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SOCRATES FOR EUROPE

LAST month, in Madrid, died a man who contributed much to the understanding of the time in which we live. He was Ortega y Gasset, author of *The Revolt of the Masses,* Spanish patriot and liberal, who had returned in 1945 to live out his last years on the soil of his native land. Of the ten years he spent under Franco's rule, he said (according to *Time),* I am here, but I do not exist here. I do not want to take part in anything." In explanation, he told a friend:

> "In times of great passion, the duty of the intellectual is to remain silent, because in times of passion one has to lie, and the intellectual has no right to lie."

Ortega had the great gift of lucid prose, and in 1930 (translated into English and issued by Norton in 1932) he published the work for which he is most famous, *The Revolt of the Masses,* in which he described the emergence and defined the nature of the modern "mass man"—the man who now intimidates the entire world. Demagogues and dictators of themselves have no power. Their power derives from their support by the millions who are without a sense of moral measure in their lives—who, from either fear or emotional hero-worship, give their allegiance to leaders who are without principle.

Ortega lived, and died, in the great tradition of the ideal of human excellence. What he said about his last years in Spain would have struck a sympathetic chord in Albert Jay Nock, who named his own colorful autobiography the *Memoirs of a SuperfIuous Man.* And what he said of the duty of the intellectual in times of passion is reminiscent of Socrates' explanation of why he had never taken part in politics. Socrates, too, lived in times of passion, and when, at the end of his life, he deliberately challenged the prejudices of the Athenian populace and defied his judges, the Five Hundred, to do what they would with him, he also told them why he had always left politics alone:

> . . . I am certain, O men of Athens, that if I had engaged in politics, I should have perished long ago, and done no good either to you or myself. And don't be offended at my telling you the truth: for the truth is, that no man who goes to war with you or any other multitude, honestly struggling against the commission of unrighteousness and wrong in the state, will save his life; he who will really fight for the right, if he would live even for a little while, must have a private station and not a public one.

It fell to Ortega to repeat this tragic utterance in his own way. As if to confirm the indignity of the philosopher's last years, a newspaper account of his death reported that at the final hour he returned to the Catholic Church, which he had left in his youth. The fact, as *Time* later explained, was that the last rites of the Church were administered to him after he lost consciousness, and he was buried in a Catholic cemetery at the request of his widow.

Ortega not only described the decline of European culture, but he penetrated to its cause. In the closing chapter of *Revolt,* he wrote:

> This is the question: Europe has been left without a moral code. It is not that the mass-man has thrown over an antiquated one in exchange for a new one, but that at the centre of his scheme of life there is precisely the aspiration to live without conforming to any moral code. Do not believe a word you hear from the young when they talk about the "new morality." I absolutely deny that there exists today in any corner of the Continent a group inspired by a new *ethos* which shows signs of being a moral code. When people talk of the "new morality" they are merely committing a new immorality and looking for a way of introducing contraband goods. Hence it would be a piece of ingenuousness to accuse the man of today of his lack of a moral code. Immoralism has become a commonplace, and anybody and everybody boasts of practicing it.

> If we leave out of question, as has been done in this essay, all those groups which imply survivals from the past—Christians, Idealists, the old Liberals—there will not be found amongst all the representatives of the actual period, a single group whose attitude to life is not limited by believing that it has all the rights and none of the obligations. It is indifferent whether it disguises itself as reactionary or revolutionary; actively or passively, after one or two twists, its state of mind will consist, decisively, in ignoring all obligations, and in feeling itself, without the slightest notion why, possessed of unlimited rights. Whatever be the substance which takes possession of such a soul, it will produce the same result, and will change into a pretext for not conforming to any concrete purpose. If it appears as reactionary or anti-liberal it will be in order to affirm that the salvation of the State gives a right to level down all other standards, and to manhandle one's neighbor, above all if one's neighbor is an outstanding personality. But the same happens if it decides to act the revolutionary; the apparent enthusiasm for the manual worker, for the afflicted and for social justice, serves as a mask to facilitate the refusal of all obligations, such as courtesy, truthfulness and, above all, respect or esteem for superior individuals. I know of quite a few who have entered the ranks of some labour organization or other merely in order to win for themselves the right to despise intelligence and to avoid paying it any tribute. As regards other kinds of Dictatorship, we have seen only too well how they flatter the mass-man, by trampling on everything that appeared to be above the common level.

Since this was written, in 1930, some few champions of its underlying spirit have appeared. In the United States, Dwight Macdonald has made a political application of the principle of human excellence implied by Ortega; Erich Fromm has explored the conception in *The Sane Society;* and in France, Simone Weil came to related conclusions—recorded in her posthumous book, *The Need for Roots.* Perhaps Irving Babbitt should be mentioned, also, as a contemporary of Ortega who was immune to the "glamor" of mass-man slogans and pseudo-philosophy.

Many writers have gone no further than to *feel* the impoverishment Ortega describes and to give vent to their revulsion in various ways. The Existentialists, perhaps, come close to being a sort of stoic resistance movement against the absolute despair which sometimes overtakes those sensitive enough to suffer the moral vacuum of modern civilization, while the French Communities of Work represent a genuine revolution and positive reaffirmation of human values.

It is Ortega's great merit that he was able to hold a mirror up to our times and to express the reflection in terms of a general analysis of basic psychological attitudes. All who could understand him found vast stores of material to work with. He is a seminal source for all those who attempt to diagnose the present.

Ortega is probably even more important for American readers than for Europeans. While he wrote in a European frame of reference, and while it appears that European events have been more specifically confirmatory of his analysis, all the historical tendencies which have found recent fulfillment in Europe have a modified presence in the United States. However, although America's time of trial may be approaching, it has not quite arrived. We say this on the ground that the dynamic principles of social synthesis and morality which have shaped the American leviathan still supply to the people of the United States the influence of a moral code. The reviving support for civil liberties in evidence since the eclipse of Senator McCarthy is a symptom of a still-existing moral vitality, and there are other signs of vigor which may be traced to the original inspiration of a humanistically conceived democratic republic. Compared to Europe, the United States is still a young country. It may even be possible for Americans to learn from the tragedy of Europe and to glean a little of the wisdom which flowers among people whose destiny is more mature.

> The gypsy in the story went to confession, but the cautious priest asked him if he knew the commandments of the law of God. To which the gypsy replied: "Well, Father, it's this way: I *was* going to learn them, but I heard talk that they were going to do away with them."

Here Ortega exposes the delusion of what might be called the technological approach, of which Americans, above all others, are the victims. The almost supernatural success of technology in the United States—from the Super Bomb to all the minor miracles of modern industrial chemistry and electronics—seems to have gained us time and to have put off the Day of Reckoning, perhaps forever. Perhaps American scientific know-how and physical and medical gadgetry will square the circle for us, and we shall never have to rebuild our lives by some new philosophy of discipline, responsibility and personal obligation. Perhaps the doctrine of Unlimited Freedom, Rights, Leisure, Wealth, Pleasures and Amusements is, after all, the true contribution of America to the world. This is the gospel of advertising, on which we have been selling ourselves for several generations.

Socrates would not permit the Athenians to live by this delusion without voicing his protest. Ortega was a Socrates for Spain and for all Europe. Who will be a Socrates for the Americans?

Letter from
CENTRAL EUROPE

INNSBRUCK.—The mountains of the Tyrol are mentioned for the first time in reports more than two thousand years old. This was the period when the Teutonic tribes, coming from Central Europe, slid on their mighty shields down the ice and snow of Alpine peaks into the sunny, nearly subtropical plains of Italy.

Some centuries later the Roman Septimus Severus built the first passroad over the Alps and the *Pons Oeni* (Innbridge— Innsbruck). The oldest extant description of a journey from Rome to the Tyrol via the Brenner Pass was written by the Latin geographer, Venantius Fortunatus.

The first time that a German Emperor traversed the Alps on his way to the South was in 754. Thereafter the Italian sun and the beauty of the scenery exercised such an attraction on the German monarchs that during the following centuries the Emperors crossed the Brenner Pass not less than sixty-six times.

But not until after the eighteenth century did any traveler give personal attention to the majestic peaks on the right and the left of those roads. Only in 1800 did Archduke Johann of Austria send out some officers with the commission to try to climb some of the Tyrolean mountains.

Although climbers had some success, so far as the westerly peaks were concerned, the summits of the Zillertal Alps waited for exploration. It was 1840 before it was possible to ascend the *Abornspitze* (9000 ft.). Then followed the grandiose *Moerchner* (10,000 ft.), the *Loeffler* (11,000 ft.) and the *Thurnercamp* (11,500 ft.). The mountaineers were partly Austrians and partly Britishers. Thurwieser, Lipold, Langner and Brinton, Tuckett, Freshfield are names which remain since inscribed with golden letters in the book of pioneer-mountaineering, although it ought not to be forgotten that those performances were made practicable by the sacrifices of poor, barefoot and illiterate Tyrolean herdsmen who, having intimate knowledge of the mountains and their perils, acted as guides.

Thousands of Germans, Britons, Americans and Italians have since been attracted by the mountain world of the Zillertal and during the favourable months they still arrive to try to find—accompanied by one or several dapper Tyroleans—some yet unknown approaches to those solitary heights which exercise such a mystic magnetism on the individual.

Even before World War I, with others afterward, several mountain trains were built (for instance, on the *Jungfrau* and the *Zugspitze)* which enabled people who were not physically fit to have part in the unique adventure of ascent. The development of technology and holiday traffic have since permitted the building of cable-ways (dispatching thirty to forty passengers with each car) in a rising number. In recent years a number of light metal cabins have been put into operation, allowing anyone to reach a peak which, a few years ago, could be ascended only after days of life-endangering efforts, but is now arrived at in a comfortable chair after a journey of hardly a quarter of an hour.

It can doubtless be regarded as an advantage that many thousands—instead of just a few sportsmen—have thus an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful panorama which may be seen from those heights. But one quality had to be sacrificed: the once overwhelming solitude. And it is the lack of that majestic loneliness which makes the true mountaineers now retreat more and more from these regions.

There is even a movement among non-climbers to put a stop to the further building of cable-ways, since in years to come there will be not a single peak left with wholly natural approaches. But even if cable-ways are no longer built, in many instances helicopters would probably take their place.

The loss of that mystic solitude is one of the main reasons why the best Tyrolean mountaineers, for the most part, are joining ascent expeditions which operate in South America and India.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
TWO NOVELS ABOUT INDIA

OUR "reader reaction" to John Masters' *Bhowani Junction* was reminiscent of what happened when we first read *From Here to Eternity.* Though the books—and the language—are entirely dissimilar, we began by thoroughly disliking the characters in both, but ended with a healthy respect for the psychological evolution achieved by almost all of them.

Mr. Masters is not inclined to sentimentalize about anything in India, including Gandhi and the National Congress; he is rather interested in generating a deserved sympathy for those who live in the psychological no-man's land of Eurasian half-castes. The "Anglo-Indians," as they are often called, come closer to being men and women without a country than any other group we know of today. Centuries of British rule, the prestige of occidental wealth, science, and "know-how" made it inevitable that children born of British fathers and Indian mothers would wish to emulate their Western forebears—and be rebuffed. On the other hand, the accompanying Eurasian contempt for traditional India could only lead to counter-resentment on the part of native Indians.

This predicament is illustrated with clarity and subtlety throughout the 370 pages of Mr. Masters' novel. "Victoria Jones," daughter of a half-caste locomotive engineer, finds that the neuroticisms of Eurasian society are more than she can stand. She has a try at adapting herself to an English man and to the English way of life, hoping, like many of her kind, to eventually end up "home" in England; but, as this fails to fulfill her natural "karma," so does she also find herself unable to marry an Indian and lose herself in the customs of Indian tradition. A dialogue between Victoria and her father on the prospect of such a marriage reveals much of Anglo-Indian psychology. Victoria's father is wholly opposed to the union, showing deep-rooted prejudices against everything native to the land to which he was born. Victoria, on the other hand, sees both sides of the question, and actually moves toward an Indian marriage, partly in revolt against her resentment at British dominance:

> "I want to talk with you, Victoria."
>
> I said, "Yes, Pater?"
>
> He said, "You know what it is about. That!" He pointed the stem of his pipe at my sari. "Why are you wearing those clothes now? Aren't the clothes your mother and sister wear good enough for you? What is the matter? Please tell me,
>
> I took a deep slow breath. I said, "I don't mean to hurt you, Pater. I don't think it's any of your business, actually, but I will tell you. We are half Indian." Pater moved uncomfortably in his chair. I went on, "Well, we are, aren't we? But there's not going to be any place for half-Indians soon. I can't make myself a whole Indian, but I can show that I don't think of myself as whole-English. I can show that I think India is my home."
>
> Pater shook his head obstinately. He said, "Of course I believe there is some Indian blood in our family. Very good blood, too. There is a rumor that my grandmother, Mrs. Duck, was a princess. But even if the rumor is true—and of course it is nothing like as much as *half* Indian that we are—it is stepping down to pretend to be an Indian. Indians are dirty and lazy, Victoria. They will run around like chickens with their heads cut off if the English Government ever leave them to their own devices. God forbid! I hear you are great friends with Kasel. Now, he is not a bad fellow at all—mind you, I like lots of Indians very much—but have you thought that Kasel wipes his bottom with his hand, with nothing but water on it? That is the hand you shake, man !"
>
> I said, "No, it isn't. They use their left hands." I was short with him because I had thought of just that, more than once. What Pater chose to ignore was that Mater did the same thing when she thought she wouldn't be caught out. And I said so.
>
> Pater banged his open palm down on the arm of his chair and cried, "I won't have you saying such a horrible thing Victoria! That is your own mother you are speaking of! What is the matter with you, girl? Do you hate us, all of a sudden? What would *he* think of you? He was a fine man." Pater pointed at the Sergeant's empty, silly face.
>
> "You've just said he married an Indian," I answered.
>
> Pater said, "Yes, but he didn't take off his trousers and put on a dhoti, my God! He raised her to *his* level, he did not sink down into all the Indian

ways. *You* are not thinking of marrying an Indian, are you?"

I said, "I'm twenty-eight, Pater. Surely I can marry whoever I want to. And how does a sergeant *raise* a princess to his level?"

I had got him sidetracked for the moment.

Bhowani Junction is written in first-person sections, as told by two Anglo-Indians and one Englishman, a vigorous and impressive colonel. The turbulence and confusion of politics are well depicted, and while *Bhowani Junction* may not cause any reader to long to visit that ancient land during these confused times, those who find inspiration in India need lose none of it for familiarizing themselves with certain areas of moral confusion.

Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* (John Day) is a good book to read along with *Bhowani Junction.* Here is an Indian author who tells—in beautiful English—a story about the simple people of the villages. The leading character is a woman who has received some education, but in whom traditional Indian ways are so strong that she never allows herself to be frustrated by the ignorance and squalor in which she must live—seeing instead, in the disease-ridden, poverty-stricken people, the quiet strength and serenity native to a land where "complaining" is almost unknown.

Tossed by circumstances into the unwelcome clamor of the city, Rukmani and her husband are both disconcerted and impressed by the behavior of the homeless children who wander the streets—for they mirror so many of the conditions found in both cities and village:

A dozen or more children were playing there, dodging in and out of the traffic with a skill and indifference which I could not help admiring. For all their play they looked as if they had never eaten a full meal in their lives, with their ribs thrust out and bellies fullblown like drums with wind and emptiness; and they were also extremely dirty with the dust of the roadside and the filth deposited upon it; and the running sores many of them had upon their bodies were clogged with mud where blood or pus had exuded. But they themselves were forgetful of their pains or patient with them as the bullock had been—and played naked and merry in the sun. Merry, that is, until a crust of bread fell on the road or a sweetmeat toppled from an over-ambitious pyramid when, all childishness lost, all play forgotten, they fought ferociously in the dust for the food . . . However much they played and were children, still their faces were scored with the knowledge and cares that children should not have, their eyes were knowing and guileful beyond their years.

"We may yet be forced to that," said Nathan, pointing to their begging bowls, "if we do not find our son—'

"Never," I protested, a little frightened by his dejection. "Come, we must be on our way."

"Let us ask these children," he said. "They seem quick enough."

He clicked his fingers and called, and they came with bright curious eyes, twittering like sparrows.

"Tell me, my son, do you know where Koil Street is?"

The boy turned and said something to his companions, and there was no doubt that he was their leader, for they dispersed at once; then he beckoned to us. "Follow closely," he said firmly—this child who might easily have been our grandson,

"or you will be lost!" and he motioned us forward. And as he did so I saw that he had no fingers but only stumps. The disease which was rotting his body had eaten away nail and flesh to the first knuckle.

Kipling was certainly wrong in his prediction that East and West would never meet, but in both John Masters' and Kamala Markandaya's novels the impression is reinforced that the meeting has been a painful one, that the unbalanced conditions aggravated by British rule, careless town centralizations, and contemptuous intermarriage will be a long time in finding adjustment. The remarkable thing, though, is not that the picture is so black, but that so much has been done and is being done by the Indians themselves to bring integration out of chaos, new idealism out of the circumstances of despair.

COMMENTARY
ORIGINS OF MATERIALISM

THE people of this generation have the habit of expecting the word "materialism" to be used as an epithet by the orthodox theological critics of our society. MANAS, therefore, is reluctant to appear to repeat the charge of materialism, for fear of being classed with the theologians.

There is a sense, however, in which the theologians are right. The loss of a moral code, of which Ortega speaks (see lead article), is largely due to the feeling of release from any sense of a larger responsibility than purely personal wants and interests dictate, and we can think of no better term to describe this attitude than *materialism.*

But what the theologians ignore in condemning materialism is that the intellectual originators of materialistic doctrines were seldom *moral* materialists, but were rather deeply committed humanitarians. Sometimes they were outright atheists, sometimes agnostics, occasionally philosophical pantheists, but they were all united in unequivocal opposition to the claims of religionists who insisted upon "obedience to God," and regarded themselves as the proper interpreters of "God's will."

Many of the outspoken men who hailed the advent of modern science as bringing liberation from mind-deforming dogmas and priestcraft were undoubtedly materialists who denied the existence of any transcendental reality in the universe; but, what is not so readily admitted, the devaluation of man as a wicked sinner, unable to save himself, unable to think for himself, in the name of "spiritual" teaching, was a still more terrible materialism—a materialism of the soul.

Thus the "religion" to which the materialists objected was worse than the unbelief which replaced it, for the reason that it was an evil corruption of the authentic religious spirit, whereas materialism was no more than simple denial. Because, perhaps, materialism was no more than this, and lacked the glamor of "spiritual" pretensions, its inadequacy and its failure have rapidly become apparent. Today we stand at some kind of philosophical crossroads, wondering if we really ought to turn back to some past version of human faith, yet knowing full well, while we wonder, that the revival of centuries-old beliefs will be difficult, if not impossible.

Or can there be, instead, a synthesis of both science and religion as the foundation of a new philosophy? Scores of books have been written on this subject, none of them marked by dramatic success. Most of them seem to involve mortal compromises of one sort or another—of either scientific or religious principles. Perhaps the thing to do, before pursuing this question any further, is to attempt a clarification of the absolutely indispensable elements of both. This is a project for which we invite simple suggestions.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

SINCE here we have always stood with those who deprecate the instrusion of Bible teaching and prayers in our public schools, it seems well to suggest that one need not be a "materialist" to adopt this position.

There are two kinds of religion in the world, one compatible with the spirit of philosophy, the other, not. The spirit of philosophy is the urge to deepen understanding of life. Since philosophy and education are logically inseparable, the philosophical approach to religious belief is in order, for religion is a part of life as we know it. That our schools teach philosophy as a means of evaluating metaphysical and transcendental questions will always be good. But to teach religion from a sectarian basis, to imply that morality is dependent upon creedal belief in a personal God, is to propagandize illegitimately.

What can the public school teachers do, though, about introducing "philosophical religion" and "metaphysics" to their young pupils? Nothing, probably, unless they define true religion simply as whatever causes the mind and the heart to expand. In our time, both Gandhi and Albert Schweitzer have indicated in their lives that the highest religion is universal, that religion is comprised of all those aspirations in human beings, young or old, which move toward a transcendence of present limitations of personality. Schweitzer believes in the religion of Nature, in "reverence for all life." He is, therefore, the sort of mystic that even children can understand. How does one teach the mysticism of Schweitzer or Gandhi? Well, whenever a child is helped to find the special happiness of occasional quiet and aloneness, he may encounter the atmosphere of inspiration in which both Gandhi and Schweitzer have lived. The highest "progress" for man is an inward turning, a dedication to truth and to clearing up the opaqueness of one's understanding. Further, since it is usually when we are alone that we can best understand and sympathize with those whose temperaments daily grate upon us, quiet contemplation is also a "religious" prerequisite for successful "social living." The child who is helped to enjoy literature which stimulates the imagination, even by that partial means, has some glimmering of what an expansion of personal consciousness may mean.

Then, too, there are the wonders of Nature to instruct in the universality of life. "Reverence" grows from experience, from feeling close to that which lives and moves outside of our own being. Too few children today—especially in smog-ridden cities—find any time for stargazing. But the infinity of the heavens has led, throughout all history, to some of the deepest thoughts. To speculate on the possibility of life on other planets and stars is to broaden one's conception of what "reality" may mean. Here we are not speaking about the science of astronomy, but rather of the psychology of metaphor and analogy. The child who "stargazes," or who spends some quiet time at the mountains or ocean, is a child who will thenceforth be better able to appreciate the poetry, the art, and the music of the world. His teachers should tell him enough about the stars and planets to give him a small sense of familiarity, but this is only to induce the habit of looking upward. The fact that everything we see, day or night, can contribute to an ever-widening vision of a living and moving universe also helps us to see that everything moves in its own natural orbit—the "laws" described by scientific observation being simply the natural expression of various levels of intelligent life. So are all humans moving in their own orbits according to the natural law induced by their own psychological states. No one, in one sense, is "better" or "worse" than others, for all have the quality of life and the capacity for moving and growing.

It is, it may be, this "power to become" which is the root of all life and, therefore, the root of all religion. When the man suffering from extreme illness feels, as his sense of personal well-being diminishes, another kind of happiness in his feeling of compassion and benevolence for all others, *this* is religious inspiration. Sometimes it may be that children, while knowing the simplest and greatest happiness, may similarly find their feelings "flowing out" beyond themselves.

What other sort of "mystic" inspiration may be possible for the young? We do not know, though we imagine they are many. Childhood is the time for the universal appreciation of beauty, and the teachers who are the most "religiously" devoted, in the sense we have attempted to define, should regard their opportunity for introducing beauty as rather sacred.

A short time ago a psychologist caused some furor in Christian sectarian circles by denouncing the "now I lay me down to sleep" prayer. Emphasis upon death, he maintained, encouraged the child to fear, and also foisted upon him a conception of God as a symbol of power, a frightening force. This sort of religion, certainly, is not good for children. Morality is not learned by making judgments, by thinking in terms of rewards and punishments, but rather through the unfoldment of a native capacity for compassion and understanding. Pure religion, the dictionary implies, "binds back" to a common source, which is something quite different from "binding fast" to a set of sectarian beliefs. In these terms, there can be no higher religion than the religion of Nature and of Man. Prayer, if prayer there be, should be directed to one's Self, in the interests of realizing interdependence and spiritual identity with all others. If religion is "better" than Communism, this can be true only of the sort of religion that helps men beyond the confines of partisanship, resentment and fear. So, if men of the Christian faith can lead in this direction, well and good, but they can only do so, we suspect, by becoming something more than "only Christian."

In an era of institutionalization and totalitarianisms, the issue of religious liberty, which was grasped so clearly by the philosophical revolutionaries responsible for the American Bill of Rights, is blurred by a confusion of good intentions and bad judgment. Shall the children of America study religion in school? May parochial school children have the benefit of public conveyances? Shall Jehovah's Witnesses be required to salute the flag? These questions are paralleled for adults in other relationships: When do religious beliefs or private opinions become political beliefs for which the person can be held publicly accountable? What is the line between tolerance and treason?

The unspoken assumption behind the fervent opposition of Thomas Jefferson to any traffic between religious sects and the State was not only that we must protect ourselves against the danger of dominance by a single religious body; he must have hoped also that men might be encouraged to evolve beyond *all* sectarian consciousness and therefore from separative denominational classifications. Jefferson was not a foe of religion, but he clearly was a foe of religions, and this attitude was common to many of those philosophically lucid men who shared a moment of destiny in establishing American political traditions.

The viewpoint of Jefferson and Madison was more than a private opinion: it was consistent with the Renaissance, which was, in simplest terms, a movement away from the religious concept of man—that is, man controlled by institutions. The authoritarian attitude of the Middle Ages broke down slowly, it is true, and in peculiar ways. Though impelled by the Renaissance belief in the superiority of individual conscience to institutional rule, the Reformation was followed by the development of a hundred-and-one new sects. Apparently men could not move directly from unified control to individual self-discipline, even if they did demand some choice as to the type of control they would accept. Nevertheless, complete religious freedom is, finally, freedom from all institutional control. The unspoken message of Jefferson is this, and the ideal of democracy is a dream where men live in the spirit of moral self-reliance.

FRONTIERS

Philosophy and Conduct

IN comparison to the deep running stream of the evolution of life, ability to use words in the logical expression of ideas is but in its infancy. Like the eight-ninths of a floating iceberg that is out of sight under water, much the greater part of human personality is below the surface of reflective thinking. A philosopher thinks, and thinks that his thinking determines what he thinks. Yet in fact, even though he strives constantly for logical objectivity, a philosopher, like other human beings, chiefly feels, and how he feels may largely control his philosophy. His thinking may but rationalize, justify and entrench his mood or temperament. On the other hand a man may, by disciplined development of action and habit patterns, substantially modify or remake mood, temperament, intuition and feeling. Thus, by what is called a "feed back" process, he can to some extent modify the controls of his philosophy.

The immediate occasion for this comment was the reading of a new edition of a book which is old, though new to me, *Principia Ethica*, by G. E. Moore. Along with it I read the volume of "The Library of Living Philosophers" which consists of a short autobiography by G. E. Moore, comments on his writings by nineteen British and American philosophers, and Moore's reply to their comments. One of the impressions I received from this reading is that, as to some of the inferences of Moore's philosophy, his conclusions are only in part the product of his thinking, and in part are unconscious reflections of his way of living.

The opinion which this reading points up has been a long time in forming. In about 1923 I attended the World Congress of Philosophy at Harvard, largely for the purpose of getting a first-hand impression of the climate of professional philosophy. Most of the two or three hundred in attendance were members of European or American university faculties. During the course of the week I attended an appalling number of lectures, and especially listened in on a great many conversations such as were constantly under way between pairs or in small groups.

The attitudes in evidence at that congress ranged over much of the whole spectrum of human motives. There were men like A. N. Whitehead and John Dewey whose technical competence in philosophy was at the service of social responsibility. At the other extreme, it seemed to me that a considerable number of the men in attendance, especially from European universities, were persons whose way of life was to entertain themselves in philosophy at public expense, while training another generation to do the same. They exemplified "pure scholarship" in philosophy. With such men, so far as I could see, there was no effective conviction that philosophy should be a controlling guide to action. If circumstances had endowed a typical one of them with ample means, a question as to whether to choose a career as a playboy sportsman, or as the developer of a program for public health, or as a professional philosopher, would have been decided, not by the issue of which would be most in the public interest, but by which would provide the most interesting and pleasant life. Often such a philosopher achieves a sustained discipline, but so do the polo player, the chess player, and the big game hunter, though not from concern for the public interest. There may be incidental public benefit from any such discipline.

This attitude of the "pure scholar" has a long historical background. It is at least as old as Aristotle, who placed contemplation for its own sake, and without regard to its social consequences, as the highest good; and there is strong evidence that the Egyptian priesthood which the Pharaoh Iknaton tried to displace during the fourteenth century B.C. had much the same motivation.

With the democratic and proletarian trends now so obvious, the historic concept of the place of "pure scholarship" is not very popular. Those

engaged in it who admit that they pursue their studies for the pleasure of the process, rather than for any socially desirable results, now justify that course by claiming that the range of human understanding and mastery is increased by complete freedom of self-interested scholarship as in no other way. It is with that justification that the status of the nonproductive gentleman scholar maintains a precarious foothold in some American universities. In reality, I believe that this claim is a camouflage of a very old historic motivation.

There having been no control experiments, we do not have historic evidence that a vastly greater social product would have resulted if free scholarship had been *habitually and generally* motivated by a sense of human responsibility, as it was in considerable degree by some scholars, such as Erasmus, Spinoza, Bruno, Newton and Darwin. It may be that in comparison to what such general motivation would have produced, what actually has been achieved by Western scholarship is shabby and mean.

Commonly it is in the interest of society that the scholar be free to choose his own subject of inquiry, and his method of dealing with it. At least for the man of marked creative ability, it usually is well that the decision as to both subject and method shall be his own, and not imposed or prohibited. The best kind of control is self-control. Yet there remains the duty for every scholar to have concern for the human adventure, to identify himself with it, and in his own way to commit himself to it.

There are infinite possible subjects for scholarly inquiry. Some have better prospects than others for significant outcome. It is the duty of the scholar, as a member of the human race, the destiny of which he shares, to choose subjects of inquiry that, in view of his own powers, aptitudes and circumstances, will have more possibility of significance than anything else open to him. His feeling of social responsibility should be nonetheless relentless because it is stimulated from within.

Temperament and thought interact. Thinking is a kind of action—a creative process. Relentless, honest thinking is real work. It may, and often does, have a regenerative and healing action on warps of mind and spirit. That is one of the encouraging things about life. Yet the philosopher often fails to realize the reality and extent of this interaction; the extent to which his disposition and habit patterns determine the assumptions, the postulates, or the axioms which control his thinking; while further his disposition and habit patterns are profoundly modified by his purposefulness, or his lack of it.

The emergence of a human personality pattern follows a course similar to that of the development of the physical body. Each human body is a sort of hybrid of parents who in some degree are of physically different types. In spite of these differences and incongruities of inheritance, the body in its growing somehow achieves an over-all unity. One wonders whether the "growing pains" which some children experience are not the pulls and strains which imperfectly matched parts suffer in becoming adjusted to each other. *Since the bones, being rigid, will not yield, the muscles, tendons and nerves, if they do not naturally fit, may have to stretch,* sometimes painfully, to adjust to them.

In the same way the pervading "homeostatic" drive of the total personality, with its varied and often incompatible elements, to achieve internal unity, tends to impel the more adjustable elements of personality into working relations with those that are less responsive. *If a person's way of living refuses to conform to his philosophy, then the philosophy, often unconsciously and subtly, tends to conform to the life.* Where two elements of personality are equally unyielding there may result a split personality.

I recently wrote in *Search for Purpose*, "The scientist must measure values not only in his scientific field, but in his life. . . . Few factors tend more to cloud judgment than habits of living that are inconsistent with critical, objective inquiry."

What is true for the scientist is far more true for the philosopher. Physical facts may discipline the scientist's thinking and tend to protect him from the vagaries of his moods. The philosopher, with his more subjective thinking, does not have the same degree of protection. His inner drives are less subject to objective discipline. How can he overcome that handicap?

Aspiration and a sense of purposefulness can greatly influence the development of habits or action patterns, and these in turn have a profound effect on both feelings and ideas. If one early develops the habit of persistently trying to do those things which he believes he should and perhaps can do, the resulting texture of personality and sense of power and of freedom of action may favor normality of temperament and objectivity in philosophy. If one persistently lives by the best he knows, then the kind of person he is, and therefore his philosophy, will change. He will achieve a degree of liberation from his chance inheritance of temperament or disposition. Also, the realities he meets in the course of action will make him aware of actual but unsuspected factors, and may correct and discipline his theory. The habit of sustained action to the limit of one's powers will help him to distinguish between those circumstances which set conclusive boundaries to achievement from those which are only superable obstacles. To the extent that one fails to develop purposeful action, his philosophy will tend gradually to the assumption that such action is inherently impossible or futile.

But now to get back to Moore's *Principia Ethica*. The solid merit of Moore's best critical thinking, which reflects the critical attitude then existing at Cambridge, is suggested by the statement of a competent judge, who refers to it as "perhaps the most influential book of British philosophy in the 20th century." Yet, as was true of the environment in which he lived, there seems to have been a fairly well defined gap between the area in which critical thinking was the acceptable course, and the area in which there prevailed uncritical acceptance of the prevailing social pattern.

Moore distinctly was in the "pure scholarship" tradition. He wrote:

> What I am concerned with is knowledge only—that we should think correctly and so far arrive at some truth, how ever unimportant. I do not say that such knowledge will make us more useful members of society. If anyone does not care for knowledge for its own sake, I have nothing to say to him.

Again he wrote: "The direct object of ethics is knowledge and not practice."

I think that Moore, along with others who see philosophy as a self-contained and self-satisfying exercise for the intellectually elite, in his effort to separate ideas from action did not fully realize that he was thereby to a considerable degree determining the character of his philosophy.

Our generalizations and our ideals, if they are sound, are, I am inclined to believe, extrapolations from experience. The "ideal" element is the product of that impulse, which is universal in all life, perhaps in all matter, to complete the structure according to the nature of its elements, somewhat as a quartz crystal tends to grow according to the nature of quartz crystals. In the world of the human mind, experience provides that which is used by the impulse to generalize or idealize in fulfilling its pattern. I refrain here from discussing the fact that of two men with seemingly similar objective experience, one may generalize or idealize by picturing to himself a mud hut, while the other may envision a parthenon. Yet for each, experience provides the data for the process. If the idea that "a straight line is the shortest distance between two points" had not been suggested and verified by experience, often so early in life that the occasions for such verification are forgotten, it is doubtful whether the idea would be accepted as an axiom.

Moore's *Principia*, both where it records vigorous and compelling logic and where it reflects his acceptance of the world as it is, exemplifies the fact that in considerable degree the

life makes the philosophy. His Cambridge environment encouraged both vigorous intellectual effort and uncritical acceptance of the prevailing social mores. For much of the time he feels his way, meticulously weighing each important word, and justifying a claim to disciplined thinking. Then, in respect to what he refers to as one of the main subjects of ethics, "What ought I to do?," he seems to speak, not from close reasoning but out of his temperament, and out of the accumulated habits of his life. In picturing to himself what ethical purpose might achieve in practical life he reflected the social atmosphere in which he lived—of taking things as they are and of expecting little change. In *Principia Ethica* he wrote:

> If, then, we ask what rules are or would be useful to be observed in the society in which we live, it seems possible to prove a definite utility in most of those which are in general both recognized and practiced. . . . It seems doubtful whether ethics can establish the utility of any rules other than those generally practiced. . . . The general utility of an action most commonly depends on the fact that it is generally practiced; in a society where certain kinds of theft are the common rule, the utility of the absence of theft on the part of a single individual becomes exceedingly doubtful, even though the common rule is a bad one. There is, therefore, a strong probability in favor of adhering to an existing custom, even if it be a bad one. . . . The cases, where another rule would certainly be better than that generally observed, are, however, according to what has been said above, very rare.

Does not this philosophy reflect the temperament and habits of the man, rather than the realities? The customs which could be improved by the kind of nonconformity Moore refers to are not few, but many. They include such matters as regard for the general interest rather than for one's self-interests alone, recognition of the interests of those arbitrarily unfavorably placed, willingness to look into the merits of practical issues rather than to hold to vested positions, etc. There can exist in a wholesome society a pervading social tension toward remaking obsolescent social habits. Such social concern may originate in individuals and be gradually transmitted to the many. Are not periods of marked social advance often just such periods of general social tension, where the aim is not just to change some rare habit which is extremely incongruous, but rather to bring about marked changes in the general social pattern? The action habits of a man's life determine his philosophy no less than his philosophy determines the habits of his life. Given the fire of aspiration, each man has power to substantially modify the habits of his life, and each man of aspiration, by the habits of his life can be Prometheus to his neighbor.

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