

THE GREAT MUTATION

THE eighteenth century was really a great turning point in the history of the world. With the French Revolution and the American War for Independence was introduced the idea of a popular overthrow, not only of existing government power, but also of existing government processes and forms of social organization. Utopian dreaming was no longer confined to the library and the study, but grew up from the art of fantasy-making, from the provocative in literature, to the provocative in politics.

Whether by accident or by some design presently hidden from mortals—or, more simply, as a result of the human energy and optimism released by the great revolutions of the eighteenth century—the historical epoch which followed the revolutionary era was marked by scientific discoveries which provided solid foundation for the idea of far-reaching change. If the Revolution gave men's political destiny into their own hands, the doctrine of Evolution helped to generate a confidence in their capacity to mold a better future. While historians and scholars may trace this theory of historical self-determination to the Italian philosopher, Vico, it came to birth in the thinking and feeling of the common man only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Without arguing about the after-effects of the revolutionary period—and there is much to argue about—let us admit that a great and lasting liberation was accomplished through the destruction of oppressive institutions. The Revolution abolished both the theory and the fact of hereditary class distinctions. While the sentiment of class distinctions may still exist in some European countries, they are not, in general, upheld by law nor sanctified by religion. And in the United States, whose civilization was rooted almost in the very hour of the great break with the

past, there is not even the sentiment of class distinction. As Peter F. Drucker notes in the current number of Harper's:

When the boss's son is made a vice president in this country the publicity release is likely to stress that his first job was pushing a broom. But when a former broompusher, born in the Glasgow slums, gets to be managing director in a British company the official announcement is likely to hint gently at descent from Robert Bruce.

Mr. Drucker's article, "The Myth of American Uniformity," is worth reading in its entirety, for it deals objectively with what may be called the uniqueness of American civilization from a number of points of view. We feel quite free to speak thus of America, and to quarrel with Mr. Drucker not at all, for this Magazine, whatever its defects, can never be accused of chauvinistic praise of the United States. But precisely because of the widespread habit of blind admiration of everything "American," many critics of America often adopt an opposite convention, being unable to see anything good about the United States. To our way of thinking, there is so much that is good about the United States that serious criticism is a vital responsibility of those who are able to see, more or less clearly, what is wrong.

Mr. Drucker's article, however, is more a treatise on what is *different* in the United States, rather than upon what is "right." He is concerned with pointing out the lack of regimentation in American life, despite the well-known dogma that Americans are bound over to rigid uniformity. We have no doubt that an article could be written proving Mr. Drucker wrong in certain important respects—there is a certain adolescent similarity of temperament among Americans, which has left them unable to reach certain levels of reflective thinking that may be represented, say, by G. Lowes Dickinson and W. Macneile Dixon in England; by Ortega in (or of) Spain; by Soetan

Sjahrir in Indonesia; and by Albert Einstein of pre-Nazi Germany—but Mr. Drucker is impressed, and rightly, we think, by the bubbling ingenuity of Americans, their readiness to "figure things out for themselves," their instinct of self-reliance, and their lack of interest in "authorities" in the fields where their own competence sets the pace for the rest of the world.

Another article in the May *Harper's* gives these evidences of "progress" a statistical twist. John McPartland is one of a team of writers who discuss "space travel"—is it, or isn't it, a possibility?—and in laying a foundation for his views on the subject Mr. McPartland supplies a picture of the technological utopia in which we live:

Science today is an iceberg, with only a fraction—perhaps one-sixth—of its bulk now visible above the ocean of military security. But this iceberg of knowledge and power is growing at a high-order exponential curve of acceleration. The formula is the same as that for the surface of an expanding sphere: human knowledge is increasing in area as the square of the radial increase. We are acquiring as much new information each two years as we acquired in the total of human history up to now; within five years that two-year span will have decreased to one year; within ten years it will have diminished to *three months*.

For hundreds of centuries man traveled at a speed measured by his walking and running (mark this on a chart as a long, flat line). He learned to use horses (mark a rising curve in the chart-line from about five miles an hour to fifteen). Five thousand years later he learned to use mechanical energy in steam engines (the curve now reaches sixty). Eighty years later he learned to move through the air (and the curve leaps sharply to one, two, four, fifteen hundred). The five years from 1945 to 1950 show an increase of at least one thousand miles per hour, twice as much as the top value of all the rest of the curve. Now put that line, with its proud rise toward the vertical, against the requirements and opportunities of travel in open space, which begin at a threshold of 25,000 miles per hour and lead to the speed of light, and the chart indicates that we have barely begun to crawl.

Mr. McPartland does not expect to buy a ticket for Mars during any foreseeable future. Our

technicians, however, are getting ready for a try at it, anyway. In Chicago, laboratory scientists are experimenting on dogs with a fluid substitute for air. The idea is that if flyers can be internally cushioned against shock, sudden starts and stops will be less likely to damage their organs, which hang loosely in the cavities of the body. This is only one item of the preparations under way—the most distasteful one perhaps, though the others are almost as strange.

Mr. McPartland speaks of a "high-order exponential curve" which represents the world's growing knowledge. With a layman's curiosity, we wonder about that curve a little bit—wonder if it gives any promise of some day resembling the curve of the chain reaction in atomic fission. But perhaps we are only beguiled by the science-fiction mood of his first two paragraphs. In any event, our main point is clear. Something wonderful, new, and occasionally quite horrible in effect has been happening to the world since the eighteenth century. (For an appreciation of some of the more encouraging aspects of this change, we invite the attention of readers to Mrs. Rose Wilder Lane's *Discovery of Freedom*, a book of dithyrambic enthusiasm, yet packed with the facts and the feelings of genuine discovery. It is a book about the United States, and what has happened, here, in terms of the liberation of man.)

Interestingly enough, to find some scheme of meaning for what has been going on since the eighteenth century, we have to go either to rather occult—certainly unfamiliar—theories of universal history, or to modern biological science for the suggestive analogy of *mutation*. We shall need, perhaps, both viewpoints before we are done. Something like this blend of mysticism with science was resorted to by Julian Huxley, sixteen years ago, when before a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science he proposed that extra sensory perception may represent the dawning of new evolutionary possibility. He compared the present state of telepathic capacity to the human use of

mathematics during the great Ice Age no more than a "rule of thumb."

So, perhaps the modern world is indeed under the bewildering sway of a Great Mutation—the introduction into the psychological life of mankind of a new kind of creative power and self-consciousness. Perhaps we have all been touched—some of us more than others—with Promethean fire, and this is in truth a wholly natural and necessary part of our evolutionary development. J. Arthur Thompson, discussing in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* the great problem of the emergence of man in prehistoric times, speaks of a "re-definition and re-thrilling of the moral fibers," bringing, as a result, the birth of human consciousness. Why should this happen "just once"? When children become adolescents, and when adolescents become grown men and women, an unmistakable "re-thrilling of the moral fibers" takes place. These and perhaps other changes in the psychological constitution of individual human beings seem to parallel the assumption of new responsibilities, and coincide, in general, with certain physiological transformations. That there are larger cycles of human development, applying to the race as a whole, is surely not beyond the realm of possibility; and, practically speaking, this extension of the idea of a Great Mutation into a theory of progressive stages of human evolution at least gives some kind of hopeful orientation in a world situation which offers no reference-points at all within the field of factual observation.

Probably this is enough of experimentation in "airy curves." (Ortega so describes the irrepressible tendency of the human mind to complete the diagram of the nature of things, starting with an "airy curve" at the point where exact science leaves off—a point, incidentally, where the problem becomes peculiarly interesting and important.) Returning, then, to the subject of Revolution, there is considerable light to be had from Herbert Spencer on what happened to the liberating influences set going in the eighteenth century. In his essay, *Man and the State* (Caxton

Printers, Caldwell, Idaho), Spencer shows that the Liberal movement, which gave practical form to the achievements of the Revolution, first busied itself with the removal of restraints upon human behavior—the restraints which had been applied to the masses for the benefit of the classes. The object, at first, was simply Equality, sought by eliminating those laws and practices which denied equal rights to all. Then, somewhere along toward the middle of the nineteenth century (see Spencer for dates, and ample evidence taken from the history of social legislation in Britain), the liberals began to attempt to *guarantee* equality by enacting a new kind of repressive or regulatory legislation. In this change of function of the Liberal movement, critics of socialization see the birth of the idea of, the legislative precedent for, what is now called the Welfare State.

The apotheosis of this ideal, of course, is found in the Communist State of Soviet Russia. Perhaps we should say *one* apotheosis of Welfare Statism is found in the USSR, for it is by no means certain that the Soviet social order represents the inevitable end-product of processes of change or "reform" which Spencer regarded with such foreboding. It would be folly to allege that organized welfare *must* destroy not only the fact but also the philosophy of Civil Liberty—that primary ideal and objective of the Liberal credo. But it is neither folly nor pessimism to point out that the Welfare State which feels compelled by circumstances to maintain constant and feverish preparation for total war is always ready to sacrifice civil liberties in the name of "security" or "military necessity." The fact that some States suppress civil liberties with an air of reluctance does not make their loss any less tragic or conclusive.

And so we arrive at a point toward which we have been moving since the beginning of this discussion. In some parts of the world, at least, the Revolution has turned full circle—from tyranny to tyranny. It matters little whether a man is oppressed by a King or a Commissar, so long as

he is oppressed. And it matters little, also, as the Commissars so justly point out, whether the man thinks he is oppressed or not. If he is led by propaganda to think that his society is the best of all possible societies, the propaganda does not become the torch of liberty because, for a time, it happens to convince.

The new Enemy, in short, is the State. But only the State, we say, and nothing less than the State, can protect us from the horror of invasion by aggressors, and the servitude which defeat in war is believed to entail. This is the real issue of politics, today. It is not, of course, an issue, but a dilemma, and no one will really discuss it in the coming presidential campaign in the United States for the reason that the man who states a dilemma is a man without a solution, and people will vote only for men who promise solutions.

To our way of thinking, there are really only two courses open to the thinking man of this epoch—Anarchism and Mysticism. That is to say, the thinking man is under a practical obligation to himself to assimilate the insights of both anarchist and mystical investigation, for these represent openings on the otherwise completely overcast moral horizons of the modern world. We do not suggest that modern anarchist thought has *the* answer; we distinctly think otherwise. But modern anarchist thought does represent a return to the values which the liberal movement possessed before it became a hostage of the State. We have a book for review—*Mankind Is One*, which is a collection of articles reprinted from the British anarchist weekly, *Freedom* (Freedom Press, 27 Lion Street, London, W. C. I; paper cover, 7/6; cloth, 10/6). The reader of this book will make an important discovery—that the anarchists are thinking the thoughts which all men ought to be thinking, in these perilous times. The anarchists are not afraid to call attention to what we are losing, have already lost, in terms of freedom, in terms of love and respect for other people, in terms of the elemental decencies of life—the decencies we so easily forget when it

comes time to plunge the world into universal fratricide for the sake of . . . all those things we say we go to war for.

The anarchist is an empiricist in the matter of liberty. He rejects the State metaphysics. The mystic, in turn, is an empiricist in the matter of consciousness. He wants to know first hand. Of all the available mysticisms, we like the Platonic and the Upanishadic forms the best—these, at any rate, are universal enough to prevent self-betrayal into some modern quietist sectarianism. Mysticism without metaphysics, it seems to us, is as bad as anarchism without self-discipline. What we are really proposing are new directions of social and personal inquiry, and the labels we have given these directions are but crude signposts pointing to undiscovered country—a country, however, from which we dare not turn away.

Letter from **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—Few weeks pass without some new book being hailed as a masterpiece, work of genius, and so forth; so that one may hesitate to add another title to this swollen and dubious total. Yet I feel that to have missed *A Land*, by Jacquetta Hawkes, published last year, which has just come my way, is to have lost an emotional and intellectual experience, such as that which the fortunate knew when first Darwin's *Origin of Species* "swam into their ken." For this book, like the other, deals with evolution and man's origins and possible destiny as a child of the primeval mud of Mother Earth. And, since we have it on good authority that there are sermons in stones and good in everything, I think there is a sermon here on almost every page, and that if one reasons by analogy, we shall find here a solemn warning—put out by this most brilliant woman geologist, purposely, or through sheer excess of intellectual fecundity. Here, plainly, I think one may find the object lesson of the events of geological time and apply them to the present central problem of mankind.

"There is some merciless force," writes Mrs. Hawkes, "in evolution that may cause trends, once they have begun, to become excessive and at last pathological, the unfortunate species concerned being utterly helpless and unable to check their racial suicide." Of course, the author is thinking in terms of that ding-dong battle between the individual and the environment which caused countless living things to devise protective armour against their enemies, but in the end so over-armoured themselves as to put a fence about their evolutionary possibilities and so, in time, determined their own extinction.

One thought, on reading these pages, springs to the mind inevitably. It is this: Is the human race committing the same sort of long-term hari-kari in its fear, not of the dangers of other species hostile to it, but against its own kind? In other words, has the obsession of the natural hostility of men of other breeds, cultures, lands, so imprisoned man's political mind, that he is turning from the wide open door of

progress through discovery and invention, with its high promise of redemption from the fear of want and soulless toil, to waste the products of his brain upon an armament which must destroy or, anyway, limit him, as the spiral prehistoric ammonite, bent on ever more perfect armament, finally consigned itself to extinction in the prison of its lovely shell?

Since the churches have failed signally to sound the spiritual alarum or call humanity from its pathological preoccupation with fear and the illusion of the inevitability of a final appeal to force, maybe the scientist, preaching from the stones and rocks, may sound an alarm so loud that, even now, upon the brink of some final catastrophe brought upon us by our spiritual myopia, will give us presently sight for present blindness. In the past, we have striven to learn from parables; maybe, henceforth, we must look to the analogies to be drawn from the earth's past, for terrestrial salvation.

One thing is certain, and that is the pathological character of the pattern of modern political thought. It requires no Orwell imagination to envisage a tomorrow in which the world will be composed of workers divided between the two functions of producing the minimum requirements for life and the maximum requirements for its destruction. Yet nowhere does any leader emerge to trumpet the alarm, while men whose minds suggest the fossils of past and discredited values and concepts dominate the world stage of action. And, as that sage—and perhaps cunning—politician, the late David Lloyd George, once shrewdly observed: "At the moment of crisis it is the few resolute men who determine the course of events." What is the choice? May it not be summarised as the choice between the dull mediocrity of political candidates and the prophetic voice of an Einstein?

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

A DOUBTFUL ABSOLUTION

IF, at the moment, we had to suggest a book which illustrates the skill and cunning of the novelist, we should probably name *The River Line* by Charles Morgan. We ought to have known about Mr. Morgan, of course. A reviewer who hasn't read *The Fountain*—as we have not—is still a mere tenderfoot with no merit badges to his credit, but as this Department is a bit tolerant in certain directions, we shall discuss *The River Line* anyway, omitting sage comparisons with the author's earlier work.

First of all, there is suspense in the story from the first page, although not an ordinary kind of suspense. You know that the book will lead to no more than psychological discovery of one sort or another. But there is always in the background a thrilling melodrama of war, espionage, and escape to give the story the special vigor gained from characters who are both thinkers and men of deeds. The foreground action, however, is all in conversation, presented with the author's consummate mastery of nuance.

The people in the story are thoroughbreds, with honors equally shared by the English, the French, and the Americans. They are all tortured by a moral problem, and in the end all find release. Mr. Morgan makes this problem a living, vivid thing, compelling the reader to realize that, for these people, the moral issues of life are paramount, and he does it with such good taste that no breath of preaching escapes from his pages.

The story, briefly, is about four people who were together for a few weeks in France during the Nazi occupation. An American flyer and two English soldiers are being spirited by the French Underground to the Spanish border, and a French girl, who later marries one of the Englishmen, is an Underground leader by night, a demure schoolteacher by day. The four meet in her home, where they rest in hiding until the way is clear for the last lap of their journey to Spain and freedom.

These, approximately, are the "facts" from which the story grows. The reader hears them,

however, as told years later by the American flyer, who returns to England to visit one of the Englishmen and his wife. The other Englishman is dead—killed during the escape, thus creating the moral problem: Need he have died?

There are successful turns and twists in the story, and one major "coincidence" which brings a fugue-like succession of new elements of suspense to the last few chapters. Distantly, but over all, hovers the shadow of war's "necessity" and the impersonal compulsions which it creates. The American, within whose mind the major unfolding of events takes place, says things like this:

"I am a natural conciliator. I loathe the very idea of using power internationally while there's one per cent of hope that it may not have to be used. And anyway, I asked, who was to decide whether power was mad or sane? Was each man and each nation to be judge in its own cause? And Heron answered: yes, to be judge in one's own cause was to exercise conscience; but a judge didn't make the law, he interpreted it; and in the same way, the exercise of conscience was evil and fanatical and insane if it *made* law; its task was to interpret a known law, to apply principle in essence religious to particular cases, not to decide each case on a basis of self-will."

This sort of reflective discussion together with the inward yearning of all the characters creates a sense of other-worldliness, as though there existed somewhere, above or within, a sphere where the Good, the True, and the Beautiful are living and identical realities. A particular warmth, although remote, is created for this world by the fact that the Englishman who dies seems to have lived in it, or by its laws, while he was known to his friends. This man, Heron, seems also to serve as some kind of "plank of salvation" for the others of the story; and yet, he has to die, while they play peculiarly agonizing roles in the cause of his death.

These friends have enough of his feeling to accept it in wonderment, with gratitude, and with love for him. They, too, are reaching after the Good, the True, the Beautiful, and having known Heron is a part of the strength in their reachings. But Heron is dead.

Thus a contrapuntal theme of changeless tragedy haunts the psychological development of *The River Line*. One feels that, at least for the conditions of life in the twentieth century, Mr. Morgan has adopted the rule, "All men kill the thing they love," and his object in this story is to bring about a reconciliation of his characters with inescapable evil. He shows that each one did what he *had* to do. When all three are finally able to feel that, whatever they have done, they are absolved of personal guilt, for the reason that the evil in which they played a part belonged, not to them, but to the impersonal circumstances of war, the great catharsis is accomplished and they go on to what amounts to a life in moral regeneration, an actual rebirth of the spirit.

Much as we admire Mr. Morgan's art, and however finely drawn the moral emotions of his characters, *The River Line* seems a great waste of talent, from one point of view. The author works within the narrow stage of the traditional morality which accepts without much real questioning the *status quo* of war between the good nations and the bad nations. In this respect, it is like William Wister Haines' *Command Decision*, another story of "military necessity." A review of this book in the first issue of MANAS said:

Mr. Haines shows us what a man of inflexible determination may accomplish after he has accepted—like a "good soldier"—the ruthlessness of war as a kind of cosmic necessity. The circumstance of war is simply given; the ordeal of Dennis [the commander who, again and again, sends his flyers to almost certain death] neither erases the evil nor explores its cause. While *Command Decision* generates the stabbing thrill of pain and provides the spectacle of its endurance by brave men, there is no expiation, no spiritual catharsis, at the end. . . . A tired and disillusioned war correspondent gives what explanation Mr. Haines thinks possible. The Army itself is not responsible for the agonizing dilemma confronting Dennis. The Army is the corporate receiver of a morally bankrupt world; only by military methods can the world go on at all.

So, for a similar reason, the catharsis offered by Mr. Morgan seems partly unreal; it is not wholly unreal because of the psychological insight of the author. The difficulty is this: Here is a book dealing

with the inner struggles and transformations of mature and aspiring individuals—individuals with delicate moral sensibilities—yet Mr. Morgan gives them a setting unworthy of their capacities. They need something more to throw their weight against than the particular wall of circumstance he builds around them. He makes them, without meaning to, fugitives from the larger problems of life. Centuries ago, when the social situation was unquestioned, when it was beyond the imaginative power of ordinary men to challenge the very order on which the wires of moral tension were strung, the characters of *The River Line* would have lived at "the height of the time." They do not, in the twentieth century.

It is characteristic of moral progress that more and more "impersonal circumstances" are drawn within the orbit of human decision and moral responsibility. Eventually, we may draw in even the "natural world," and make equations which will relate the moral will of man to the apparently external forces of nature. Presently, however, we ought at least to include within the area of personal accountability *all* the terrible phenomena of war. In short, Mr. Morgan's "code" is not comprehensive enough to apply to the moral issues of the modern world; as a result, he gives us progressive psychology linked with medieval morality, and his undeniable success with this novel comes only from his natural tenderness and his incomparable art.

COMMENTARY ON LOVING ONE ANOTHER

A READER'S query concerning a statement attributed to the Emperor Julian (MANAS for April 23) has led us along devious paths of "research," ending in the conclusion that Julian did not make the statement at all. The passage, which was cited "from memory"—a faulty memory, it seems—was, "See how these Christians love one another," represented as Julian's sarcastic comment on the theological controversies of the day. Actually, these words were first used by Tertullian to signify pagan envy of the harmony among Christians.

However, a note by the editor of Tertullian's works gives further light. Calling Tertullian's claim a "precious testimony," he adds that "the caviller asserts that afterwards the heathen used this expression derisively." (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1885, III, 46.) So if the "heathen" Julian did not use this expression, he could easily have done so, in view of his opinions. What did happen, according to Lydia Maria Child's *Progress of Religioas Ideas* (III, 68), is this:

He [Julian] summoned a meeting of various Christian sects, and attempted to preside over their discussions. . . . Whatever his motives might have been, the disputes between the Athanasians, Arians, Apollinarians, Anomeans, and of Donatists with them all, became so clamorous, that he could not make himself heard; and he dismissed them with the remark: "No wild beasts are so savage and intractable as Christian sectaries."

Tertullian himself, termed the Founder of Latin Christianity, to whom are owed such familiar sayings as, "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church," and of the Resurrection, "the fact is certain, because it is impossible," did not himself escape the taint of heresy. Eventually he became a leader of the Montanist sect, a group opposed to the worldliness of the Roman clergy and intent upon returning to the simple life of the early Christians.

Tertullian was not, however, a gentle soul. Writing of Judgment Day, which he apparently believed was just around the corner, he exclaimed:

Which sight gives me joy? which rouses me to exultation?—as I see so many illustrious monarchs, whose reception into the heavens was publicly announced, groaning now in the lowest darkness, . . . governors of provinces, too, who persecuted the Christian name, in fires more fierce than those with which . . . they raged against the followers of Christ. What world's wise men besides, the very philosophers, in fact, who taught their followers . . . either that they had no souls, or that they would never return to the bodies which at death they left, now covered with shame before the poor deluded ones, as one fire consumes them. . . . (*De Spectaculis*, Chap. 30.)

Tertullian's Christians may have loved one another, but they certainly did not love anyone else.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

SOME months ago, a subscriber wrote us wondering about the "problems of old age." It now occurs to us—as it should have at the time—that the psychology of aging is not unrelated to the psychology of "growing up." The logic of this is clear enough. The way in which we, in the in-between ages, regard the oncoming later period of life has a profound and constant effect upon the values we live by. Further, the habitual attitudes of our daily life have a great deal to do with the habits of mind and attitude we help our children to form.

A society largely convinced that old people are comparatively useless is a society whose members will tend to crowd as much excitement and pleasurable sensory experience as possible into the years when the pleasures of the senses are keenest. The old recommendation, "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die," expresses the attitude—a feeling that we *should* place chief emphasis upon bodily enjoyment. This in turn leads to an accelerated tempo in the "pursuit of happiness," and, by and large, modern Western society has long lived in just this kind of frantic psychological atmosphere. Whatever pleasures are thought to be still possible during advanced age are conceived as second-rate, the only compensation for the supposedly inevitable decline in the capacity for pleasurable experience being supplied by a hoped-for greater security of possessions.

In other words, you can't have as much fun after you pass the age of fifty or so, but you can count on a guaranteed monthly stipend from the annuities and retirement funds you are laboring to accumulate. There are, of course, exceptions to this view. For instance, the comparatively small group of successful intellectuals who write or lecture in universities expect to find their most creative years in later life, but the average salaried employee or unionized worker reflects the

majority viewpoint, which is that old age is something to be dreaded.

Thoughtful critics have written occasional essays on the "cult of youth" in America, and bombastic iconoclasts such as Phillip Wylie have excoriated the habits of middle-aged women who try to preserve the facades of youth even at the cost of health and by the expenditure of enormous sums for beauty culture. Such preoccupation, it can be contended, leads to the virtual cessation of useful or creative thought. We can certainly amass a convincing pile of evidence to indicate that the "fountain of youth" fever is much like other crippling delusions. If one feels that the greatest enjoyment of which he is capable resides in hanging on to the unraveling strands of youth, he is actually "living in the past," tending to resent innovations of both ideas and social habits. He does not prepare himself to adapt to changes because he has given up hope of participating in the future in any meaningful sense. And this type of reaction easily becomes a vicious circle, with grandfathers and grandmothers of reactionary temperament cutting themselves off from any possibility of being good companions for the young.

Older cultures surely have something to teach us, here. The patterns of Chinese and Indian life provided special respect and veneration for the elders. Grandfathers and grandmothers often served as instructors to the children while the parents were busily occupied with details of material support and keeping house. In Pearl Buck's accounts of the old Chinese family, it is even suggested that an additional advantage was gained by this method, since the best instructors are often those not too personally and pridefully involved in the progress of the pupils. The "older ones" were supposed to have acquired the calm and broad perspective needed for teaching without excessive excitement, and worry as to the final result.

In India, too, the elders are often regarded as possessing a natural wisdom. In Indian life, the

emphasis has always been upon the patient pursuit of self-mastery, and the more time one has had for the carrying out of this most difficult undertaking, the greater the possibilities in this direction. The cultures of China and India, then, have long encouraged an entirely different attitude toward old age. Middle-aged people were not desperately striving to *keep* from being elderly and so the tempo of family life, in general, absorbed something of the calm of the elders.

More, perhaps, than anything else, children and the young need to think of their accomplishments in terms of control, patience, of the arts of deliberation and an inward deepening and growing of perspective—something quite different from the rush to get to college and a much greater rush to pack "the best years of our lives" into the semi-adolescent play atmosphere of the life there enjoyed. The present movement towards military training and conscription may, of course, by an unwelcome sort of poetic justice, now be making the later years of life a little more attractive—the draft can't get you if you're old enough. And it has been noted here before that the thousands of young veterans crowding American universities on the G.I. Bill of Rights have brought a more serious tone to "campus life." Many veterans have obviously been shaken out of the naïveté of the pre-war generation in respect to how life may be most sensibly lived, and the university atmosphere seems more purposive from their presence. But this is only a minor cross-current, developed, moreover, by circumstance rather than by design, and even if university life does oppose the religion of childhood pleasures, the real transition can come only through far-reaching reevaluation of our idea of "happiness."

It will undoubtedly be a long time before such a transition can be expected to take place. The carnival atmosphere of wild-cat political movements exploiting extravagant promises of large pensions for the aged shows that Western civilization is every bit as materialistic in some

respects as our fulminating religious critics maintain.

In general, our view of the later years of a human life should be a point of departure for studying the perplexing problem of why we have so much trouble with our children, why our example to them seems so poor, and why only adults without fear of advancing age are fit to teach children how to live.

FRONTIERS Religion and the Future

THE frequent discussions of religion in MANAS—almost to the point of monotony—are easily justified by reference to the mass of contemporary essays and analyses now appearing on the subject. The process of "re-thinking religion" recommended a few years ago by John Haynes Holmes seems destined to go on for some time, and it is also probable that a deeper psychological penetration into the causes and effects of religious beliefs will be gained as the tide of inquiry progresses.

One thing above all, we think, needs to be realized—that the prevailing discussions of religion are not simply repetitions of old scholastic debates, nor are the issues involved relevant only to "intellectual" people. There *is* a demand for understanding, a demand which cuts across both educational and economic distinctions, even though it cannot be claimed to involve the majority. The cleavage between the "pragmatist" and the "supernaturalist," which may at first seem remote from the average man, can be seen to be increasingly a matter of concern to all. The "average man," no matter how untutored his intellect, is inevitably affected by the contradictions between religious and scientific standards, and by the confusion encountered when any sort of reconciliation or synthesis is attempted.

An article in the New York *Herald Tribune* book-review section (March 9) is useful as background in evaluating the new public interest in religion as a *field of study*. The survey is by Harry Overstreet, whose subtitle asserts that "The Books of Today Reflect Man's Search for Basic Values on Which to Build his Life." (Readers will note that Mr. Overstreet comments on a number of volumes that have been reviewed in MANAS, including Allport's *The Individual and His Religion*, Floyd Ross's *Addressed to Christians*, and Erich Fromm's *Psychoanalysis and Religion*.

Overstreet's own Book-of-the-Month volume, *The Mature Mind*, has also been reviewed in MANAS.)

Overstreet notes that during 1951 (according to *Publishers' Weekly*), "more books were issued in the classification of religion than in any other except fiction and children's books." He adds:

It is significant, however, that science follows directly on the heels of religion (only nine books behind). These—religion and science—were, in 1951, the Big Two in non-fiction. It would seem to mean that in this confused uncertain time, man is turning to an all-round look at himself and his world.

This, undoubtedly, is as it should be. Religion is not (or ought not to be) in a place all by itself. In its mature form, it would seem to determine man's activating sense of his total relationship to life; his feeling of the basic values he can depend upon and to which he must dedicate his best self.

In my own field, I find a significant thing happening. On the one hand, psychologists and psychiatrists feel an unaccustomed call to seek out and appraise the values in religion—a field hitherto left pretty severely alone; on the other, men of religion feel an unaccustomed call to seek out and use the values in psychological and psychiatric science.

One important aspect of the general broadening of religious investigation is the present interest in Eastern religion and philosophy. Overstreet fails to mention this tendency, yet a number of Christian thinkers in recent years have apparently felt obligated to acquire a more sympathetic understanding of Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and other Eastern faiths. In a recent *UN World* article, "Tomorrow's Religion," Harry Emerson Fosdick provided a distinguished review of the growing aspiration for a Universal Religion, calling attention, also, to the many ways in which the Eastern and the Western traditions may be united in sympathy—and to the general advantage of Western religion. Dr. Fosdick writes:

When men of the most sharply divided faiths—Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems—talk together seriously with mutual respect, they discover, beneath the estranging factors which separate them, a profound area of common ground where they share like experiences and understand one another very

well. If Christian experience and faith are basically true they cannot be merely isolated, local, and provincial, shut in by boundaries of race or even creed. They must have universal ingredients which all men everywhere, in one degree or another, seek after and sometimes find, thus distinguishing between the secondary elements in religion—its endlessly diverse details of cult, sacrament and legalism—and the primary elements, the universals, which undergird and overarch the secondary.

Dr. Fosdick writes as a philosopher rather than as a theologian, and it seems to us that the really vital thinking being done, today, by Christians is all at this level. Only when the pursuit of religious values is seen to be at one with the pursuit of truth for its own sake the intended vocation of the philosophers—can religion offer a genuine basis for human brotherhood.

Dr. Fosdick's remarks may also serve as introduction to the new quarterly Journal, *Philosophy East and West*, first published in 1951 by the University of Hawaii Press. The philosophical approach found in this journal often includes perspectives which are lacking in the work of psychologists who have recently entered the field of religious analysis. Typical of the material appearing in *Philosophy East and West* is Gustav Mueller's "Philosophical Foundations of Historical Civilizations," which draws critical comparisons between traditional Christianity and the religious thought of the Orient. Those who wonder why so many writers call attention to the greater maturity of Eastern philosophy and religion should find Dr. Mueller's remarks helpful:

The Biblical religions differ in the interpretation of their common principle of revelation. In Judaism, God addresses the Jews as his chosen people. He is the guarantor of their national existence. In Christianity, the chosen people become the Church of those who believe.

If we now turn from the West to Asia, we find four world religions, which are in agreement on their main principles, and are, as a group, diametrically opposed to the main principles of the Biblical religions.

Whether we look at the "Central Harmony" of Confucianism or the "Silent Way" of Taoism in

China, or at the "Brahman" of Hinduism or the "Nirvana" of Buddhism in India, we discover no God in the Biblical sense. All Asiatic religions are, in terms of the Semitic religions, godless or atheistic. When they speak of Gods, and Hinduism has innumerable Gods, they refer to them as mythical images, and myths are known as symbolic, penultimate forms of truth. There is no transcendent God, breaking through his creation in personal revelations addressing man, because in the Eastern religions God is the unity of this world, and man is identical with God. "That art Thou." Man therefore needs no revelation, but must by introspective contemplation find this divine identity or harmony within himself. . . .

The goal is selflessness and the way to this goal is a steadfast practice in learning to see that what we call evil is always tied to some particular want. As long as we want something as good, we create the evil of being frustrated in what we want, because the end of all wants is certain. The horror of the Oriental "to lose face" is the shame of having committed himself to something as certain which he ought to have known to be uncertain and relative. To rely on the uncertainties of experience and images is equivalent to losing your mind, your peace, your balance, your harmony, your spirituality, your religion. In the eyes of the West this is a negative and passive attitude. But in the eyes of the East this attitude is the acme of activity, which is the activity of contemplation, whose aim is to resemble the divine principle. This principle is the absolute unity of life, which is the core of reality; it maintains itself in unbroken peace in all myriad ripples and vicissitudes of a changing appearance. Any man-made unity, any program of action, any legally established harmony, is at best an imperfect analogy to the absolute, eternal, and pre-established harmony of Being. But if the man-established unity is taken seriously, as if it were ultimate, then it becomes the snare of illusion and the cause of miseries, unnecessary sufferings, and wars. The East, therefore, has never known religious war, which sounds to it as a square circle does to us. Western dogma is, for the same reason, foreign to the East. Dogma means an intellectual fixation, a conceptual determination of religious truth in definite propositions. For the Eastern religions all such fixations and determinations are negations of the fluid continuum of the divine life, which allows an infinite and indeterminate variety of symbolic expressions. This means in practice an open and absorbing tolerance of all religious symbols,

including those of the West. Mythical and artistic symbols take the place of revelation of divine truth.

Whether the Western aggressive activism or the Eastern patient tolerance and compassion will "win out" is a typical Western question. . . .

MANAS is content to let its frequent "pro-Eastern" judgments in philosophy rest upon such testimony. While the corruptions of Eastern religion have been numerous enough, most Asiatic faiths have at least managed to avoid worship of power and obeisance to fear—both failings held to be directly responsible for much of the neuroticism in Western civilization.