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MEN AND IDEA SYSTEMS

IN human relations, there are, one may say, two sorts of trust—simple trust and complex trust. In *Fontamara, Bread and Wine,* and *Seed beneath the Snow,* Ignazio Silone describes the breakdown of both, and in the last book of his trilogy, he places his faith in tireless labors to restore simple trust between human beings. This is the message of *Seed beneath the Snow.* In Italy, the decay of culture has gone too far for any attempt to restore trust—trust in law, trust in culture, trust in institutions. In this story, the foundations of human relations have been worn away by endless deceptions and betrayals, so that, for the Italian peasants, any expression of "social philosophy" is entirely beyond their grasp. How can a man who expects to be cheated by his next-door neighbor—by all his neighbors—and very likely will himself cheat anyone he can, comprehend propositions of social philosophy?

Spina, Silone's leading character, experiences his most acute disappointment in *Bread and Wine* when he discovers that the pamphlets he has been writing on social reform are incomprehensible to the Italian peasants. His words and ideas are just gibberish, so far as they are concerned. He studies the corruption of mind which they have suffered, and in *Seed beneath the Snow,* with a comrade or two, goes back to the beginning of things. He writes no more pamphlets, but plows a widow's field, without being asked, smiles, and goes away. This, and like acts of kindness, are the "seeds" which will restore the trust of human beings in one another, and until men can trust one another, there will be nothing more that men like Spina can do.

Complex trust becomes possible after simple personal trust is well established. It is a form of complex trust that, in some democratic societies, a man charged with an offense is said to be innocent until proved guilty by due process of law. The same sort of trust makes it possible for a man to submit his cause to the judicial process in the expectation of receiving justice. In a community founded upon complex trust, no innocent man and no just man need fear the processes of the law, for they are protected by certain "tested safeguards" which embody the meaning of this complex trust. These legal principles were expressed in a recent decision of the Supreme Court of the United States:

> An accused in court must be tried by an impartial jury, has a right to be represented by counsel, he must be clearly informed of the charges against him, the law which he is charged with violating must have been passed before he committed the act charged, he must be confronted by the witnesses against him, he must not be compelled to incriminate himself, he cannot twice be put in jeopardy for the same offense, and even after conviction no cruel and unusual punishment can be inflicted upon him.

A long and painful evolution of social institutions is expressed by these few words. Neither the words nor the laws embodying the ideas give force to the procedure which they describe, but the common consent and the common confidence of the people, which have grown into a structure of impersonal trust, make them an organic part of social relationships in a democratic society. Nor is "perfection" in the administration of these principles possible or necessary. Good faith does not rest upon perfection, but upon the general intent of the human spirit. Great social ideals are abstractions which public officials have before them as standards for their conduct, but the moral power of such standards lies not only in the probity of officials, but equally in an appreciation of their importance by the general public. The consciousness of ideals, even though they are only imperfectly realized, imparts a moral temper to the

forms of culture and gives direction to education and to social movements of every sort.

What is the pertinence of all this? In recent years the whole idea of "trust" as the basis of human relationships has suffered aggressive attacks. The most obvious attack—the one, that is, which we recognize most easily—came in the form of despotic doctrines of government; we have been told, and we have largely believed, that the second world war was fought to oppose the advance of doctrines which would abolish the security of the individual in institutions of government and law.

The danger to freedom involved in the totalitarian theory of government has often been illustrated by what happened to the German civil service after the Nazi revolution. Under the Weimar Republic, a civil servant was guaranteed freedom of political opinion and association and could be dismissed from service only if he participated in acts "aiming at the forcible overthrow of the existing political order." The Nazis changed all this. Political "reliability" became the primary requirement. Communists, socialists, liberals and pacifists were discharged. The government employee had to identify himself with the ideology of National Socialism. He could be disciplined for

> . . . buying at a Jewish store; expressing concern over the closing of denominational schools; pointing to any parallels between National Socialism and Communism; failing to protest against "insults" to National Socialism uttered in the course of church services.

As only four per cent of the German civil servants were Nazis when Hitler came to power, application of such rules soon decimated the service. In 1937 a new order of regulations was passed to assure life-tenure to all government employees who would swear loyalty to Hitler. Dismissal, however, was inevitable should the official no longer "give assurance of acting at all times in the interest of the National Socialist state." In effect, the civil service became a branch of the Nazi Party, but even after this iron control was established, allegedly independent tribunals were set up to provide any accused employee with a "fair trial."

In the *Yale Law Journal* for December, 1948, Thomas I. Emerson and David M. Helfeld discuss "Loyalty Among Government Employees," providing the following summary of the Nazi innovations in civil service procedure:

> In the first period of the new regime the right to a hearing and appeal was abolished. Intrigue and espionage were encouraged. A wave of denunciations swept the desks of personnel officers. Those whose "inner conviction" was felt to be in opposition to the new order were in imminent danger of separation from the service. Although at most only ten per cent were removed during the first two years of the new regime, demoralization resulted and the service was on the verge of being destroyed as a useful instrument for carrying out the ends of the new order.

It was then that "reforms" were instituted, to increase the sense of security of government employees, and the "service disciplinary courts" provided before which the accused could enjoy an open hearing with complete disclosure of the evidence against him. Emerson and Helfeld comment: "While such procedures have been subject to the overriding powers of the secret police, the fact that they have been formulated at all indicates their estimated importance in terms of employee morale and efficient government operation."

In other words, the open hearing and disclosure of evidence against him allowed by the Nazis to the accused were measures of expediency, based upon no principle. The Nazis would have preferred to continue their original policy of arbitrary removal—and doubtless gained their ends, anyhow, one way or another—but, they were obliged to institute the similitude of "just" procedures to avoid the collapse of the civil service.

Meanwhile, in the United States since the war, in curious contrast to the Nazi procedure, an exactly opposite expedient has been applied in the

procedures of the Loyalty Review Board established by executive order of the President on March 22, 1947. With an entirely different conception of human rights, traditionally speaking, and institutions founded upon the ideals of freedom of thought and due process of law, the United States has nevertheless set up procedures which frankly ignore basic features of legal justice in America. According to Emerson and Helfeld:

> The most significant defects are:
>
> (1) The failure to provide for complete notice of the charges and for full disclosure of the evidence upon which the decision is reached, these deficiencies resulting in denial of the traditional rights of rebuttal, confrontation and cross-examination.
>
> (2) The failure to provide for judicial review.

The evidence against accused government employees is generally supplied by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and it is argued that important sources of information would be closed to the FBI if they were disclosed in open hearing. The Chairman of the Loyalty Review Board has candidly declared that the evidence possessed by the Government will be withheld from the accused "in the great majority of the cases." The effect of this rule is illustrated by a passage quoted by Emerson and Helfeld from Bert Andrews' *Washington Witch Hunt,* giving the reply of an investigator to a State Department employee accused of being a "poor security risk," after the latter had repeatedly asked that specific charges be made, so that he could defend himself against them. All that the investigator would say was this:

> "Well, we realize the difficulty you are in, in this position; on the other hand, I'd suggest that you might think back over your own career and perhaps in your own mind delve into some of the factors that have gone into your career which you think might have been subject to question, and see what they are and see whether you'd like to explain or make any statement with regard to any of them—that is about the best I can do as far as helping you along that line."

Is, then, the distinction between totalitarianism, both past and present, and the government of the United States, only one of degree in arbitrary authority? One would think so, according to this comparison. But any such conclusion would overlook the basic contrast in social philosophy between the principles of self-government which the American Constitution embodies and the idea of arbitrary single party rule.

In the one case, the case of totalitarianism, we are confronted by a social order in which distrust of human beings has been made into a ruling principle. The individual is at both theoretical and practical discount in a political despotism. What dignity is allowed the individual is as a sop thrown to him by authority—a "morale" factor devised by expediency. The rule of force and dogmatic authority has replaced the impersonal authority of law, and fear is substituted for the complex trust from which the law draws its sanction for the individual.

In the other case, that of a professedly democratic society which, under the stimulus of fear, adopts as expedients some of the practices of totalitarianism, it is possible to recognize the means by which the complex trust of a civilized community is gradually destroyed and its members made pliable to despotic control.

What is the same, in both cases, is human nature, and the arbitrary procedures which the totalitarians practice on principle, but which the democracies are increasingly adopting as expedients. In other words, the democracies still have opportunity for self-criticism, while the populations under totalitarian rule do not.

The mood of suspicion and ungrounded accusation that is spreading throughout the United States has made the occasion for a discussion of this sort in MANAS. This mood grows from a general breakdown of trust which, if it continues, can end only in the corruption of both public and private life such as Silone pictures in *Bread and Wine and Seed beneath the Snow.* MANAS, for

example, has to explain too frequently that there is no ulterior motive in its editorial policy of attempting unbiased discussion of broad social problems. Despite many clear statements on the issues of human freedom, this journal was recently accused of disseminating "subtle propaganda for State Socialism," the evidence being found in the statement (MANAS, April 27) that, "The *intelligent* way to oppose state socialism would be to suggest some other means of developing social responsibility than control by government." As we read this sentence, it seems to have a significance which is precisely the reverse of what is charged. MANAS is also frowned upon for daring to use the expression, "Western imperialism," without adding, immediately thereafter, "the Russians, of course, are imperialistic, too." These reactions seem to us to be based upon nothing more than neurotic insecurity and undiscriminating fear.

We have never understood why Russian imperialism is more hateful than any other sort, unless it is to be regarded as a *rival* imperialism. And the debate about which rival imperialism is the better one is a forum which holds no attraction for MANAS. The Russians, if we may hazard a judgment, are human beings in the grip of a bad system of ideas, while the Americans are human beings who are rapidly dissipating their priceless heritage of a good system of ideas. What, then, is the point of talking about the Russians?

Letter from
GERMANY

BERLIN.—During this period of the "streamlining" of society to prepare for and against total destruction, here, in Berlin, one feels like an advanced post of social experience when looking at the ruins and considering the daily needs of the inhabitants of this city. Will the fate of Berlin and the Berliners—and of many other cities in the world—forecast the future for other big cities and their populations?

The first two years following the end of the war (1945-1947) were very bad: everything was broken down, not only buildings and transportation facilities, but also the spirit of the people, health, morale, security, life-values. There reigned one superior force in all minds: *depression.* This depression, however, not only affected the former Nazis who might have, with right, considerable difficulties; it influenced anti-Nazis as well. The latter had contemplated an entirely different ending to the Hitler regime, and they now found themselves overtaken by the same deep degradation as all the other Germans. The second most important factor was *insecurity:* through the invading troops, through the falling bricks from the ruins, the uncertainty of food provision for the next day, through drinking water which might be infected, through . . . . it is impossible to enumerate all factors which could imperil the Berliners. Next comes *nervousness,* originating from the excessive greed caused by the daily struggle for one's bare life, securing a seat in the next train or tram, securing potatoes, etc., etc., circumstances which the authorities were powerless to change. Among the difficulties which have continued up to the present day are *hunger, cold, and darkness* in winter, and the interminable *waste of time and energy* inevitable in an over-organized community where all things are foreseen and provided for by unrelated services and sources.

Lately, the situation has "improved," in two ways: First, you get "accustomed" to many things after a while. One has his occupation, his relations, his aims and tasks. One no longer pays much attention to the horrible surroundings of a ruined city. In fact, comparing many Berlin streets with their drab apartment-building fronts, before the war and now, no great difference is noticeable, with the exception that in place of the windows, there are merely black and empty holes. Modern cities are usually not very attractive as regards architectural beauty, either before or after a war, but sometimes one will find the ruins bathed in moonlight, with their bizarre skylines, especially on cold nights, a sight worth seeing. There is also the good contact with a city which has shared the same fate with you in war and peace. You both belong together, with scars and poverty, and share the common fight against the latest oppressions from the East. Then there has been a measure of improvement in supplies.

We now return to the question of what may be hoped for the future. Intangible forces start wars, and these forces gradually drag us down to a still lower standard of life. What are these powers which seem to be trying to frustrate all human morals and rational understanding?

This process appears to be a law of present society. This society, which tries so strenuously to obtain a permanent abundance of material goods, achieves instead just the opposite result—constant impoverishment of large territories. The wealth is expressed merely in articles which are unfit for human consumption, such as tanks, weapons, war-planes, and atomic bombs. But there is a saying, "Trees don't grow boundless into the heavens." The subsequent suffocation which naturally follows such excessive production, must interrupt the vicious circle of our epoch. Human sense and human power of formation may find therewith again the possibility of gaining control over the intangible destructive forces and of transforming them into the means to a free and plentiful life. The way thereto, as in the case of all developments, including those of every individual, will be through difficult and manifold crises.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
PSYCHOLOGICAL WANDERINGS

PEARL BUCK'S *Kinfolk* (John Day) for May and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (Viking), Book-of-the-Month selection for June, afford some interesting comparisons and contrasts. In *Kinfolk,* the reader becomes aware of a persistent thesis which affects both the characterizations and the developments of the plot—the thesis that man is most apt to find happiness by sinking his physical and psychological roots in a life of simple, basic productivity. He will do well to eschew "power" and position, identifying himself with the needs of his people in a practical, educational way, as does James Liang, the young American-Chinese doctor who is the central figure of the story. Liang returns to China after achieving some reputation as a surgeon in America. He is driven by an indefinable restlessness, plus a feeling of obligation to his own people, first, to move to an understaffed hospital in Peking, and finally to move still deeper into the heart and soul of his people by returning to his ancestral village. There, too, he is a doctor, making the rudimentary beginnings of a hospital, but the environment is better than New York or Peking, for he finally discovers *himself* in the village in ways he could not have, says Mrs. Buck, in the larger cities.

In a sense, it is misleading to call James Liang the "leading" character. The whole story seems designed to carry Mrs. Buck's message of conviction as to where happiness for human beings lies—in the simple things. And all the activities of James Liang's kinfolk are an important part of Mrs. Buck's argument. For this reason, *Kinfolk* might be considered to be one of the most "integrated" novels of recent years, and it seems to be a continued outflowing of an attitude expressed by Mrs. Buck on the occasion of Gandhi's assassination. (See MANAS for April 28, 1948.)

But the interest in a simple, uncomplicated life is not unique with either Gandhi or Mrs. Buck. We find strong echoes of this same conviction in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman.* A great success on Broadway, partly owing, no doubt, to the abilities of Lee Cobb, this play is in some ways a peculiar combination. The atmosphere is definitely reminiscent of James T. Farrell's Studs Lonnigan series. Willy Loman is also a bit of a Babbitt, but a 1949 model, and therefore more disorganized. We sense that he is meant to represent an "average" of the many men who continuously dream of sudden financial success—men who are usually salesmen or promoters, these positions in the business world promising the greatest hope of rapid achievement. But Willy and his two sons, while caught as hopelessly as Farrell's characters by a grasping society which encourages only artificial values, do have some intimation of what they *ought* to have done. There is a better way, and Willy is not completely without the ability to see it. This quality is reminiscent of Mrs. Buck rather than James Farrell. Willy keeps thinking about retiring to a farm, and he keeps trying to grow vegetables in the midst of an apartment house district.

Of the two Loman sons, Biff, the more sensitive, is also the more unhappy, because even less able than his brother and father to adjust to all the false assumptions which apparently must be made if one is to become a "big man." Biff travels in the West and works on farms and ranches, is happy until the get-rich-quick virus attacks him. Even his moderately successful brother is subject to this vacillation between the questionable values of a sales-promotion society and the enjoyments of a more independent life closer to the soil. . . . It is doubtful whether any informed reader will be able to recognize *Death of a Salesman* from these comments, for the book is essentially the tragedy of a man who comes to the end of his road without realizing any of his dreams, cruelly buffeted by the cold, cynical game of quick profits which he endeavored to play. But the aforementioned intimations of some other sort of

life which might have been lived by Willy and his two sons interest us; perhaps they were prompted by the author's own feelings, not dissimilar to the quality which dominates Mrs. Buck's work.

Kinfolk, we think, deserves some separate comment as one of the most instructive and excellent of recent novels. So far as "instructiveness" is concerned, *Kinfolk* seems Mrs. Buck's finest as well as her longest novel. We are privileged to obtain a view of the unfolding difficulties which beset all "foreign minorities" in the United States; we are led to reflect upon the cultural adjustments imperatively imposed upon people who are transplanted to the New World, and upon the subtle conflicts which inevitably arise. In *Kinfolk* there are some Chinese who wish to lose their "Chineseness" in the United States because it costs them so much humiliation among Americans. Others try to capitalize upon being "oriental" and the inheritors of China's great culture, and there is also a middle group of Chinese who are constantly confused by trying to live according to two standards at the same time. (Studies of this sort, if carefully done, further the objective established by Louis Adamic, both as the author of *Native's Return, My America,* and as the founder of the Common Ground group for assistance to and appreciation of transplanted racial minorities.)

Mrs. Buck does something else which is very interesting; she contrasts and correlates the values of old-fashioned personal morality with the values which have gained ascendancy in the modern world. The extremely dissimilar attitudes toward marriage and love affairs, toward family and social position receive remarkably balanced treatment. Here, Mrs. Buck does not argue for either the "old" or for the "new," but tries to increase understanding of both. Because she is not cynical about either the old values or the new, she probably does a much more convincing job in both defending and criticizing than other writers who deal with this problem.

This book is definitely recommended for reading-sharing between parents and teen-age children. A month or so ago we remarked that BoM had as yet failed to produce a volume that could win our unqualified approbation and recommendation. Mrs. Buck obliges us to retract this judgment. *Kinfolk* is a very good book, and we are very glad that it is going to reach as many American homes as it will.

COMMENTARY
THE HUNGRY HIDE

AN article by Paul Mattick in *The Adelphi,* an English quarterly edited by Henry Williamson (founded by John Middleton Murry twenty-five years ago), gives an account of physical and psychological conditions in present-day Berlin. Having been guilty of echoing the familiar comment on the Germans, "They seem to be very sorry for themselves, and to think of nothing but their own troubles," we were glad to come across this article. What Mr. Mattick describes does not, perhaps, "excuse" the self-pity which is commonly attributed to Germans under the occupation, but it certainly helps the reader to realize how near to literal obsession has been existence of the average Berliner during recent years. Take this passage on the food shortage:

> Hunger shows; it drives the smiles from the faces and tightens the skin on the bones. The flesh turns yellowish-brown and eyes sink into their sockets. There is an irritated tired look in the eyes, and sadness and anger around the mouth. The backs are bent and the steps are unsure as if in hesitation before the grave. When hunger comes, it appears publicly only in its early stages and in some cases not at all. Permanent hunger makes one indifferent, even to the self. The hungry hide like wounded animals in their caves. Starvation is not a street sight; it doesn't offer itself to curious visitors. The people on the streets, and particularly on the still comfortable streets, frequented by even more comfortable visitors, are still struggling against starvation with all the weapons at their command. If they are hungry, they rush about not to get hungrier. They still care about their appearance, dress up, brush, wash and mend not to add moral humiliation to the physical dilemma. The starving rush no longer. They do not clutter the streets; they have no shoes to walk in and no reason to be seen. They stay at home, in their rooms, live in their beds, or in the wards of hospitals, apathetically awaiting either a miracle or death.
>
> Their peaceful withering away is the triumph of the rationing system. It is always a minority that succumbs first, to make room for another minority, recruited from the large mass of people fighting for their place in the majority. But in the end the various minorities represent a previous majority. This prospect, however, only intensifies the struggle for life and gives the hunger-obsession first place in the minds of the obsessed.

If some purpose could be conceived for all this suffering, some constructive result anticipated as the end of the ordeal, and if the end were at least in sight, these terrible circumstances would doubtless be easier to endure. It is the impotence of the people which creates their despair.

Today, the happiest of all in Berlin are the children who were born since the hunger began—who have never experienced anything else. "They do not know about candies, chocolates and fruits, and often refuse these strange things if they are offered to them. The world of hunger, cold and want is the only world they know about. . . . Their carefree attitude misleads the wellfed visitors to consider the claims of misery to be grossly exaggerated. The doctors know differently, of course. . . ."

There are far too few publications like *The Adelphi,* issued not for profit, nor for special interest, cause or party, but simply to tell the truth. How do we know this? By the only means it is ever possible to judge a reflective and descriptive publication from afar—by the mood and quality of its reflections. Honest, unambitious writing—so little of it exists, these days—carries with it a peace and a friendliness which, in the realm of ideas, convey the same release from strain that a quiet day in the country may afford. It is not striving after anything, but is content with itself.

Although the subject-matter of Paul Mattick's article has no peace in it, the discussion does not disturb, but rather deepens the understanding. We are confident that in a world where there was only writing of this sort, genuine peace would prevail.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

ONE reader's comment is directly related to our last week's discussion of children's "better behavior" with strangers. The comment is that simply "by living with us, children must form a great many subconscious evaluations of our characters. This ought to follow, if it is true, as you often assert, that every child possesses an innate, intuitive sense of values. It would seem that the child could be much confused by the combination of unavoidable psychic identification with ourselves and some subconscious awareness of our many inadequacies. If so, such children would never feel as much 'at their best' with us as with others."

Most thoughtful parents must have recognized something of the above dilemma, just as did the reader who posed last week's question. But after arriving at some general psychological truth, the next problem is one of applying it to some specific situation. This seems another occasion for introducing the context of "the neighbors."

Some parents, we fear, tend to deride any neighbor who seems to be held in high esteem by their child. There is no excuse for this, but the explanation of it, in part, must be that the parent is uncomfortably aware of shortcomings of his own which have been revealed during his relationship with the child, and self-conscious about the child's awareness of these shortcomings. If one of the neighbors has the opportunity to appear at a better advantage in the child's eyes, the parent will often strike out at the neighbor with critical innuendo—in defense of his own self-esteem. If it happens that our neighbors are not as bad as we make them out to be—and, of course, they seldom are—our child will discover this, too, and think less of us for deriding people at least as good as ourselves.

Among adults, there is no characteristic which works more inexorably toward the lowering of esteem than the habit of critical or slanderous gossip. Children do not really respect parents who gossip destructively, either. There must be some recognition in the majority of human beings, even when they haven't heard of psychiatrists, that the man who attacks others does so only because he fears attack himself, and he fears attack himself only because he is vulnerable. Children may sense, then, that our tendencies to derogate others are really derogations of ourselves. And if our neighbors happen to be more charitable than we are in personal judgments, it is even likely that our child will develop a kind of loyalty towards such neighbors. Of course, if we were wise enough, we might value such a loyalty rather than resent it: it is established by the child himself and is not imposed upon him—as be will sometimes feel our loyalties are—by the circumstance of birth.

We all profess great concern over the moral development of our children. And however we describe the process of moral education, we will probably find that it corresponds to an analysis popularized by John Dewey: each person must discover that he never acts alone, but always in conjunction with some "total situation" of which he is a part. After the developing moral individual has learned how to distinguish between unintegrated desires and his own basic *needs,* he must then realize, in turn, that intelligent thought and action are always directed toward fulfilling the *needs of the total situation* to which he belongs. Parents wish a child to see that brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents, are part of his "total situation." But it is just as necessary for the parent to see that anything which benefits the child, whatever its source, will be of benefit to the entire family. This, too, is a necessary "total-situation" view. If we are jealous when the child receives advice and instruction from other people, we are hampering opportunities for better relations in the family. For even if the child picks worthy heroes for emulation *outside* the family circle, and finds these more inspiring than ourselves, both we and the other children of the family will benefit from the enlarged moral

horizon of the child, even though our vanity be distinctly unflattered.

As always, the essential work of moral education is that of helping to encourage a positive rather than a negative attitude of mind. Our neighbors' *faults,* for instance, are unimportant—because we cannot build constructively upon faults, cannot incorporate them into a more mature working relationship. But any *constructive* quality can be added and these we can find in all our neighbors, in varying degree. The neighbor whom we regard as extremely eccentric may also possess, for instance, a very high degree of self-reliance. He may be somewhat thoughtless of the sensitivities of others, yet stand firmly on his own feet and be too engrossed with his own attempts to come to satisfactory terms with life to criticize others. Such a person, perhaps rather disreputable in appearance, or keeping a shabby house with no concern about the inevitable criticism of his friends, may have a single quality of great worth—disdain for public opinion—which is of definite value in a society where conformity is often the presiding deity. In other neighbors we may see that a constant concern about the opinion of others is accompanied by an exacting thoughtfulness and great readiness to cooperate. These latter qualities, if separated from their accompanying preoccupation with public esteem, are also to be prized. Perhaps people usually tend toward either too much gregarious concern or too little, but the important thing is to build upon those aspects of both gregariousness and self-reliance which are most socially constructive from a long-term view.

The same form of constructive analysis may be employed when we are viewing the divergent religious beliefs of our neighborhood associations. For there is some psychological and social truth in each religion, however distorted we may personally think it to be. These are the things which the child must be helped to understand and appreciate. And above all, any spontaneous movement of the child's toward appreciation of neighbors should not be hampered by derogatory remarks on our part.

It is also a great waste of time to try to categorize our own or our family's virtues for the child. If we have such, they will be built into our child's character anyway by reflection and absorption. Our faults, on the other hand, may need some intellectual clarification and objective description, for it is necessary for them to be understood as well as felt. The reason should be obvious: Virtues are always constructive, but "vices" need to be diverted into the material of construction by an analyzing process which can lead to some new sense of direction.

Perhaps all we are talking about here is that huge generalized virtue called "humility," but if this is so, we are trying to do it in a way that will suggest the psychological common sense of analyzing both our own faults and our neighbor's virtues. The expanding moral consciousness of the child needs the "community sense" that such a practice may help to develop, and it should go without saying that if we wish children to learn to criticize themselves, we are in the perfect position to demonstrate how such a thing can be done and what benefits may flow from it—by doing it to ourselves.

FRONTIERS

What is a Germ?

WHEN, nearly eighty years ago, Prof. Thomas H. Huxley declared before the British Association for the Advancement of Science that "the molecules of dead matter" cannot "re-arrange themselves into living bodies," he only gave public utterance to a dogma of bacteriology which had gained acceptance from Pasteur's famous experiment aimed at this conclusion. Pasteur sterilized a putrescible fluid and then allowed air to reach it, but excluded dust and germs. No putrefaction ensued. But when he allowed dust to enter the flask, microscopic examination showed a mass of rapidly multiplying microorganisms. He reasoned, therefore, that germs are the cause of infectious disease. This proposition led to the well-known postulates of Koch and the subsequent development, on the basis of Pasteur's and Koch's foundation, of the science of bacteriology. In general, modem bacteriology may be said to rest upon two assumptions: (1) that the tiny micro-organisms called "germs" originate from similar, preexisting organisms; and (2) that they are the primary cause of infectious diseases.

Until recently, orthodox medical investigation has hardly questioned these propositions at all. They are delightfully simple and seem to have a clear basis in experimental science. They also lend themselves to easy explanation and illustration. A man's body is like a castle which must be protected against invasion. Sanitation is the most important line of defense, and next comes the training of warriors to act against invaders when sanitation proves insufficient. Vaccination or inoculation to produce what the doctors call "artificial immunity" is supposed to provide a sort of guerrilla warfare for the defensive forces of the body to keep them in fighting trim. Vaccination is thought to produce a special caste of defenders known as "antibodies"—small fighting particles which attack in particular whatever germs the body has been vaccinated or inoculated against. While this general view of the processes of infectious diseases has been under fire from heterodox quarters ever since Pasteur's time, the objections voiced have had almost no hearing from the medical profession. The Huxleyan conclusion that the spontaneous generation of germs is an impossibility, enforced by a similar declaration by John Tyndall, ended debate in scientific circles. Not until 1941, when Wendell M. Stanley of Rockefeller Institute restored to respectability the theory of heterogenesis (spontaneous generation) to account for the transformation of inert crystals into the self-reproducing cells of the plant cancer, tobacco mosaic, did any well-known biologist or medical man even think of considering the evolution of "life" from "dead" matter.

Now that spontaneous generation is admitted to be "possible," it seems worth while to recall for the record the several scientific thinkers who opposed the Pasteurian dogma throughout the period of its unquestioned rule. First should be mentioned Dr. Antoine Béchamp, a contemporary of Pasteur and author of *La Théorie du Microzyma* and of numerous reports published by the French Academy of Sciences during the nineteenth century. Opposing Pasteur, Béchamp claimed that he had discovered the existence of tiny living granulations which he called "microzymas" and which he asserted "are the antecedents of cells, and up-builders of bodily forms." Bacteria, he further claimed, are mutant forms of microzymas, and he described his observations of this transformation of the granulations of living matter into what are called "germs." (The story of Béchamp's investigations and his professional conflict with Louis Pasteur is dramatically told by E. Douglas Hume in *Béchamp or Pasteur?* published by Daniel in London in 1932.) Béchamp, unlike Pasteur, who was only a chemist, spent a lifetime in active medical practice. He held a degree in pharmacy and taught chemistry, toxicology and physics in leading French universities. It is of special interest that an eminent French physiologist, Dr. J. Tissot, has recently published three large volumes,

complete with plates, in support and extension of Béchamp's theories.

Next on the list of unpopular defenders of spontaneous generation is the English physician, H. Charlton Bastian, a Professor of Medicine in the University of London and a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1911Dr. Bastian published the results of experiments he had conducted over forty years—during which time he was denied space to describe his findings in the organs of orthodox science. His book, *The Origin of Life,* issued by Putnam in New York in 1911, sets forth the details of spontaneous generation he observed as taking place in sterilized saline solutions and colloidal silica. Bastian's explanation for the fact that other investigators have not reported similar results is that they usually superheat the media, instead of simply raising the temperature to a point necessary to assure destruction of all bacilli and bacteria. Among the germs which appeared "spontaneously" in Bastian's solutions were Bacilli, Bacteria, Vibriones, Micrococci, Streptococci, Torulae, and other fungus germs. Along the same lines, but approaching the bizarre and almost unbelievable are the experiments of an English biochemist, Morley-Martin, who died in 1938, whose work, so far as we know, is described only in Maurice Materlinck's recent volume, *The Great Door.*

So much for the "impossibility" of spontaneous generation, concerning which the great biologist, August Weismann, long ago pointed out: "It would be impossible to prove by experiment that spontaneous generation could *never* have taken place; because each negative experiment would only prove that life does not arise *under the conditions of the experiment.* But this by no means excludes the possibility that it might arise under other conditions."

Turning now to the "antibody" theory of immunity, the conventional explanation of how antibodies are formed and how they operate is derived from the assumptions of Paul Ehrlich. An excellent summary of the theory as well as a criticism of Erhlich's assumptions is provided by W. H. Manwaring of Stanford University:

> According to the Ehrlich theory, . . . any specific chemical substance that can be caused to appear or to increase in blood serum as a result of natural infection or artificial immunization is necessarily a specific defensive substance. It is only necessary to obtain this substance in sufficiently large quantities to have a valuable therapeutic agent. Specific antibodies may be readily induced with any pathogenic micro-organism. Yet, in spite of millions of dollars spent in research and ten million in the commercial exploitation of anti-sera, they have been lamentably unsuccessful as therapeutic agents, except in a small group of relatively unimportant diseases. A percentage of success not much greater than the few hygienic successes developed as a result of logical deductions from the medieval miasmatic theory of disease production. . . .
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> . . . the Ehrlich theory was promptly endorsed by the medical profession as a whole. For three decades it has had a prominent place in elementary textbooks in bacteriology and clinical pathology, and has been the generally accepted basis for immunological deduction and clinical interpretation. Yet, I believe there is hardly an element of truth in a single one of the dozen or more basic hypotheses incorporated in this theory. *(Scientific Monthly,* Oct. 1927.)

Two years later, Manwaring offered a devastating criticism of orthodox immunology in an article in *Science* (July 3, 1929). Contesting the theory that antibodies are fixed chemical entities, he described experiments in which foreign proteins, injected into an animal body, hybridized with the natural proteins of the blood to form mongrel breeds. Verner and Weiant, in *The Chiropractor Looks at Infection,* quote Manwaring from another source, as follows:

> Immunization to date [1929] has been based on the Ehrlich theory that the inoculation of disease products in sub-pathogenic doses creates antibodies, or defending entities against any subsequent mass invasion. Not only is there no evidence of these antibodies being formed, but there is ground for believing that the injected germ proteins hybridize with the body proteins to form new tribes, half animal and half human, whose characteristics and effects cannot be predicted. . . . Even non-toxic bacterial substances sometimes hybridize with serum albumins to form specific poisons which continue to multiply,

> breed and crossbreed ad infiniturn, doing untold harm as its reproductivity may continue while life lasts.

In the basic medical text, *Agents of Disease and Host Resistance,* Dr. Claus W. Jungeblut remarks that the many intangible and unknown factors involved are, undoubtedly, "the major reasons why clinical success with the anti-infectious serums varies so disconcertingly, bringing about striking and spectacular improvement in one case and only utter failure in the next." It seems likely that the idea of antibodies as fixed chemical entities may be responsible for such confusing results.

In terms of immunological theory, the most bewildering result of all was obtained by S. Metalnikov in experiments performed at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, This investigator was able to produce "specific" antibodies simply by a conditioned reflex. Reporting his work in *La Presse Medicale* (Nov. 24, 1934), Metalnikov generalized his discovery:

> It is known that the injection of microbe cultures changes abruptly the status of the leucocytes; in the blood. Associating injections with external excitants (scratching the car, or the sound of a speaking trumpet), we secured the typical reactions. With rabbits, the same results were obtained, after a series of experiments, from the external stimuli alone. . . . in our experiments we introduced nothing, and yet the white corpuscles appeared in the blood or in the peritoneum to combat the microbes, to build up barriers against the capsules and abscesses.

Puzzled, Metalnikov supposes that the nervous system may institute "action at a distance," or that the brain exerts a "radiating" influence on body tissues. "By what means," he asks, "do the nerve centers act on the free cells which play the chief part in immunization?" Metalnikov cannot say, but presents his facts.

We cannot explain these things either, yet one thing seems certain: The body, and every cell, every minutest part, is *alive,* and contains untold psychic potentialities, unknown susceptibilities. The "chemical" theory of germs and infectious disease seems entirely inadequate to account for the facts. Albert P. Matthews, a contributor to Cowdry's *General Cytology,* has remarked that the study of biochemistry without any knowledge of the psychic factor is "like Hamlet with Hamlet left out." Possibly, we shall never know, really, what a "germ " is, until we have solved the mystery of the psychic aspect of matter and of life.