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# WANTED: A THEORY OF MAN

WHAT is the logical ground of the "guilt-by-association" doctrine of human behavior? This question is not hard to answer. It is based upon the likelihood that a man will share the opinions of those with whom he associates. But in practice, the assumption of guilt by association becomes somewhat more urgent, approaching what appears to be a fanatical conviction that a man cannot really be distinguished from his environment. The contempt for the individual apparent in this attitude is not surprising, since the atmosphere of fear and suspicion which pervades much of contemporary thinking about "security" could only arise among a people who place individuality at a discount; but what is surprising is the lack of vigor in what resistance exists to this ominous trend.

Why should this be? Respect for the individual and for his right to form the associations he prefers and to hold the private opinions he wishes is at the very foundation of American political institutions. Communists and communist sympathizers are condemned for their proclaimed disregard of the rights and importance of the individual. It is precisely on this point, we are told, that the democratic system of government differs from all totalitarian systems. There are other differences, of course, but this one is held to be the most important.

So, our question changes, and becomes: Why has the traditional American respect for the individual lost its strength? Why do we so easily succumb to the anti-individual doctrine that a man is not only influenced by his environment, but is also actually *shaped* by it?

The only explanation that we have been able to develop in answer to this question is that American culture has no clear conception of human individuality, and that the most influential thinking of the past three hundred years—scientific thinking, that is—has been directly opposed to admission of any human individuality at all. We live, in other words, under a political tradition of individuality that has no practical support from either science or philosophy. Some may argue that the idea of individuality is supported by religion, but this is gravely questionable. From the days of Augustine to John Calvin, the claim of the absolute supremacy of God and the total insignificance of man—so far as the power of decision is concerned—has been a major theme of Christian thinking, and never, we think, successfully contested in orthodox Christian circles, although various modifications of predestination have been accepted in the name of common sense. Here, however, we are concerned with the scientific attack on human individuality.

It began with Galileo, although the Florentine astronomer and mathematician could hardly be accused of intending to underrate human beings. He was a convinced Platonist who believed that the world is formed according to number, and it was perhaps natural for him to define the real and the unreal in experience to suit the convenience of a mathematician. Accordingly, he divided the qualities of physical bodies into primary and secondary, the primary qualities being those susceptible to mathematical treatment—size, weight, motion, etc. In *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science,* E. A. Burtt sums up Galileo's view of nature and man and indicates its philosophical consequences:

> Physical space was assumed to be identical with the realm of geometry, and physical motion was acquiring the character of a pure mathematical concept. Hence, in the metaphysics of Galileo, space (or distance) and time became fundamental categories. The real world is the world of bodies in mathematically reducible motions, and this means that the real world is a world of bodies moving in time and space. . . . Teleology as an ultimate principle

> of explanation he set aside, depriving of their foundation those convictions about man's determinative relation to nature which rested on it. The natural world was portrayed as a vast, self-contained mathematical machine, consisting of motions of matter in space and time, and man with his purposes, feelings, and secondary qualities was shoved apart as an unimportant spectator and semi-real effect of the great mathematical drama outside.

It was by this means that physical science, so far as its early theory or "philosophy" was concerned, stole from man the very things which the Renaissance was supposed to have restored!

Except for the new science of parapsychology and the occasional insights of pioneering psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, there has been little hint of a theory of man which alters in any significant way the view as Galileo left it. A college textbook on sociology, published in 1934, remarks casually in its first paragraph that "for most purposes of scientific analysis the explanation of the self is included in the explanation of the environment." This writer, L. L. Bernard, might have said that man is a "semi-real effect" *of* his environment, with no alteration of meaning. A passage from this text, *The Fields and Methods of Sociology*, will illustrate the extensive progress made since Galileo's time in assimilating man to his environment, and rendering the human individuality virtually non-existent. Bernard writes:

> The process of reducing the personality and its behavior to the same sort of calculability and control [as are applied to physical things] has been slower and more difficult, largely due to its greater complexity and spontaneity, and especially because of the invisibility of the physiological and anatomical mechanisms on the one hand and to the abstractness of verbal behavior (the chief content of modern personalities) on the other hand. The prior development of the environmental sciences has been of great aid in the development toward an exact and objective science of personality and behavior. More and more the attempt to reduce behavior to physico-chemical and psycho-physical processes has been successful. The development of biology into anatomy, physiology, neurology, and endocrinology has at the same time produced an extension of the objective analysis of the physical personality. The old theological assumption of personal control through spirit direction, which later developed into a theory of spirit possession, and thence into a theory of an individual or personal soul (a permanent indwelling directive spirit), has given way, under the influence of an analysis of neurons, cortexes, and endocrines, to the behavioristic theory of the conditioned response and stimulus-response or behavior patterns. The spiritualists and the theologians and the metaphysicians have not welcomed this growth of a science of personality and they have not hesitated to reveal their intellectual character by their strenuous efforts to sweep back the oncoming tide of behavioristic science with their witch brooms on which they have been accustomed to ride in the clouds of spiritistic phantasy. But in spite of this bit of diverting hobby-horse play a science of personality based on a measurable mechanics of behavior is bound to replace the old magical and mystical spiritism which still survives in the thousand and one cults that delight in calling themselves psychological.

It is difficult to say what this passage reveals about the character of its author, although modesty is surely not one of the traits which are exposed. While it is true that this confident behaviorism is no longer repeated by either psychologists or sociologists, and represents, not a contemporary view, but a kind of climax in the mechanistic thinking set in motion by Galileo, Dr. Bernard's analysis has had more or less aggressive expression in the psychological sciences for something like fifty years—say, the first fifty years of the twentieth century. Where could the guilt-by-associationists look for better confirmation of their theory? Or, for that matter, the communists?

The problem is complicated, however, by an unpleasant fact. It seems to us—and we are willing to be corrected—that the doctrine that man is wholly a product of his environment approaches something like absolute verification in the people who behave as though they believed it. Persons who are suspicious of others because of their unconventional ideas and odd associations are usually persons who seem to be very much the product of their own times and associations. Their inability to *understand* authentic individuality is a betrayal of their own lack of

individual distinction. Hence their insecurity in the presence of deviation from the conventional, their condemnation of "atheists" or free-thinkers or secularists, their eager assumption that socialists are practically the same thing as communists.

Readers may recall the report (in MANAS for June 22) of the discharge of two California public school employees (a principal and a business manager) who had been members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the American Civil Liberties Union. The Fellowship of Reconciliation is an organization of Christian pacifists and the American Civil Liberties Union is devoted to the defense of the Constitutional rights of all American citizens. Yet because of these associations, a citizen of Costa Mesa (the town in which the two men had been employed) declared:

> "The rights of these two men are certainly important. So are the rights of my children. I'd rather see these two men's careers ruined than take a chance with my children."

Another, with a startling show of courage, said:

> "I won't say they're [the ACLU and the FOR] un-American. I won't say they're communists. I will say they're questionable. We've got to draw the line some place. Now is the time to stand up and be counted as an American."

It seems a foregone conclusion that such citizens would make a similar judgment of Robert Oppenheimer, and probably now regard with suspicion the Fund for the Republic, if not the Ford Motor Company, which, by a devious net of association, might be made responsible for the recent expose of Washington loyalty investigations compiled by Adam Yarmolinsky, who was enabled to do this work by the Fund for the Republic, which was established by the Ford Foundation, which was provided for by the Ford family.

A course of rational investigation of the ACLU, the FOR, the Fund for the Republic—and we might throw in Unesco for good measure seems completely out of the question for such people. They deal in the feeling-tones created by demagogues and propagandists, not in facts. They are not, it must be admitted, "individuals" in relation to matters of this sort, but mere offprints of their psychological environment, and excellent evidence to support the case of behaviorists!

There is no way, of course, to compel people to behave like individuals and to honor individuality. Compulsion always operates in the other direction—to reduce people to being passive reactors to environmental stimulus; to make of them, in short, a regimented society. That is why a successful revolution is the most difficult thing in the world. The revolutionist wants to strike a blow for freedom, but the *blow* requires the abandonment of the principle of freedom, in order to organize the blow into a Sunday punch.

Men become individuals by a process which is the very reverse of compulsion—by recognizing that the rational life is a life which contemplates an ordered array of alternatives, and chooses between them according to values which have been achieved by hard thinking. The environment, according to this view, is the agency which presents the alternatives, but the decision among them is an act of the free individual.

Interestingly enough, just as there is guilt by association, so also is there innocence by association and salvation by association. The trouble with all these hyphenates of "association" is that they represent a refusal to think of human beings as individuals. The man who is innocent by association is the man who makes a particular point of joining the most conventional clubs and belonging to the "right" associations. His motives for doing things like this may be obscure to himself, but his behavior is far more subversive of the democratic principle than unorthodox associations undertaken out of a thoughtful regard for what they represent in themselves. The man who behaves conventionally because it is always "safe" to conform is collectivist at heart, and the

maker of future collectivist social orders, regardless of the slogans he repeats.

The habit of seeking innocence by association has ample precedent in the example of the promise of salvation by association, set by organized religion. What are the various creeds but competitive claims to having the exclusive path to blessedness? A creed is a definition of how to get to heaven; a denomination is an association of people who possess or "believe in" the creed. You may have certain things to do after you accept the creed, but belief or association with true believers is the most important step.

Ultimately, the mystic is the only kind of religious aspirant who is free from the temptation to seek salvation by association. He may seek association with others in order to obtain the benefit of the reflections of other minds, but he knows that he must save himself. In politics, the anarchist is the only man who has a completely individualist view of social relationships, yet even the anarchist is obliged to seek association of some sort as the means of common cooperation in maintaining the means of life. The mystic abandons spiritual authority; the anarchist, political coercion and brute force in social control.

Yet, historically, the greatest mystics have usually turned out to be heretics, and the anarchists persecuted revolutionaries.

To those who feel that too much is being made of this matter of guilt by association, we strongly recommend a reading of the volume prepared by Adam Yarmolinsky, *Case Studies in Personnel Security,* in which the accusations made against fifty civil employees in Washington are set forth at length. The mood of suspicion is incredibly strong in initiating proceedings of this sort, and the example set by the federal government is all too easily followed by private industry. We know of an instance in which one argument in the case for discharge of a young man working for an industrial corporation was that he had "majored in political science" when at college. There were other considerations, to be sure, such as the fact that the young man is a pacifist and a Socialist Party member, but that his collegiate interest in political science should be mentioned at all in connection with his "security" rating shows which way the wind blows through minds which have the power to hire and fire for security reasons.

Well, what are we to do? Disregard altogether the associations of people in trusted positions? The immediate answer to this, from the viewpoint of the present, is *yes,* unless it can be shown that the associations do in fact constitute a "clear and present danger." But we make this reply only half-heartedly for the reason that it evades the real issue. The real issue concerns why we have the sort of society in which such unhappy dilemmas not only exist, but are exceedingly common. What do we think of a country whose life and freedom are believed to be in jeopardy from the magazines read, the friendships contracted, the political associations formed by some of its citizens? How vulnerable can you get, and still talk about living in a free country?

The symptoms of reliance on collectivist solutions for our problems are all about. Trust in military force and fear of the loss of military secrets are tyrants which have no knowledge of the freedom they are supposed to protect. That we do homage to these tyrants, and find the suggestion of any alternative an almost intolerable prospect—intolerable to the point that we are willing to "ruin the career" of anyone who makes them—is evidence of the moral bankruptcy of the culture we have created.

The great need is for a new faith in the individual, and in his capacity to solve the human equation on an individual basis. But where shall that faith be found?

# *REVIEW*
## MAGAZINE NOTES

THERE was a time, a while back, when we feared that the *Nation*—published weekly in the United States since 1865—was at last becoming "adjusted" to certain aspects of the American status quo. The feeling was difficult to define, since this excellent weekly is always finding fault with something. Perhaps it was that after the war there seemed to be no "big idea" for which the *Nation* stood, as it had in other, less complicated and less confusing decades. Perhaps it was simply that the editorial attitude of the *Nation* was becoming a bit "predictable," and therefore not quite as interesting as it might have been.

At any rate, this mood has passed, so far as we are concerned, and the *Nation* now seems better than ever. We are not talking about the political articles, concerning which our opinions are not worth much, but about the general temper of the magazine. Something of the change—if a "change" can be spoken of—may be due to the new editor, Carey McWilliams, whose touch is noticeable at least in the increased attention given to Western writers. But with due credit to Mr. McWilliams, there is also an indefinable freedom which may be a characteristic of the times—a kind of "looking around" that is all to the good in a liberal weekly.

It is fair to say, however, that with Carey McWilliams at the helm the magazine has a better chance of representing the "nation." Unlike editors who have spent their lives in New York City, McWilliams knows from many years of writing on the Pacific coast that there is a vast if inchoate vitality in the West. Los Angeles may be, as Milton Mayer described it ten or fifteen years ago, " a cross between a sideshow and an infirmary," and Southern California a haven of more than its share of crystal-gazers and sectarian prophets and sibyls, yet the gangling adolescent of the West, for all its callow ways, represents a *plastic* culture that still has an unpredictable future. To over-simplify, we might propose that the West has not yet made up its mind about anything, even if it only lately could be said to have something properly called a mind.

Speaking of the future in the issue of Sept. 24, when he took over the editor's desk, McWilliams composed a paragraph which seems to us the apex of editorial sagacity:

> . . . new interests, reading habits, needs, and outlooks will determine the changes in content and coverage which readers of *The Nation* will note in the weeks to come. For a reason once suggested by Cyril Connolly I am reluctant to spell these changes out in detail. As I remember, Connolly once said that everyone has been victimized at one time or another by three persistent illusions: falling in love, starting a magazine, and the notion that one can make a living by keeping chickens. Projecting blue prints for magazines, to be and in being, is an occupational disease of editors; better that the changes should appear without announcement, fanfare, or forecast.

That, it now appears, is how the changes are taking place. One interesting development is the space allotted to Kenneth Rexroth, San Francisco poet and critic (he conducts a book-review program over KPFA, a listener-sponsored station without commercials). Rexroth contributes to the Fall Book Issue of the *Nation* (Nov. 5) an article on Henry Miller which is very much on the unpredictable side, and will leave most readers a monumental task of reconciling familiar "literary" judgments with some of Rexroth's backhanded compliments to Miller. To wit:

> Miller is a very unliterary writer. He writes as if he had just invented the alphabet. When he writes about a book, he writes as if he were the first and only man who had ever read it—and furthermore as if it wasn't a book but a piece of living meat whacked off Balzac or Rimbaud or whoever.
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> Miller has preserved an innocence of the practice of Literature almost unique. Likewise he has preserved an innocence of heart. But he is not unsophisticated. In the first place, he writes a muscular, active prose which is always under control. True, he often rambles and gets windy, but only because he likes to ramble and hear his head roar.

> When he wants to tell you something straight from the shoulder, he makes you reel.
>
> Now the writer most like Miller, in some ways, is the eighteenth-century *naïf,* Restif de la Bretonne. If you want the common man of the eighteenth century with his heart laid bare, you will find him in Restif. But you will also find thousand of pages of sheer boredom, and hundreds of pages of quite looney and obviously invented pornography. Miller too is liable at times to go off the deep end about the lost continent of Mu or astrology or the "occult," but for a different reason. If the whole shebang is a lie, anyway, the lies of the charlatans who have never been able to get the guillotine in their hands, are better than the official lie, the deadly one.

Rexroth, in short, is going to be a little frightening and unsettling to readers. There is a blatant, opinionated honesty about him. He will probably be very wrong a lot of the time, and give his readers the feeling of being cut adrift in a sea without any beacons or comfortable ocean liners in sight. Rexroth's sacred cows are all mavericks personally branded by Rexroth, and you won't find him sponsoring any "line" at all. He doesn't offer much "orientation," but considerable confusion, to be welcomed as a calculated risk, balanced by stimulus.

Now a brief tribute to Harold Clurman, who has been doing the *Nation's* dramatic criticism for years. Clurman's comments on the theater are always interesting reading, whether or not you've seen the play he writes about, and we, of course, have not. In this issue (Nov. 5), he has a paragraph on *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* (a farce contrived with jokes about Hollywood) which lights up the tastelessness of much of modern "humor." Clurman writes:

> Some of the jokes are funny and there is—helpfully from the standpoint of a certain audience—a bit of rancid ribaldry about many of them. I am a poor audience for these jokes because I consider most of the quips about Hollywood to be based on a lie. The joke about Hollywood's stupidity, madness, and immorality was effective as long as we believed that the people who made the joke had values which were not those of Hollywood—but this is no longer true. Motion pictures are a great industry at which many able people are hard at work, and the product of which most of us patronize. We now realize—if we never did before—that the majority of the people who scoff at Hollywood are extremely eager to become and remain part of its corruption, madness, etc.

We suspect that a complete intellectual integrity keeps Mr. Clurman well supplied with critical insights of this quality.

Another article in this issue deals with the *Life* editorial on Literature discussed in the MANAS lead for Nov. 9. Here Maxwell Geismar examines in some detail the championing of Herman Wouk by both *Life* and *Time*. Actually, Mr. Wouk has attained almost the status of a celebrity as a whipping boy for intellectual critics, but Geismar, while by no means Wouk's defender, is chiefly concerned with the recommendations of the Luce publications for American literature:

> What is clear, however, is that both *Time* and *Life* are laying down a program for a new slap-happy optimism mingled with a proper respect for whatever exists and a species of domestic drama that will avoid all bad language and all serious human issues. We are back again to that "smiling side of life" which the Victorians believed to be the true American side, though we have been through a sewer of corruption since then, and are now sitting on top of a volcano. This new literature will be based on the principle of "Woukism." The object will be to persuade millions of people that they are completely different from all the other people whom they are exactly alike. "Peace, Prosperity, and Propaganda" will be the grand theme of the new literature, and all deviants from the norm, whether biological or esthetic or ethnic, will be tolerated only so long as they do what they are told. . . . Well, what does it all really mean? I suspect that the final impact of the atomic age has had the effect of a lobotomy on the national spirit. Don't look now, but we're all dead.

This may be "destructive" criticism, but with all the pseudo-culture spread by the mass magazines in terms of pretentious judgments about "art" and "literature," we can hardly do without it.

Turning to the November *Progressive,* we find an article by Hallam Tennyson (great-grandson of the poet) which is a friendly and civilized report of his recent visit to the United

States. The article is so good that we promise to return to Mr. Tennyson frequently, but here quote only a paragraph which confirms the one thing *Life* said about America in its editorial on Literature that will bear repeating—that the United States has "gone further than any other society toward creating a truly classless society." Mr. Tennyson relates:

> At a party in Greenwich Village, against a background of "wobbly" songs on the phonograph, I talked oriental mysticism with a truck-driver—my first experience of the American dream that function need set up no barrier between man and man. Back here [in England]—by their suits ye shall know them, for truck-driving and oriental mysticism have never been known to communicate. Later a Supreme Court justice told me that while staying in London he had been in the habit of taking his breakfast in a cheap cafeteria round the corner from his hotel. One morning he sat at a table with four British workmen and each of them described the nature of his work. Finally it was the judge's turn. He explained. There was an awkward silence. Three of the workmen finished their breakfast in a hurry, then rose from the table. The judge turned to the fourth and asked if he had offended his companions in any way. "Oh no," came the pitying reply. "But you didn't expect them to believe you, did you? They knew no judge would ever speak to working people same as you did." Yet this judge was not the hearty, back-slapping type: he was stiff-backed, intellectual, judicial. An aristocrat without a trace of class-consciousness: a true product of "pioneer" democracy with its emphasis on the formation of character and the tradition-directed home.

Mr. Tennyson's article has the same sort of honesty we have been recognizing elsewhere, and it produces the sudden light which is characteristic of a man who habitually tells the truth and does it with good taste.

A choicer bit in the November *Progressive* is Hallock Hoffman's "My Wife and the Tax Assessor." This article recites some personal history of the Hoffman family which ought to be of interest to practically everybody who believes in free institutions.

Back in 1952, California decided that nobody who is subversive can have a tax exemption, and in 1953, to make sure the 1952 law would work, the state passed another law requiring anyone who applies for a tax exemption to swear that he is not "disloyal." Very sharp people, these California legislators. When the tax assessor came to the Hoffman's house bearing an assessment form with the non-disloyalty declaration on it, Mrs. Hoffman asked for another form without the declaration. "I don't want any tax exemption," she said. It seems there weren't any other forms, and Mrs. Hoffman wouldn't use the ones they had. Eventually, she went to court to make the State print up forms without the declaration, and succeeded. So pretty soon you too (if you live in California) can have a tax form without a loyalty oath on it.

But what we like about Mr. Hoffman's article is his excursus on what is the matter with loyalty oaths. Some people find this difficult to understand, and we have never heard it better put than by Mr. Hoffman. Supporting his wife's decision, he writes:

> I, too, object to loyalty oaths, and I have been willing to say so to anyone who would listen. A loyalty oath makes you promise you will not commit a crime. There are laws which make crimes illegal, and penalties for people who commit them. Nobody would lobby for a law to make everybody promise not to batter and rob his neighbors. But people like a law to make other people promise not to commit the crime of trying to overthrow the government by force and violence.
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> I object to loyalty oaths because they cannot separate the loyal from the disloyal, which is what they are supposed to do. I object to them because they do not make people feel safe, they make them suspect each other. I object to them because they give the government another—and dangerous—power over us citizens, and the government already has all the power it needs to secure us against crime and violence.
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> Besides, I object to all oaths because I object to promising to be good or to tell the truth on special occasions. I think people ought to tell the truth, the whole truth, all the time, and I think they should refuse to set aside times and places for truth-telling, as if other times and places were for lying or hypocrisy.

Making people tell you that they love what you think they should love, and hate what you think they should hate, doesn't prove anything except that you are big enough to make them tell you what you want to hear. You say to school teachers, or tree trimmers, or city electricians, "You want to keep your job? Then swear to this oath." If they swear, what you know is that they want to keep their jobs, or that they don't care what they swear to, or that they are afraid of what some people will think.

But shouldn't you make up your mind about how people will perform as teachers or tree trimmers or electricians by the way they do their work? You wouldn't hire an electrician by asking him to swear that he would always make good connections, and that he would never under any circumstances make any bad connections, and that he had not made any bad connections for the past five years, so help him God.

I know that people suspect each other these days, and I think one symptom of their suspicion is loyalty oaths; and then the loyalty oaths turn out to be a cause of more suspicion. Imagine how it is in California—you are the Methodist Church, and you have to stand up and swear you will positively not overthrow the government of the United States by force or violence or any other means which is a crime. The Methodist Churches I have seen do not appear to be able to overthrow the government by any means whatever; and they also do not look as if they wanted to. But California fears they might, if they don't say they won't.

Hallock Hoffman's article is consistently good, but this is the best paragraph of all:

Loyalty oaths are designed to make you say you love the country, and that you have not under any circumstances loved anybody that people who love the country are not supposed to love. And then next year they tell you that you have to say it again. I feel that if I had to tell my wife to tell me that she loves me, and positively doesn't love anybody else, it might be because she didn't love me any more.

# *COMMENTARY*
## THE SOURCES OF FAITH

WHERE shall a new faith in the individual be found? This is the question which ends this week's lead article, and we can well understand the writer's decision to stop without attempting an answer.

*A real* answer to this question, it seems to us, would have to involve either a mystical revelation (and the mystic's wisdom, when he tries to communicate it, ceases to be mystical) or the genius of Stoic inspiration—and who could improve on Marcus Aurelius, in print for many centuries?

Yet we remain convinced that a real answer exists. Every time we read the *Phaedo,* we come away touched by the breath of immortality and filled with reverence for the human spirit. Plotinus, too, carries a sense of absolute conviction concerning the reality of the soul. Men speak of "divine grace" as a kind of beneficence granted by some deity or other to ease their sorrows and give promise of another life. We should prefer to think of "grace" as the sense of human dignity which is born in the heart—why or how remains a mystery.

The problem would be easy of solution if some doctrine of philosophical religion were enough to raise men to heights of self-reverence. But doctrines, we know from experience, are never enough to lift the weight of fear and self-deprecation. Doctrines, supposing them to be true, are like the blueprints which specify structural reality, but can never convey the full, three-dimensional being of an edifice. True doctrines must be, in the nature of things, the verbalized form of the knowledge of *someone,* but the moment they pass from that one, they become an echo, however faithful, of the knowledge of another.

Yet doctrines remain important, if only as the record of the explorations of other and perhaps wiser men. It is when doctrines begin to grow into the organic form of personal experience whether through some deep, inward reminiscence, or a flash of vision of the sort which sometimes rewards strenuous search—that the birth of actual knowledge may be felt to be a fact. This, or something like it, must have belonged to Plato, and to some few others to whom the greatness of man was no transient enthusiasm, no speculative hope, but an ever-present reality in the mind.

When men of this stamp shape the traditions of a culture, an atmosphere of courage and integrity begins to be the effective environment provided for the young. This, and nothing less than this, as we see it, is the requirement of a new faith in the individual.

# CHILDREN
## . . . and Ourselves
### THE UNIVERSITY—WHAT EDUCATION CAN MEAN

LIFE Magazine for Sept. 8 told the poignant story of South African children who, as a result of the determination of a "white supremacy" government to limit native educational opportunities, have had to shift for themselves in acquiring an introduction to "culture." Devoted teachers—unpaid—and the parents of thousands of black Africans, know that the children must learn language, art, music and mathematics, government and science, in order to have a chance for the minimum "good things" of the world.

One of the more familiar drives toward learning is here represented. There was a day, in every land, when it seemed quite apparent that the most enjoyable things in life were attainable only by those who had successfully pursued an educational goal. Today, especially in the United States, it is no longer clear that this is the case. Whether one "succeeds" in high school—that is, receives commendable grades—or whether he passes through four years of college attendance with diligence and purpose, seems to matter little; what most people consider "the good things of life" will be available to him anyway. Almost *any* job will gain him enough purchasing power to acquire an automobile, a television set, and leave enough extra money for a wide variety of exciting entertainment.

But if the common conception of culture becomes identified in the public mind with what passes so easily before the eyes on the television screen and in motion pictures, or into the ear by way of radio broadcast, it will be difficult for youths to see the need of a deeper understanding than can be inspired by these watered-down means. A Lincoln studied, perhaps in part, because without learning he knew he was nothing. The farm boy who came to the city knew why he was coming, and because he had to make great sacrifices and heroic efforts to attain his learning, he had enough of the habits of study and discipline to realize, eventually, that there is no end to the development of the human mind, and that such development is the highest calling of man. So, devotion to an education, even when passionate and disciplined, can stem from the very natural urge to better one's horizon and conditions.

There is, however, another concept of what education can mean, both to the individual and to society. One of the best current descriptions of that other pursuit—pursuit of truth for its own sake—is found in an article by Charles Frankel, Associate Professor of Philosophy, in the Fall *Antioch Review*, 1955. Under the title, "Scholar's Freedom," Professor Frankel first investigates the belief that the universities are primarily institutions for serving "the day-to-day needs of the community." That the university may serve the community, and serve it well, there can be little doubt, but it is Prof. Frankel's interest to show that the greatest service to community and nation contributed by scholars may come in unexpected ways. The view that scholars are "sublimated engineers," Frankel writes, is partial and misleading, for "scholarship does more than merely serve other interests; it frequently collides with them. And it is not only an entertaining form of play, it is the source of countless daily irritations. Scholarship creates problems that would not exist if it did not exist. And those who, through the generations, have been suspicious of it, have had good reason to be so."

Prof. Frankel continues:

> In his classic defense of free inquiry, Socrates, I think was a bit disingenuous. He claimed that he was only interested in being clear, in finding out what he and others meant by the words they employed, and that he had never wished to disturb anyone's faith in the gods or the state. I suspect he knew better. He practiced his scholarship in the market place, and he knew that his manners were irritating, his apparent idleness troubling, and his skepticism a challenge to everyone's dogmatism. He knew too how disconcerting simple clarity can be; and while he may have been honestly surprised by the charges against

him, he must have known that impartiality, particularly in perilous times, invariably impresses angry or anxious men as disloyal. The simple fact is that free scholarship hurts. It hurts people's feelings, upsets their composure, challenges their beliefs, threatens their social position, and undermines the prestige and authority of established institutions. Quite apart from any conclusions he may reach, the scholar's very attitude and methods are themselves a source of provocation and an implicit dissent from the *status quo.*

It is for this reason, of course, that free scholarship is under perennial attack. But it is for this reason also that it is useless to try to understand its meaning, or the role it plays in human life, by drawing up some simple balance sheet of its costs and services to the community. For what scholarship represents is a change in the temper of the human mind, in the focus of its attention and in the quality of the things it cherishes. Like religion or art or politics, or, I suppose, like the automobile, scholarship is sometimes a harmless diversion, sometimes a materially profitable enterprise, sometimes a public nuisance, and always a financial burden. But like these other things, it is capable of becoming not only a means but an end, something final, which has its own inner dynamism, goes its own way, and changes the quality and shape of the society in which it exists. It does not merely do good or harm—it changes the terms in which we measure good or harm.

In short, scholarship raises a problem of values. To understand its general significance, or why it perpetually arouses animosity, or the conditions under which it prospers, we have to understand the effect it has on the character and purposes of other human activities. . . .

The greatest gift of the universities, or of scholarship in general, to a democracy is the thrust that may be imparted to a natural urge to discover the truth, and to love justice—which are, after all, very much one and the same. Without a passion for truth and a love of justice, democracies will exist in name only, with the demagogue mistaken for the savant, and the savant for being "un-American." Put in another way, the best that any education can give is a wide range of choices for the human mind. A culture possessing an educational system geared to conformity practices indoctrination, not education. The wide range of choices includes choice to disagree with professors, with politicians, and with policies favored in the community and nation. It is partly for this reason that a man must be courageous even to attempt the true task of education, as either teacher or pupil. Prof. Frankel concludes:

The freedom which scholarship has given to modern man has undoubtedly added to his sense of strain, to his consciousness of his failures, and to his feelings of guilt. But this is because he may more justly hold himself accountable for his actions than could his predecessors, and it is a measure of his opportunity and of the powers that are available to him. The function of scholarship in civilization is to present men with choices that do not emerge within our ordinary round of practice, to lift human behavior out of the staleness and flatness of the routine to the level on which men may deliberately enlarge the scope of their experience and select the goods they pursue with an imagination invigorated, chastened, and emancipated.

As indicated in our discussion of student motivation last week, the average college student is largely conditioned by the purposes and ideals or lack thereof—characteristic of society at large. Student motivation, therefore, is all too apt to be the motivation of simple acquisition—unless somewhere, somehow, universities gain the determination to lead minds beyond the dead level of conformity, whatever the price in temporary unpopularity. At present there are many indications that such a determination is growing—supplied by articulate spokesmen such as Prof. Frankel, Stringfellow Barr, Robert Hutchins—and thousands of less well known faculty members who are convinced that the university best serves by generating a desire to change and improve its philosophy.

# *FRONTIERS*

## Philosophy and Art

THROUGH the years, subscribers have occasionally confessed frustration at being unable to discover a fruitful approach to "art." One reader recently suggested that Professor C. J. Ducasse's long out-of-print volume, *Art, the Critics, and You*, provides an excellent basis for consideration of æsthetics. He writes: *"Art, the Critics, and You* is the best work I have seen so far of its kind, from the philosophical point of view. Here I found so many points that for years I have felt very strongly about, but had never met with in print, or not in such lucid terms." This book, we note is being reissued by the Liberal Arts Press ("Student" paper edition, 95 cents; cloth, $2.50, from the Liberal Arts Press, 153 W. 72nd St., New York 23).

Before turning to the new edition of Professor Ducasse's volume, we should like to notice a magazine article which nicely counterpoints his thesis. *Holiday* for July has a sympathic discussion of Balinese culture by the young Indian author, Santha Rama Rau. The Balinese, every one of them, it appears, are artists by temperament. Art, for them, is indistinguishable from the day-to-day processes of living, from all use of implements and material, so that no one thinks of "art" as something "special." The parallel we have in mind is provided in the following conversation:

> Once I asked a Balinese artist why he never signed his work. He replied seriously, "It is more difficult to write my name than to paint a picture."
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> "But don't you want people to know your name?"
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> "If a man likes my pictures I will know it. Why should he also like my name?"
>
> "What I am trying to say is if your pictures are good and if your name is on them, then even people who have never seen you will admire you."
>
> "They will admire the pictures."
>
> "Listen," I said desperately, "even after you are dead perhaps your pictures will be famous and your name will be respected Otherwise people may forget who painted them."
>
> He smiled with that old Balinese assurance and, entirely missing the point, said, "Don't worry, people will not forget how to paint good pictures. After I am dead there will be many to paint good pictures."

We wonder—we really wonder—if our own æsthetic experience, and our productions of art in every field, might not actually be better if no one in the English-speaking world imagined that he would reach fame by, or be paid for, his creations. The art born in moments of leisure from other occupations is usually a labor of love, spontaneous, not contrived. And if it is true, as we suspect, that no one can fully appreciate music unless he essays to be something of a musician, or painting unless he attempts to use a brush, there can be little doubt that the work of artists who otherwise live as most of us live would bring to the general populace a feeling of being closer to the artist.

The salient contribution of Dr. Ducasse's work, we think, is his closely reasoned argument that the evaluation and criticism of art—and all considerations involved in formulating a philosophy of art—should be recognized as something everyone should attempt. For Ducasse, of course, this advocacy has a double meaning, for he is not only talking about the disadvantages of separating the viewer of art from the critic of art, but is also making a case for a vitality in philosophical thinking. Not one to enjoy separate eminence as a man publicly designated a "philosopher," Ducasse is always trying to get people to think for themselves, and to destroy the taboo which insists that only a special sort of person occupying a special sort of chair in a university is capable of understanding philosophy. The pursuit of philosophy, and interest in arriving at independent judgment in all matters pertaining to æsthetics, is, in Ducasse's opinion, the only true corrective for the habit of leaning upon experts.

In a chapter entitled "Artist, Amateur, and Critic," Dr. Ducasse writes:

> Æsthetics, or the philosophy of art, is one particular branch of the general enterprise of philosophy—the branch that seeks wisdom concerning, specifically, art, æsthetic contemplation, and the criticism of literature and the other arts. Æsthetics seeks the inclusive perspective on these matters and the accompanying sense of relative values that are the only effective vaccines against the countless catchwords, dogmas, half-baked theories, and personal predilections, erected into would-be authoritative standards, that infest the world of art and criticism and shroud it in the mystery of confusion.
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> Because this account of the nature of philosophy and of aesthetics as a branch of philosophy was perforce framed in somewhat abstract terms, it will perhaps have caused an impression that philosophizing—including philosophizing on the subject of art—is something essentially academical and remote from the lives of all but a few of us. Now, therefore, something should be said to make further evident that, on the contrary, philosophizing—and philosophizing on that subject—is something in which most of us at times do engage spontaneously and indeed vigorously, although we do so perhaps unawares—like the man in Molière's play, who, unawares also, had been speaking all his life in prose.
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> That each of us is likely more than once to have taken at least some steps of his own in the field of the philosophy of art will be made evident if attention is called to the type of situation that irresistibly provokes almost anyone to do so, namely, those occasions on which our own judgment concerning some matter connected with art clashes with the judgment of another person. Disputes of this general sort, even when unsystematic, are genuinely disputes about the philosophy of art; since most of us at times do take part in them, the philosophy of art is not something cultivated only in academic halls, but rather something about which we occasionally get so heated that perhaps for a week afterward we will not speak to the friend who opposed us.

Since we are all exposed to the bombardment of attempts at "decorative art," if only by way of advertising, Dr. Ducasse feels it imperative to recognize that every sort of decorative art contributes—well or ill—to the education of our feelings. He stresses "the importance of education of the feelings as an integral part of the education of a human being; in education of the feelings, the works of the various free and decorative arts have a role to play analogous to that of scientific treatises in education of the mind for activity in the fields of science."

One of the most interesting and important questions pertaining to art—that given central attention by Tolstoy—concerns the relation between art and what we usually call "morals." As Ducasse shows, the highest ethical receptiveness depends upon subtlety of feeling, upon the capacity to observe, note and take into account fine distinctions. A true participation in the work of art, or an attempt to understand works of art through the disciplines of philosophy, helps to develop this capacity, and contributes to ethical perceptiveness. The creative man, perhaps, is too busy to be a moralist. He knows that creation, not conformity, is the secret of life. But if he is devoted to his genius, instead of vain of it, he can see that the highest ethics, also, are "created"—by the intuition of those most worthy to be called human.