is certainly a first principle of any worthy philosophy, whether personal or social. A book along similar lines, recently issued by the Foundation for Economic Education, is Frederic Bastiat's *The Law,* first published one hundred years ago—a time when the Revolution of 1848 was fresh in the memory of all Europeans. This work is introduced by its present publishers as containing "eternal truths," a claim that would be more persuasive if it were also explained that

other "truths," probably just as eternal, are not mentioned by Bastiat at all. *The Law*, however, is more than a mere tract against socialism and communism. It deals with conceptions that are basic to any evaluation of the function of government.

Briefly, Bastiat regards *law* as justice in operation—no more, no less. In his words:

> When justice is organized by law—that is, by force—this excludes the idea of using law (force) to organize any human activity whatever, whether it be labor, charity, agriculture, industry, education, art, or religion. The organizing by law of any one of these would inevitably destroy the essential organization—justice. For truly, how can we imagine force being used against the liberty of citizens without it also being used against justice, and thus acting against its proper purpose ?
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> Here I encounter the most popular fallacy of our times. It is not considered sufficient that law should be just; it must be philanthropic. Nor it is sufficient that the law should guarantee to every citizen the free and inoffensive use of his faculties for physical, intellectual, and moral self-improvement. Instead, it is demanded that the law should directly extend welfare, education, and morality throughout the nation. . . .
>
> Mr. de Lamartine once wrote to me thusly: "Your doctrine is only the half of my program. You have stopped at liberty; I go on to fraternity." I answered him: "The second half of your program will destroy the first."
>
> In fact, it is impossible for me to separate the word *fraternity* from the word *voluntary.* I cannot possibly understand how fraternity can be *legally* enforced without liberty being *legally* destroyed, and thus justice being *legally* trampled underfoot.
>
> Legal plunder has two roots: One of them, as I have said before, is in human greed; the other is in false philanthropy.

Bastiat presents one other principle worth noticing. He challenges the "divine right" of legislators to "design" social systems for the good of the people, on the assumption that "the people" are too passive and unresourceful to know how to serve their own welfare. He reviews the historians of past social systems, showing how it is always assumed that the legislators, through the States they create, are the great benefactors of the supine masses. He writes:

> Open any book on philosophy, politics, or history. . . . In all of them, you will probably find this idea that mankind is merely inert matter, receiving life, organization, morality, and prosperity from the power of the state. And even worse, it will be stated that mankind tends toward degeneration, and is stopped from this downward course only by the mysterious hand of the legislator.

The Law is a short book containing simple contentions. A reading of it will settle very little for those who are determined to do impartial thinking about the social question; but the lucidity with which Bastiat sets forth his major thesis is of particular value. When he says, "If you attempt to make the law religious, fraternal, equalizing, philanthropic, industrial, literary, or artistic—you will then be lost in an uncharted territory, in vagueness and uncertainty, in a forced utopia or, even worse, in a multitude of utopias, each striving to seize the law and impose it upon you"—he is describing actual conditions under totalitarian rule. And when he says, further—

> This is true because fraternity and philanthropy, unlike justice, do not have precise limits. Once started, where will you stop? And where will the law stop itself?

—he asks a question which no one has been able to answer, as yet.

Obviously, there are many questions to be put to Mr. Bastiat in return—the same sort of questions that the reader will desire to ask Herbert Spencer and Rose Wilder Lane; but it is doubtful that any questions so directed can reduce Bastiat's questions to unimportance. And to *ignore* Bastiat's questions and principles has been the great mistake of the revolutionaries and the reformers of our age.

Has it Occurred to Us'

EDUCATION—whatever may be the faults of educational systems—is a magic word, even today, when almost all other kinds of magic seem to have lost their potency. A book like Houston Peterson's *Great Teachers* (Rutgers University Press, 1946) does not go back two or three centuries, or a millennium or two, for its gallery of portraits, but is able to find within two generations a distinguished assortment of men and women who demonstrated what may be called the alchemy of true teaching. There *are* teachers among us who know how to look for the jumping spark in the mind of the young; who kindle enthusiasm, awaken yearning, cherish the small voices that hesitantly begin to speak of ageless things; and who listen with that curious power of sympathy which at length is rewarded by the sound of thoughts spoken for the first time by some one man or woman, girl or boy or child.

But has it occurred to us that a fine teacher appears and continues only so long as there are pupils and students to *need* his unique efforts, to see the gifts he offers and to find ways of deserving their possession?

One rare educator—whether available to thousands in a huge metropolitan university or quietly meeting a handful of students in some small community or in an unpopular department—heads a stream of influence that may run off in many tributaries, refreshing eager minds unto the third and the fourth generation. We are sentimental about the responsibility of the schoolteacher, perhaps because we know their work should be appreciated (even if skimpily paid). But we are usually hazy on the reasons (aside from Tradition) for respect-of-teachers. Our haziness is in part the consequence of a certain superstition: that children and other people learn by acquisition, by hoarding something called knowledge as if it were a species of metaphysical marbles. It follows that what goes in and what is saved up is more important than what might have been in the mind in the first place, and learning comes to be measured by how much information can be jiggled around in the brain.

Yet each one can ask himself where he derived his greatest and strongest inspiration, and who were the liberating teachers of his own experience . . . and discover that the wonder of understanding, the thrill of a synthesizing vision, the sudden knowledge that certainty is possible though not yet attained—came directly from two sources simultaneously: from within himself and from some other person who (whatever his function or position) stood for the moment as teacher. In a truer sense, the source of that supremely educative moment is not dual, but singular: it is itself a fusion of like elements, divided and separated only technically between two minds. The flash of comprehension is not a thing of time; it takes no time at all. Nevertheless, such moments justify all the time given to education.

To shape the circumstances which will afford the least obstacles to the educative synthesis of teacher-and-pupil or fellow-discoverers, to honor the genius of sympathy over the giant of information, to revere the attitude of impartiality above all lesser scholastic traits, to seek out and support wholeheartedly the "dedicated mind" for the sake of its uncompromising sincerity and aside from its academic specialty—these are the aims of those who keep alive the spirit of learning. Their religion is not essentially that of an outside god, for they believe in the potentialities of the human mind, with its power to roam the universe. They look for ideas that bear wisdom for all men and that give hope of self-knowledge.

Has it occurred to us that education lies more in the endless search than in temporary accomplishments, and most of all in sharing the search with all who will join therein?