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ALL GOOD MEN

IN these days, when nearly everyone who feels competent to judge the progress of the world is castigating the United States for obvious shortcomings—shortcomings of culture as well as of foreign policy—there should be some value in attempting an impartial view of the American people. This may be difficult for Americans, living in America, but those who have not lived in America might find it even more difficult to understand the complexities of the American scene.

Such an estimate ought, of course, to be formed without any interest in attaching special virtues to Americans for their accomplishments, whatever they may be. The effort, that is, should be to look at America from the larger viewpoint of world culture, and, considering what may be called the American heritage of ideals, this seems historically justified. The founders of the American Republic were much more than "nationalists." Their loyalty to the American Dream, they made very clear, grew out of devotion to certain broad principles of human freedom. They loved and served America, not because it was *their* "homeland," but because they saw in America a place where the ideals of the social reformers and revolutionists of the eighteenth century might become a matter of practice.

It is easy to show the extent to which many Americans have lost sight of the original inspiration which brought their country into being. Criticism of the United States can be both devastating and just. But while the critics are exercising their talents, they may as easily overlook qualities of American life which are now taken more or less for granted, and so fail to recognize the progress that has become possible for the world through the experience and example of the United States. This is not a matter of claiming special virtue for "Americans." To do this would be to miss the point entirely. It is rather to recognize, regardless of issue of "nationality" and pride in the place of one's birth, that America represents an important way-station in the journey of human development.

Here, in this new land, a beginning was made in forming a culture where the intrinsic qualities of the individual could determine his status, instead of artificialities of inheritance. The active, energetic man would no longer be held back by the dead hand of the past. From the viewpoint of the organization of human society, this was potentially an extraordinary advance. In earlier schemes of social organization, the emphasis had always been on the hierarchical structure of human relationships. The primary movement of the new American society directly challenged the old principle of regulation and order—the principle formulated and defended by Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida:*

> O! When degree is shak'd
> Which is the ladder of all high designs,
> The enterprise is sick. How could communities,
> Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
> Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
> The primogenitive and due of birth,
> Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
> But by degree, stand in authentic place?
> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And, hark! what discord follows; each thing meets
> In mere oppugnancy. . . .
> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite,
> And appetite, a universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce a universal prey,
> And last eat up himself.

Shakespeare here declares for the principle of degree the principle which, in its extensive corruption, was repudiated by Americans, who, in so doing, released a flood of power over a great and wealthy continent. The founders of American society were not themselves enemies of order and degree, but, some of them, at least, believed with prophetic fervor that human beings, given liberty, would be able to find within themselves the

regulatory principle for men living in a free society. This was entirely natural, especially in a world where the old principle of order was represented by tyrants who had turned the "ladder of high designs" into a scheme of systematic exploitation. The new American society was both a utopian dream and an unpredictable threat to the society of the Old World. It was a vision of the promised land for those who were growing restive under the poverty and hereditary restraints of Europe, a threat of anarchy and unmeasured disorder to rulers and the aristocratic classes. With a few notable exceptions, the people who occupied positions of authority and status in the Old World regarded the upstart "democracy" of the United States with both contempt and foreboding. Here was a people who did not understand servility. In America, men were growing up who had never experienced class oppression, whose sense of personal dignity and competence had not come from an inherited "place" in society, but in meeting and overcoming the challenge of an untamed wilderness. Their natural independence was often mistaken for arrogance by visitors and travelers from the Old World.

America has lost much of her original inspiration, but she never lost this genius for equality, which is bred in the bone of the people. Here, no child is made to feel, almost from the cradle, the psychic confinements of class or "station in life." (The notable exception to this, in the case of the Negroes, and other racial minorities, while marring America's embodiment of equality, need not prevent us from recognizing the basic change from European attitudes; in fact, the race prejudice of the United States is particularly incongruous precisely because of its blatant contradiction of the practical equality of American culture.) Men of the European working classes who come to this country to practice their trades immediately notice the different relationship between employer and employee in America. They find no taken-for-granted assumption of the superiority of the employer, no social abyss which rigorously separates owner from worker. The line between the two is constantly being crossed over, from both directions. "Degree," in the United States, is where you find it. There is no master pattern, no rigid scheme of class relationships.

In consequence of this and other causes, the efforts of men to better themselves are not impeded by immovable, institutional barriers. In America, a man can often accumulate in an hour's work the amount of purchasing power that would take him a day or more to acquire in some countries of Europe. The tradition of equality and freedom allows a freer flow of productive energies. The gibe of "materialism," even if deserved, should not obscure this reality of American life.

Intelligent criticism of America can come only from those who are able to look at the American cycle of civilization with full appreciation of the historic change in human relations accomplished in the United States, and then go on to consider how the regulation of degree may be evolved to suit the functions of a society which is free in principle. It is fair to say that America has solved the problem set by the Old World, but who will solve the problem set by America?

Possibly, some of the new republics of the Orient, with its great philosophies of order, may take the first steps in this direction. The highest tribute that a new nation can pay to an older country is to adopt the latter's national heroes. This honor has already been paid to America in the new East, by the reverence expressed, say, in Indonesia for men like Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. The point, here, is that such great Americans really belong to the Indonesians almost as much as they do to the Americans, for the reason that these men stood for universal principles of freedom and justice, rather than for peculiarly "American" ideals.

What we are trying to make explicit is the idea that American culture, confused, bewildering, and aimless as it may be, stands in a very real sense for the world's coming of age. Personal decision in matters of work to be done, personal restraint in the disciplines adopted for greater efficiency in what one sets out to do, and for success in mutual enterprise these are the marks of the mature man. If what a man is to do with his life is more or less decided for

him by the social structure—as in the caste system of India or the medieval guild system of Europe—and if the controls over his behavior are of an external, institutional character, then it is proper to speak of the society in which such a pattern prevails as an organically authoritarian society. There is no especial point in condemning this form of society as intrinsically evil. It might be the best possible society so long as it channels human energy to the most constructive result. But if, in the course of centuries or millennia, not only do these external controls become corrupt, losing their identity as means to release the energies of men, but also, there comes about the slow development in men of the capacity to regulate their own lives according to their own judgment, then the organically authoritarian society becomes a dead and oppressive weight upon human life.

The American society which assumed its primary form at the close of the eighteenth century broke the base of the organic, authoritarian structure. It is true that, as the decades went by, the purity of the new, egalitarian society was continually colored by spontaneous, unplanned, hierarchical growths—financial networks of economic control, political parties, theocratic lines of influence; and, later on, labor organizations which in time came to regulate the activities of vast numbers of men—the pattern of monolithic, *total* control no longer existed. Just as there were *relative* freedoms possible within the old authoritarian society, so, also, under the free, egalitarian society, there developed *relative* schemes of organic control. The difference between the two societies is in their primary principles—in the one case it is order and control, in the other, equality and freedom.

The problem of order is inextricably involved with the problem of human differences. While the form of American culture tends to obscure the fact of human differences—these differences have no standing at all from the legal or political point of view—they continually emerge to puzzle and complicate the over-simplified social theory of American culture. Equality, for one thing, has in practice tended to leave scant respect for individual distinction. The exaggerated respect of Americans for the economic results of freedom has led to a quantitative ideal of cultural achievement and the regimentation of taste at the low level of mediocrity. This tendency, unfortunately, has been securely confirmed by the merchandising techniques of modern industry, whose skills have been developed almost exclusively toward catering to customers by the million. These various factors, taken together, amount to a conspiracy to produce the *mass culture* which Dwight Macdonald and others have written about, and which Ortega described so brilliantly in *Revolt of the Masses.*

It must be admitted that, today, America offers little or no cultural place for the unusual individual. Not just the "rebel" is ostracized, but almost anyone who finds himself unable to conform to the conventional pattern of behavior. This means, in practical terms, that the freedom which America gained objectively by her political and cultural revolution is now very nearly lost subjectively by the failure of Americans to develop an internal, non-authoritarian scheme of order and control.

The time, then, has arrived for a new, all-engrossing effort to balance the ancient opposites of freedom and order. The atavistic relapses of a large part of the world into old forms of authoritarianism need not discourage us too much. These are perhaps the best evidence we can have of what most needs to be done in behalf of the future.

LETTER FROM MEXICO

OAXACA.—In the past half century, three million sons of Mexico have abandoned their homeland for greener pastures abroad. This figure, which does not include Wetbacks, averages one fifth of the national population. Driven by poverty, these men have sought to improve their economic and social status mainly in the United States, where they perform hard labor of field and factory at the lowest wage scales. This mass departure constitutes an indictment of a long unresolved economic maladjustment, a warning of an impending population problem, presented so dramatically by Josué de Castro.

Although maintaining close ties with the country of their origin through their relatives, these emigrants are a painful reminder to Mexico of the social, economic and moral flaws of her national community. They constitute a warning to develop a well-integrated, long-range, economic program whose benefits will reach vast rural areas so far untouched—so that the new citizen of Mexico may have the minimum acceptable conditions of life and security.

Until 1940, fifty to sixty thousand *braceros* migrated annually to the United States—not including illegal Wetbacks—but after 1942 the exodus increased to 78,000 while the clandestine departure has been estimated at four times this number. Of 787,000 braceros who have crossed the frontier legally, only 400,000 have returned to Mexico. The human drama involved in this grand migration is yet to be told.

While developing enormous hydroelectric and irrigation projects to convert arid land into productive fields, Mexico presently imports millions of tons of beans annually from Africa, selling them to the consumer at loss in order to keep the cost of living within the means of lower income groups.

In his first report, President Ruiz Cortines pointed to the problem in its crudity by proposing a solution that included the expansion of rural credit while increasing the tempo of highway and rural construction in a network leading to seaports. While the benefits of these investments will not bear fruit for some years, the government will use its power to open new public works such as the Papaloapan project and to control the distribution of population in accordance with colonization, communication and health projects.

In recent years, the thoughtful Mexican has become aware that the annual 3 per cent coefficient of population increase is greater than the production of national rent and physical resources; thus if this lag continues, Mexico is following the course of progressive impoverishment. What justification is there for a *laissez faire* demographic policy for the present population of Mexico, not to speak of the annual increase, in face of an undeveloped productive economy? This question is asked by Mario Puga in a recent newspaper article.

If poverty is the mother of high birth rate, as Josué de Castro asserts, then Brazil and similarly undeveloped nations must choose between controlled population and better distribution of their present resources; or they must redistribute their resources with greater social equity and technical assistance in order to elevate productivity at a faster rate than the population. The alternative is progressive misery.

Tragically, liberalism has allowed itself to become equated with more government but not less government, a predilection revealed in its platform of government interference for ends of human betterment. It will be informative to follow the course that Mexican liberalism pursues in meeting the apocalypses of underproduction and overpopulation, the heritage of many poverty-plagued areas of the globe.

CORRESPONDENT IN MEXICO

REVIEW
THE ROLE OF SLOGANS

A FORMER German, an anti-Nazi active in the underground resistance to Hitler, now an American citizen, writes in the *Nation* for Jan. 9 to compare Nazi book-burnings with American book-bannings. The parallel is ominous. It is true, as the *Nation* contributor, Martin Hall, points out, that the Nazi book-burnings were sponsored by the German Government, whereas similar goings-on in the United States have been the work of "amateurs." But it was the United States Department of State which, responsive to the findings of Senator McCarthy's subcommittee, ordered a number of books removed from its overseas libraries. Hall names several of these volumes:

> Among the books removed were Owen Lattimore's various books on Asia; the writings of Vera Michels Dean, the Foreign Policy Association's executive director; *Mission to Moscow*, by former United States Ambassador Joseph E. Davies; all the novels of Howard Fast, some by Albert Maltz, the *Selected Works* of Tom Paine, Langston Hughes's *Not Without Laughter*, and some of Dashiell Hammett's well-known mystery stories.
>
> It is interesting to note here that the American State Department outdid even the Nazis. Hitler's book-burners were careful to select only books whose content made them objectionable. For instance, they burned some of Thomas Mann's books but exempted others. American book-burners in 1953 burned books on the basis of the author's political behavior, not their content.

With the example set by the State Department, self-appointed vigilantes soon took over the task of attempting to police the nation's reading. Mr. Hall tells of a committee headed by the wife of the Mayor in San Antonio, Texas, which prepared a list of 600 books found in the local library, demanding that they be burned. While a City Council Resolution to this effect was defeated, the mood of the would-be book-burners is illustrated by some of the titles offered as fuel for the fires of "patriotism." On this list were such works as Albert Einstein's *Theory of Relativity*, Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, and even an edition of *Moby Dick* because it had been illustrated by Rockwell Kent! Other such lists included Judge Ben Lindsay's books on marriage problems, the works of Freud, Helen Keller's *Why I Became a Socialist*, and John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World.*

Articles of this sort are impressive, ominous and frequent. Hardly an issue of the *Nation* goes by without a sober recital of such facts. In this same number (Jan. 9), another writer tells about the activities of the Minute Women of the U.S.A. and other "patriotic" groups in Houston, Texas. As instance of the temper of opinion in that city, this writer, Ralph S. O'Leary, points to the removal from the public schools as "too controversial" of an essay contest on the United Nations. When a hundred clergymen signed a petition requesting restoration of the contest—an annual affair in Houston since the formation of the UN—the signers of the petition were accused in the letter columns of the local press of sanctioning polygamy:

> The reasoning of the letter writer, a woman, seemed to be that since a UNESCO booklet says polygamy is as widely accepted as a way of life on this planet as monogamy, UNESCO favors polygamy. And since UNESCO is a branch of the U.N., the ministers who favor the U.N. must also—etc., etc.

The charge of polygamist sympathies is probably more obviously ridiculous than other accusations, and chosen by O'Leary to make a good story, but it does identify the intellectual level of the attack on honest attempts by educators to win some attention for international understanding. You may think UNESCO a most modest effort in behalf of world peace, and the UN an exceedingly frail reed upon which to rest any hope, but the extraordinary bitterness and bigotry of such attacks is enough to demand vigorous defense of simple education about the work of these institutions.

The *Nation* keeps us well posted on such matters. How would we know, without articles of this sort, that the tide of suspicion and militant attack on almost any sort of international impartiality is swelling into a flood which affects every aspect of our national life? But what seems even more important than good reporting on this trend is some appraisal of what it really means. It is clear, for example, that the leaders of these movements are often irresponsible, that their followers are unreachable by reason. Least of all are they likely to be affected by what appears in the *Nation*!

Is this sort of aggressive desperation a typical development of a mass society? From what psychological roots does it grow? When writers like Martin Hall show how closely political fanaticism—call it "McCarthyism"—follows the pattern marked out by the growth of Nazi power, are we to conclude that the trend is irreversible until it has run its course—a course which, history tells us, can only end in the total exhaustion of another war?

There is one perplexing parallel between the witch-hunters and at least some of the people who take the lead in resisting them. Both see the struggle in the lurid light of an end-of-the-world drama. Without attempting, here, any extensive psychological diagnosis of those who fear "subversive influences," it seems fair to say that they have come to feel that certain simple symbols stand for what they hold dear—symbols which are embodied in the slogans like "Free Enterprise," "Americanism," and a few other formulations. It also seems clear that every time a nation like the United States goes to war, the public as a whole is made susceptible to the appeal of such over-simplified symbols and slogans. Further, modern advertising, as a "cultural force," exercises a constant influence toward oversimplification. The same may be said of mass forms of entertainment, and probably of mass forms of religion, too.

This amounts to the suggestion that, given the specific provocation of a tense international situation in which the contesting powers meet on ideological issues rather than the naked claims of rival imperialism, the sort of reaction we are getting is absolutely inevitable. If this should be the case, the curve of witch-hunting activity might easily be projected as accurately as any other forecast of developments, as a function of time and the gradual maturation of anxiety-producing states of mind. Eventually, we suppose, witch-hunting, like war, will become a thing-in-itself, independent of provocation, just as the Inquisition or the Soviet Secret Police became practically independent sovereignties.

A gloomy outlook? One effective rejoinder, we suppose, would be that the United States has a background very different from Russia's, or that of medieval Spain. But one way of getting at a broad trend is to examine it apart from modifying elements. And it seems even more necessary than keeping track of the progress of this trend to understand the psychological compulsions which supply its gathering power.

Flexible minds, gifted with the capacity for abstract thinking, are seldom found among the followers of these movements. The followers do not write the slogans. They are in some sense people betrayed—betrayed by others who have permitted slogan thinking to become popular. It was "liberalism," let us remember, that coined the slogans which led us into World War II. This was the war that would bring a new beginning in all innocence and glory. We would fight for our high-minded, beautiful principles and emerge purified by the ordeal. But the people, who were not so "far-seeing," who did not grasp those great ideals, had to be helped to understand. And since the war would not wait, something more effective than the slow processes of education had to be used.

Too often, "the liberals" are half idealist, half Machiavellian. They are idealists when they can be, Machiavellians when they must. And now they are themselves hunted by the followers of Machiavellians who are not idealists at all.

The sequence perhaps illustrates an application of Gresham's law to the currency of political opinion. The Machiavellian methods have driven idealist aims and hopes out of circulation. If we accept this analysis, the only course which remains is plain enough. We have to go back to the beginning and start explaining what always lies behind the division of the world into Bad People and Good People, Bad Nations and Good Nations. We have to do this, even if it means that next time an important war needs to be fought, the people may refuse to go along.

The world today is filled with frightened people. Nobody, not even the biggest army with the most atom bombs, can stop them from being frightened. Frightened people will always look for a simple explanation for why they must be afraid. Frightened people are unable to accept complicated explanations. You have to be calm and impartial to understand and accept complicated explanations. So the frightened people are looking around for someone to blame, for if they can find someone to blame, they are able to hope that by eliminating the culprits they can put an end to their fears.

McCarthyism, then, is nothing more nor less than a disease of frightened people in a mass society. You can't stop it with speeches about civil liberties. You can't stop it by reasoning with people. Not all at once. Nor can you stop it by the language and emotions of crisis even the crisis brought by the decline of the liberal spirit.

The last two wars engaged in by the United States were wars proposed and propagated by liberals. Woodrow Wilson was a liberal. Franklin Roosevelt was a liberal. Their supporters were liberals. What we are saying, here, is that you can't have "liberal" wars and escape the aftermath of McCarthyism. McCarthy is only repeating the slogans of liberal wars, after they have bounced against the backdrop of broken promises and impossible dreams. The slogans are coming back to us, in reverse.

COMMENTARY
A TIME OF WAITING

A CENTURY or a little less ago, it would have been easy to support this week's lead article by quoting an illustrious spokesman for America—Walt Whitman. To read Whitman today, however, is likely to make an American feel ashamed. So little of his vision has come true.

Since Whitman's time, the legend about America which he began has become a mechanical spiel—a pitch for propagandists who watch closely for the "effect" they are achieving. But Whitman's joy of life was not something that could survive being offered for sale. You couldn't have hired Whitman to celebrate the American way of life over the radio or on television—not even on a sustaining program. You might have been able to pay some soapy-voiced announcer to read Whitman's lines, but the old man himself wouldn't have lent himself as window-dressing for a sales program. He had other interests.

There is no need to tell our friends in other countries these things. We are so busy trying to "sell" *everybody* Americanism, as well as the more tangible products of American industry, that our commercial psychology is quite obvious. It is much more important to say that underneath all this superficial clatter are roots of American life which still send up shoots of Whitmanesque feeling. America is too big a place to spoil in a brief hundred years, even with three terrible wars to hasten the process.

There is still an America which is free, easy, and unafraid, even though it may be hard to recognize after it is found. Our review section has in recent years chronicled the appearance of a number of young novelists who, while not of Whitman's grand stature, are taking the new world in their stride, a little as he did. It is a new world already tarnished in spots, and not very brave, but these writers make appropriate adjustments for the changes. They are like Whitman in their essential honesty, their genial disregard for sham and peevish respectability.

What needs to be realized about America is that the present offers no clear issue to bring into the foreground the strength of these qualities. The problems of the time are blurred with uncertainty. The challenge is there, but it is too "big," too vague, to galvanize men into action.

We are living in some sort of psychological valley of indecision. We suspect that we have been sold down the river, but we don't know exactly when, how, or by whom. We need more time.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

LAST week we gave an able critic of Progressive Education his innings, and conceded that Albert Lynd's *Quackery in the Public Schools* could not be ignored. More than a few "educationists" do sound like a semanticist's nightmare, but if some of the "Progressives" wallow in psychological generalities, there are some others for whose presence we can be grateful.

Mr. Lynd was especially critical of sloppy thinking and writing by members of the "in-group" at Teachers College, Columbia. But the "horrible examples" he quotes are not all that comes out of Columbia's T.C. Nathaniel Cantor's *The Teaching-Learning Process* (Dryden, 1953), for example, shows that a number of good things can be said about the infiltration of psychological language into teacher-training programs.

To begin with, the background and origin of this book is interesting. From 1951 to 1952 a Visiting Professor of Sociology at Columbia, Dr. Cantor then proposed an informal series of discussions among "teachers and candidates for teaching" on the very general theme, "The Improvement of Skill in Teaching." According to Stephen Corey's introduction, "Professor Cantor and the group tried to develop greater sensitivity to the interaction between themselves and their pupils and to intellectualize about its meaning. . . . The central theme of this book is that if learning is to be significant and useful—if it is to make a difference the learner must want to learn. And in the classroom he will learn that which matters to him to the degree that he does not feel defensive and threatened. The teacher must help him to face his uncertainties, his limitations, and his inadequacies."

While this volume may not help a teacher directly by supplying better techniques for teaching mathematics or languages, the approach suggested *may* help him to better understand himself—and make him want to learn from the attitudes and the behavior of his pupils. It is reasonable, also, to think that a teacher who feels himself on a voyage of discovery in the classroom will feel a greater natural enthusiasm for the communication of specific information and knowledge. We always do our best "sharing" with those whom we love or feel sympathy for. Anyway, in Dr. Cantor's discussions the following conclusions emerged after teachers admitted and examined their common susceptibility to feelings of annoyance evoked by their young charges:

> Often the child looks to the parents for strength and security, but at other times it challenges the parent's will to discover weakness and to test the adult's strength. Parents sometimes lose control and display temper and anger, thereby creating fear, panic, and insecurity in the child.
>
> The harassed parent seeks to curb the child's spontaneity and willfulness. Adult patterns are projected upon the child long before he can possibly understand their significance or necessity. . . .
>
> Very often the child, especially during his early years, simply does not understand the logic of the situation or the reasonableness of the request from the adult point of view. The child does not react to the content of the argument or to the logic of the demand. *He reacts to the psychic-motor tensions of the parent,* as well as to his own feelings which accompany the punishment. Emotion cannot be concealed. It reveals itself in the pitch of the voice, the tilt of the head and the position of the arms, the tension of the lips and facial muscles, the position of the eyebrows, the pauses between phrases, the choice of words, etc.
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> What occurs is that the child *associates* the parent's disturbance, as he experiences it, and his own anxiety fear, hostility, and rejection with *his independent act of willing.* That is to say, his *own* way, his *own* will gets him into trouble. It is not *what* he wants to do, but the very fact that *he wants to do* that is wicked. *Being* independent is the evil thing which is punished. He is frightened. He experiences fear following his natural impulse to say or do or try things in his own spontaneous and creative way.
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> Acting independently, he discovers rather early, gets one into trouble. It's evil to follow your impulses. Do what's expected, listen to parents and teachers, and avoid painful consequences. Do not speak when you feel like saying your piece. Speak when you're spoken to. Don't question your parents;

> don't question the teacher. Parents know best. Teacher knows best. The radio announcer knows best. Emily Post knows best. . . . Hitler knows best.

By this time, at least some of the issues between the Progressives and their critics should be in clearer focus. Traditional education was bent on imposing the moral attitudes and judgments of older generations upon younger, as well as upon "transmitting the cultural heritage." "Progressive" teachers, though, invariably strong on avoiding the first mistake, are often very poor in fulfilling the later obligation. Thus, Albert Lynd's strictures ring true. But there *is* a growing science of humanitarian psychology, and it is possible to use psychological understanding for the benefit of teachers and pupils alike, *without* detracting attention from reading, writing and arithmetic. The obvious need is for a non-partisan attitude, when new theories are being tried, since we are bound to get both good results and some peculiarly abortive ones.

The importance of open-mindedness is stressed by Dr. Cantor in a chapter entitled "The Measurement and the Quality of Learning." Teachers taking his course wanted to know how you could possibly use "discussion" in teaching algebra or Latin. Some of the wild-eyed Progressives deplored by Mr. Lynd solved this problem by denying any intrinsic importance to algebra and languages, but here is a story illustrating how Dr. Cantor found a better solution in the example of a colleague:

> The writer was visiting a high school in South Carolina at the close of the first semester and was present at the algebra examination. The instructor was explaining to me the significance of the students' moving about the room, huddling together in groups of two, three, and four. *The pupils were helping one another to understand and to solve the examination questions.* The instructor explained that he was certain that, after an hour or so, every one of the thirty pupils would understand the principles involved in the solutions of the problems. He added that most teachers would consider what was happening as outlandish cheating. He thought it was a form of highly desirable cooperation. Learning to work together, to cooperate, to achieve self-esteem, he felt, was the important outcome of the elementary algebra class. The tool of algebra was a means of helping the pupils develop as people and, incidentally, become genuinely interested in mathematics, because it meant more to them than the risk and fear of "flunking" the teacher's or school's examination. Algebra became associated with friendliness, helpfulness, opportunities to express creativity, freedom to make mistakes without penalty or disapproval. In this atmosphere, pupil responsibility for perseverance and working through to an understanding of the problems is self-imposed. Algebra becomes a challenge, not a threat.

Even if there are a hundred or so objections to this "social approach," there are also advantages, and these are clearly described. If this teacher had gone all-out for "character building," and forgotten the algebra, we should be obliged to agree with Mr. Lynd. The fact is, however, as seems to be so often the case in the "Progressives" versus "Traditionalists" controversy, the truth does not lie conveniently located at one of two opposite poles. Nor should we forget that a good "traditional" teacher also knows how to make algebra interesting to the whole classroom, and is quite possibly able to get in more algebra and just as much inspiration as did the experimenter in the example mentioned. But, by way of still another rejoinder, especially today we are less likely to find such pedagogical geniuses—there are too many pupils and too few teachers. While we would choose geniuses every time for our teachers if we could get them, if we *can't*, we need to make sure that those of smaller stature in the profession are no longer encouraged to become petty tyrants in the classroom.

FRONTIERS

BOOKS FOR OUR TIME—Discussion

A COMMENT from Joseph Wood Krutch on Books-for-Our-Time discussions offers an interesting—and perennial—point of departure. Both Mr. Wienpahl's essay (printed here Jan. 6) and Mr. Krutch's remarks remind us how much more there is to living than to intellectualizing. But while Wienpahl stressed æsthetics, Krutch stresses biology.

That æsthetics and biology have a psychic common denominator there can be little doubt, nor that the wondrous conceptualizing capacities of man, however valuable, can sometimes hide a world of beauty only revealed when we place an equal trust in instinct and intuition. All this, you may say, is self-evident, but it has not been so for the majority of Christian apologists, nor for system-builders and moralists. It is as if the most obvious imperfection of man is his tendency to exalt one aspect of nature at a time, and at the expense of all others. The theologian, the philosopher, and the physicist, also, often represent extremes for which the sensuous man as well as the mystic supply compensating opposites. In any event, this is what Mr. Krutch has to say on intellectuals in general:

> Editors, MANAS: Reading your correspondent's letter as he says he intended it—*i.e.*, not as in derogation of the books you discussed but only in order to call attention to something else important—I agree with him. In various places I have attempted in various ways to say something very similar. Our age is one which rather too persistently neglects the immediate in favor of the somehow remote. That means that we do not enjoy the moment as it passes and that we are more concerned with the origins and the consequences of things than with the things themselves. It means also that we are always neglecting the concrete in order to compile statistics, formulate laws, and discover tendencies. We always want to know what a thing "really is" when the thing which we finally decide it "really is" usually turns out to be something quite different from what it "appears to be." And yet it is with things as they appear to be that we actually live our lives.
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> To take a simple example we think a given color "really is" a disturbance in the ether (if there is any ether!) best described in terms of angstrom units. But for us it "really is" a color sensation, first of all. The experience of living takes place in the world of things as they seem to be. We do not have our conscious life in a space-time continuum but in a universe where seven o'clock means one thing and the corner of 42nd Street and Broadway another. And we should remind ourselves frequently not to try to live, usually, in any world except the one which we have real contact with. It is in that world that joy and pleasure, love and heroism, gladness and sadness are possible. Animal faith is the thing we have to live by most of the time. And I am not at all sure that one of the reasons why this is an age of anxiety is not that we are trying to live too much of the time in a world to which neither our minds nor our senses are adjusted. Concepts are necessary. It is perhaps only because we have them that we are capable of anything more than animal impulse, emotion, and behavior. But we are a long way yet from being ready to cut off completely from our animal nature.
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> —JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Krutch, like Wienpahl, will, we feel sure, welcome Macneile Dixon's amplifications of his own remarks. The following paragraphs from *The Human Situation* seem to us particularly pertinent:

> How often it is proclaimed that Naturalism, or Materialism, is dead. Yet its ghost continues to haunt the philosophers. Perhaps it has not been buried with the proper rites. In my opinion a very powerful case can be made out for Naturalism, and its opponents have good reason to view its strength with apprehension. It has an ally in the human heart, there is something in us which approves and accepts it. Let us say that there is something in us hostile to religion, and something in us friendly to it. "The soul is naturally Christian," said Tertullian. Yes, and it is naturally Pagan. It is divided against itself. Religion knows it well, this double mind: Psychology is well aware of it. But this division is not of our making. It is from nature, "the outward man," in the phrase of Paracelsus, that we inherit this double-mindedness. Man mirrors the world and is involved in its duality, in the balanced rhythms which permeate the whole fabric of things. We shall meet the swaying forces, the crossing currents in many forms and guises. "If man is good," it has been asked, "why does he do evil? If evil, why does he love the good?" Nature has decreed that he should desire incompatible things—to

> have, for example, the approval of others, and yet go his own unhindered way. We are very strange creatures, so strange that, in my opinion at least, not a philosopher of them all has written the first sentence in the book of the soul. "Four thousand volumes of metaphysics," said Voltaire, "will not teach us what the soul is." "You will not find its boundaries," said Heraclitus, "by travelling in any direction, so deep is the measure of it."

There is more than one way to argue the need for remembering our "animal" natures. Mr. Krutch's way is that of the naturalist. What he sees in "nature" delights and warms him, so that by reminding us of the primal role of biological awareness and feelings, he is crediting rather than discrediting Homo sapiens. While at first glance his remarks seemed antagonistic to the familiar emphasis on metaphysics and transcendental philosophy which characterizes MANAS, we think that he is simply balancing the scales against intellectualism, along lines similar to those developed by Mr. Wienpahl. We are not sure, however, what Mr. Krutch means by "animal faith," since faith, as blind trust—as of dog for master—takes us back to trust in God, for which neither we nor, we suspect, Mr. Krutch have any particular predilections. Then, too, when one begins to toss around statements about the "animal" nature of man, arguments on the Kinsey Reports are sure to ensue, and for these we, at least, do not have a present sufficiency of courage. The real point seems to be that, when one is in a pantheist mood, he seeks close kinship with all that lives and breathes, and discovers, even in the "animal" organism he inhabits, that mineral, vegetable and creature life are all a part of oneself. In the final analysis, we do not live to think—we think to live most fully, with all of the philosophies and sciences serving well only when they lead to closer rapport with other beings, whether they be fellow humans, "animals," or Gods.

And now, we discover we have again made room for that literary Proteus, Mr. Dixon, who has more to say on why man is "naturally pagan," why "hostile" to the sort of religion which denies the beauty and wonder of our union with nature. Here, perhaps, in romance and love, we have a meeting-ground for æsthetics and biology, and it is probably close to truth to say that man who has not loved and loved well is hardly able to know himself, let alone the rest of humanity. There have been many who have feared love between the sexes—who are somehow convinced that the devil has a hand in all such matters. Dixon, we think, fairly states the case for love:

> For the souls afraid, mortally afraid of life—and how many they be, and have reason to be—Christianity came with healing in its wings. But to the lovers of life and the world, fascinated by the wide range of its vital and vivid interests, its sunlit landscape, the brave show of its human figures and enterprises, Christianity had no clear message. "One world at a time," men said, "and the present is the present."
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> Take a single illustration. Let us ask, "What has Christianity to say of love between the sexes?"—surely a subject of central importance. Apparently not a word, or a derogatory word. The Fathers have little pleasant to say on women or love-making. They commend and exalt celibacy. Chrysostom spoke of women as a "desirable calamity," and we are all familiar with St. Paul's remarks on marriage. Yet here you have a subject which more than any other has occupied the attention of the poets and artists, indeed all mankind, a passion which is at the root of life itself, which exceeds all others in strength, of which, as Stendhal said, "all the sincere manifestations have a character of beauty," which has provided the kernel for all the great stories of the world, with which every literature teems, which gives rise to half, and more than half, of all the pains and pleasures of life, plays a leading part in every activity, creates family relationships, running through human existence like the veins through the body, omnipresent, entering into association with every side of our conduct and on every day we live, leading to crimes, treacheries, self-sacrifice, heroism, eternally occupying the thoughts of society, and present in all its conversations. Upon this transcendent theme with its endless ethical ramifications, a strange silence reigns in the Christian documents. And there is a similar silence in respect of the animal world. Their status in God's creation is overlooked.

We close with another addition to Mr. Krutch's letter, a passage borrowed from his just

published *The Best of Two Worlds* (later to be reviewed in full). The view that "art" is somehow more suited for admiration and inspiration than the world of nature seems a bit beside the point, if one reflects how closely these two are ultimately related. Krutch, moreover, indicates what happens when a culture becomes over-sophisticated in the typically urban sense:

> What seems to me so terribly, perhaps fatally, wrong with the present stage in the evolution of the human spirit is not its tendency to go beyond a mere "life in nature," but its tendency to break completely the connection which it cannot break without cutting off its roots; without forgetting with desperate consequences that the human arises out of the natural and must always remain to some extent conditioned by it.
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> Beauty and joy are natural things. They are older than man, and they have their source in the natural part of him. Art becomes sterile and the joy of life withers when they become unnatural. If modern urban life is becoming more comfortable, more orderly, more sanitary, and more socially conscious than it ever was before—but if at the same time it is also becoming less beautiful (as seems to me) and less joyous (as it seems to nearly everyone)—then the deepest reason for that may be its increasing forgetfulness of nature. She is often none of the good things which the city is, but she is almost always, nevertheless, somehow beautiful and somehow joyous.