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# A CASE FOR INDIVIDUALISM

SOME years ago a writer for this journal had occasion to meet with a labor union organizer of manifest ability and equally manifest interest in helping the leaderless, underpaid migrant workers of the San Joaquin Valley in California. (If anyone should imagine that this is not a worthy cause, he should read Carey McWilliams' *Factories in the Field* for a representative view of the facts, and John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* and *In Dubious Battle* for the moral overtones. Then, for latest advices on the situation of agricultural labor in the Valley, read Gladwin Hill's dispatches to the New York *Times.)* At that time, two articles on the plight of striking farm workers were published in MANAS (for May 19 and July 7, 1948), with a brief excursion into the controversial subject of the Central Valley Project. The point of recalling these articles, however, has to do with the attitude of the farm labor organizer toward the problems of his members. When asked if there might be advantages in encouraging the establishment of smaller farms, he found the idea of little interest. "It's easier," he said, "to knock over the big ones"—meaning that large organizations with dehumanized relationships between employer and employee provide better opportunities for a union victory. This is doubtless true. The larger the labor force that can be organized, the greater the power wielded by the union. And a union of farm workers in California's great agricultural expanses will have to be big to do any good.

The workers and small operators in the Valley call the owners of the large ranches "windshield farmers"—men who drive around their holdings in expensive automobiles. Several thousand acres is not exceptionally large for a single unit among these monstrous food-growing enterprises. Such ranches are run by complex organizations of experts, much as any industrial enterprise, and with the same basic methods and conditions, except for the absence of the controls over labor policy which are legally enforced in all branches of manufacturing. Thus there is reason enough for a union organizer to be indifferent to visionary schemes entailing smaller farms—even farms of their own for the "Okies" and "Texicans" who wander from crop to crop. The Valley, as Walter Goldschmidt made fairly clear in *As You Sow* (Harcourt, Brace, 1947), a sociological study of California agriculture, will not support farms which are too small to be competitive on cash crops.

It seems to follow from this that the only possible victory for farm labor is a victory which depends upon mass organization. The old trade union slogan, *Organize,* applies with obvious validity, so far as the immediate objectives of wages, hours, and working conditions are concerned.

This kind of victory, however, is what we are setting out to question, here. Whether or not the farm workers deserve better pay and more security is not at issue. That this journal thinks they do is obvious from the coverage given in 1948 to the strike at the di Giorgio farm at Arvin, California. We are now concerned with the kind of a society that results from progressive organization of every side of political and economic controversy, until, at last, the isolated, unorganized individual has no standing at all. We are questioning whether, in the final analysis, there is any real side in social controversy except the side of the free individual.

The implication, here, is that a victory which requires partisan conformity may be almost as bad as a defeat which is administered by another conforming partisan group. At all costs, we must avoid developing into a society which is comprised of a number of rival conformities. This will be difficult, of course, for the reason that we are rapidly forgetting how to fight in behalf of individuals. The individuals are still there, but we don't see them unless they are identified with some "side." So, there is the question: Can a man even do battle at all, without joining some "side"?

Observations made by Simone Weil in *The Need for Roots* apply directly to this point:

> Generally speaking, all problems to do with freedom of expression are clarified if it is posited that this freedom is a need of the intelligence, and that intelligence resides solely in the human being, individually considered. There is no such thing as a collective exercise of the intelligence. It follows that no group can legitimately claim freedom of expression, because no group has the slightest need for it.
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> In fact, the opposite applies. Protection of freedom of thought requires that no group should be permitted by law to express an opinion. For when a group starts having opinions, it inevitably tends to impose them on its members. Sooner or later, these individuals find themselves debarred, with a greater or lesser degree of severity, and on a number of problems of greater or lesser importance, from expressing opinions opposed to those of the group, unless they care to leave it. But a break with any group to which one belongs always involves suffering—at any rate of a sentimental kind. And just as danger, exposure to suffering are healthy and necessary elements in the sphere of action, so they are *un*healthy influences in the exercise of the intelligence. A fear, even a passing one, always provokes either a weakening or a tautening, depending upon the degree of courage, and that is all that is required to damage the extremely delicate and fragile instrument of precision that constitutes our intelligence. Even friendship is, from this point of view, a great danger. The intelligence is defeated as soon as the expression of one's thoughts is preceded, explicitly or implicitly, by the little word "we." And when the light of the intelligence grows dim, it is not very long before the love of good becomes lost.

After allowing for what may be an overly solicitous view of the susceptibilities of intelligence to "pressure," the validity of Miss Weil's remarks seems beyond question. And even her solicitude may be justified by the argument that pressure is always an evil, and stands beyond the cooperation on which a free society must depend.

The position here assumed seems to imply that, practically speaking, no genuine human values can be served by organization. Let us see if this is so. In the first place, are we obliged by such a judgment to range ourselves in opposition to organizations such as the public school system, or any social structure which seems an indispensable requirement of our kind of society? Must we, in short, become thoroughgoing anarchists?

Perhaps we should affirm, instead, that while organizations do not serve human values, they can increase the efficiency of those agencies—the individual human beings—which do. An organization can arrange for a building to be erected, install the necessary fixtures, provide for its maintenance, establish some system of enrollment of pupils and, if necessary, work out a system of transportation to bring them to school. Organization can do all these things, and many more, but it cannot *teach.* The same school which brings together children and wise and freedom-loving teachers may as easily become a sorry monument to educational failure and betrayal. The quality of education afforded depends upon the quality of individual human beings who teach, and upon nothing else. The rest is mere technology—useful, perhaps, but wholly amoral.

One might, with almost equal reason, urge the same judgment of "methods" of pedagogy. A method can never be any better than the person who applies it, although a method may—while it bears the initial inspiration of its creator—be of some value in aiding unimaginative or inexperienced teachers to do their best. A real teacher, however, will never be bound by a method, any more than his opinions will be governed by an organization. Excessive preoccupation with method is always the mark of mediocrity—of people who fear to think for themselves, who want a manual to tell them what the best authorities are now advocating. This is not true, of course, of such things as the "Socratic method," but the Socratic method is a temper of mind, an attitude toward life. It is a method which leaves all essential decisions to the individual, and cannot, therefore, be made into a manual or code.

An article in the *Nation* for Sept. 20, although titled, "Why They Voted for McCarthy," is really a study of the decline of intelligent individualism in the United States. The writer, H. H. Wilson, finds four basic reasons for the results of the primary election in Wisconsin. As he gives them, they are (1) the

growth of conservatism in the United States, amounting to a "positive hostility to social experiment"; (2) the prevalence of insecurity, resulting, in part, from "an awareness of forces beyond the control of the individual"; (3) the absence of militantly protesting groups—"it is only barely too sweeping," says Mr. Wilson, "to suggest that no important social critics are now able to obtain a following in the United States"; and (4) the impact, favorable to a conforming outlook, of "the dominant educational forces in this country—press, radio, television, and movies."

Except for the first, these four reasons need little comment. A "hostility to social experiment," we should like to think, however, may represent a subconscious disillusionment with organizational methods, along with less admirable "conservative" motives. The rapid transformation of once revolutionary organizations into instruments of oppression—or, if not of oppression, of candid regimentation—is so obviously a typical process of our time as to need no illustration. And where, we may ask, are the "social experiments" which seek no organizational backing? A few may exist, but they get little publicity. On the one hand, publicity requires organization; and on the other, men schooled in the techniques of publicity are not likely to regard non-organizational efforts as having much importance. Finally, it is entirely possible that a conventional sort of publicity would do such efforts more harm than good.

Meanwhile, the decay of individualism is everywhere apparent! We offer the following passages from the Wilson article as an encouragement to read this brief but important study in its entirety:

> Regimentation is becoming perhaps the dominant characteristic of this society. Lip-service, to be sure, is still paid to individualism, chiefly expressed by condemning government and opposing any restriction on the right to exploit it in the economic area. Primarily this modern regimentation, as Karl Mannheim and Herbert Marcuse have brilliantly remarked, is the result of industrialization, of mass production. The machine process, the organization of technology, imposes upon men patterns of mechanical behavior. "Individuals are stripped of their individuality," says Marcuse, "not by external compulsion, but by the very rationality under which they live." Significantly, there is no consciousness of loss, no sense of submitting to a hostile force. On the contrary, the organization to which the individual submits is so rational and so productive of material goods that individual protest appears both hopeless and irrational.
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> Accompanying this regimentation is the intensive development of new techniques for manipulating men. "The spectacle of an efficient elite maintaining its authority," comments E. H. Carr, "and asserting its will over the mass by the rationally calculated use of irrational methods of persuasion is the most disturbing nightmare of mass democracy." Psychological insights are being utilized to shape the human material to the productive apparatus. The "engineering of consent to authority," notes Mills, "has moved into the realm of manipulation where the powerful are anonymous. Impersonal manipulation is more insidious than coercion precisely because it is hidden." Manipulation thrives on apathy and indifference, and the "mechanics of conformity" move from the industrial organization to other areas of society, to schools, entertainment, politics.

Paradoxically, the man who resists the pattern of conformity—or, more particularly, who resists the psychology of conformity, wherever it exists—is counted, in our society, a dangerous man. Why is he dangerous? Because he questions, and by questioning, threatens, the validity of organizational thinking and the imperatives of thinking and the imperatives of organizational necessity. So, this man is denounced as an enemy of his fellows. He is called a "radical," as, indeed, he is, and charged with indifference to the common welfare. Yet, in reality, he may serve his fellows best when he seems to respect their wishes and behavior least, and when his stand appears most "hopeless and irrational."

# *Letter from* GERMANY

BERLIN.—The strategic conception of Stalin differs from that of Lenin by its defensive character: the forward drive of the world revolutionary movement of the proletariat is replaced by the commanding slogan, "Socialism in one country," which in its national restraint shows both illusory and defensive traits.

This change from a revolutionary offensive to a policy of limited national defense took place shortly after the death of Lenin. Yet these conceptions derive less from personalities than from differing historical situations. Lenin died—as so often happens to historic figures—when his "period" came to an end. In 1924, the revolutionary wave in Europe ebbed away, and consequently the important ally of Lenin, Trotsky, was removed from Russian political circles in the years that followed.

Trotsky's prodigious theory of "Permanent Revolution" had to give way, for Russia, with her weak and civil-war-worn proletariat and her huge peasant population, could no longer support an internationally oriented revolutionary conception. Finally, the historic course of events does not pursue simply "just" conceptions or efforts, except in terms of the possibility of their support by the large numbers of people. Thus the theoretic and political victory of Stalin means the victory of Russian backwardness, manifesting through countless millions of half-Asiatic peasants, over the elaborate theories of the Marxist intellectuals of the twentieth century—Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, and others. .

Stalin and his group have been successful so far. Where, in its further development, will the weaknesses of his program—born out of the backwardness of Russia and the dying off of the revolutionary wave—reveal its effects? When will his victory change to certain defeat?

The conception of defense against a hostile surrounding world can be successful only so long as it is possible to prevent the formation of an overpowering coalition of foreign powers against Soviet Russia, and this especially by diplomatic means. Stalin hardly succeeded in carrying out such a policy (one of its most hideous examples being the Stalin-Ribbentrop pact of 1939) until 1945. Then began the slow formation of the "Big Coalition" under the leadership and pressure of the U.S.A. Confronted by this coalition, the fate of Soviet Russia can be only inevitable defeat.

A hostile coalition of foreign powers against Soviet Russia can be hindered only so long as the process of concentration of power is incomplete—so long as sovereign states about equal in strength stand facing each other. This held true during the first big world war and, conditionally, during the second big war of our century, also. In the present, however, the enormous growth of the U.S.A. has made impossible an alliance of sovereign partners having equal rights. Today's alliance, although forced over the protests of resisting partners, will probably be successful in the end, perhaps because resistance against the might of U.S.A. is already inefficient.

It may be granted that there are facts which seem to contradict a general trend at the end of which stands the fatal decline of Soviet Russia: (1) Occasional Russian thrusts (i.e., into the Balkans) to strengthen strategic defense positions (the same in Korea); (2) agrarian revolution in Asia, which creates new allies for Soviet Russia, although weak ones; (3) use of social unrest by Communist parties to strengthen the Russian position; (4) differences between surrounding foreign powers, which do not diminish, but intensify, during the process of concentration of power by the U.S.A. The contradictory picture of such phenomena, however, shows one uninterrupted tendency: the growing together of the world hostile to Soviet Russia into one tight, power block. The overpowering potential of this huge alliance, united with its necessity for economic expansion, has already become an irresistible force which will prepare for Stalin and his followers the same fate which he has imposed on his adversaries for decades. The historic terminal point of Stalin's conception and the most unfavorable situation for his strategy have been reached; but neither conception nor strategy can be changed by free choice. (The most intelligent heads in the Kremlin know this and—it is very likely—will meet in conspiracy against the present political system.) We may even hope that the whole rotten Soviet Republic will be wiped off the political map without bloody war.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

# *REVIEW*
## THE QUEST FOR THE LIVING

THE interested but skeptical parent who, with his offspring of three, four, or five years of age, is practically knee-deep in lavishly illustrated volumes about the brave steamboat, the happy-go-lucky tractor, or the busy little red fire engine that tried *so* hard, is bound to have vagrant questions concerning the educational purpose—and perhaps the artistic purpose, if the two are different—of this massive drive to place the young on cozily familiar terms with the mechanical denizens of the industrial and power age. The stories are cleverly told and are nearly all properly equipped with built-in morals stressing perseverance, cheerfulness, and the reward of true merit, and whether or not they represent a sad decline from the epoch of Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, Alice in Wonderland, and folk tales of the "Pepper and Salt" variety is by no means certain. Even Mother Goose is much improved by intelligent expurgation, and Grimm is often as bloodcurdling as Andersen is morbidly depressing.

The comparison has points of interest. Some of Grimm's fairy tales are useful for the steamboat-and-tractor age-group of children, and achieve effects that are impossible to any whimsy about talking elevators. Take for example the tale about the youth who, wandering through the forest, does a kindness to the ants. Later, when in the clutches of an angry king, he is ordered on pain of death to separate a ton or so of millet from sand before sundown, the ants appear in force and work the miracle for him. There is more to this story, but the underlying theme concerns the reciprocity of living relationships. Having been a friend to the wild things, the youth finds nature responding in kind. With the aid of fantasy, the storyteller conveys a vivid sense of kinship between man and nature, such as a child may remember for all his days.

If, from this, we may pass to another level of questioning, it seems that in such story-telling the function of the artist stands revealed. It is to encompass the gamut of human experience in a wide and provocative scheme of meaning. The child—or man—whose mind and sensibilities have been enriched by fine literature is helped to become an individual who has at least symbolic reference-points for interpreting to himself the major experiences of life. The artist, then, accomplishes a kind of assimilation of the typical events and happenings of his time. He sets them in a frame of commonly accepted cultural values. In the past, when stories dealt with man and the world of nature, the common denominators were familiar and easy to invoke. The ants, for example, obviously possess intelligence. They are members of the fraternity of sentient life. They are busy with their own affairs—affairs of some importance to ants—and the young man described by the brothers Grimm was respectful toward ant affairs and received a corresponding respect from them.

To generate this sort of psychological moral from a little people's world populated mainly by tractors and steamshovels, to say nothing of super-jets and submarines, is bound to be a bit difficult. This is not a plea for the good old days of menacing giants, cannibalistic witches, and wicked fairies who turn people into lady bugs, but a comparison of the *dynamics* in educational literature. Maybe it is just as plausible to pat a sturdy earth-mover on the back, while murmuring encouraging syllables, as it is to hold converse with a proud eagle; maybe we should thank the makers of stories for our children for their brave attempts to naturalize the machine—but, so far as we are concerned, they have worked no notable enchantment. A thing made out of metal with wheels in it is not alive the way the ants are alive. A tractor does not belong to the fraternity of life as old Dobbin belonged.

The question, then, is this: How shall we bring the mechanical works of the modern world into the magic ring of living things? Can we give them some kind of second-degree sentience that

will end this alienship of the machine? Is there a legitimate kind of mysticism for the shadow-life of mechanics? This is not, of course, and cannot be, a literary project. We learned to make machines in an age when men had stopped believing in the soul, so that our machines are mostly irrational, soulless monsters, bearing the image and imprint of their creators. Wherever we turn, we find the mark of man's indifference to life. We have turned nature into a captured and unwilling slave, not an ally and friend, and we can hardly expect to change this situation by literary pretenses.

What would the machines of a nature-loving and life-sympathizing people look like? Surely, not like ours. Nature creates beauty as a matter of course. While some machines may have the kind of beauty that a finely wrought cannon has for a man who has spent his life making cannon, by any save such neurotic standards, machines are in general ugly things. Why can't a group of machines be as beautiful as a grove of trees?

Much of the literature of the past fifty years has sought to rationalize the machine, to make it more integral to our lives. But this literature soon failed of its objective, and devoted itself rather to fierce rejection of the qualities of the machine. The terrible hopelessness of serious fiction since World War I declares the humanly unassimilable qualities of the machines we have made. We invite the reader to spend an hour or two with Edward J. O'Brien's *The Dance of the Machines,* and with Friedrich Juenger's *The Failure of Technology.* Then read Dos Passos—one of his early books—and other disillusioned moderns. Read Karl Marx to feel the impact of emotional reaction to what man has done to man, through the machine.

The machine, of course, is not a personal devil. It is a type of the zombie sort of life we advocate when we prate about "standards of living" and write endless treatises on our "economic problems." These things are beside the point. We do not have any economic problems which are not, directly or indirectly, produced by other problems of far greater importance. This is not to ignore the human suffering which grows out of economic injustice, nor, above all, to make light of the profound humanitarian motives of certain economic reformers. It is only that, now, after a century or so of aggressive reform and revolutionary movements in this field, it seems possible to recognize the deeper origins of our ills. It is not our system of economics, but our system of thinking about our lives, and what they mean, that makes us confined and miserable.

Let us acknowledge that our age of engineering and technology—represented by the machine—has ushered in a host of new evolutionary possibilities for mankind. Let us admit the genius behind this kind of invention. But have we gently raised a curtain, drawn a drape, or rudely stripped living and protective tissue from the bosom of nature? Have we ascended to this new plateau of creativity with the reverence of men who invoke a muse?

There ought to be a sense in which the cunning of mechanisms may harbor the life we pretend is there when telling stories to our children. There ought to be a wonderful overtone of harmony in all of man's creations, just as natural scenes have an unintended magnificence. Here is something to grapple with, as intelligent, sensitive, and moral beings. Machines ought to have a rare, impersonal loveliness—a kind of magic of their own, just as the planes of a human face may reflect some unearthly reality, something beyond the skin and flesh and bones of which, the physiologists tell us, man is made.

Something of what we are trying to get at is illustrated in a new book by Robert Payne—*Journey to Persia.* Indeed, what Robert Payne was moved to write, while thinking about Persia, may be taken as representing that over-arching content of human life which appears above the furniture and figments of actual existence. Payne visited Persepolis, but it was of man he wrote and only incidentally about the Persians:

> These ancient people possessed a tenderness toward living things which is becoming foreign to us. They adored life and living in the sun. Not reverence alone—for reverence is not enough—but perfect adoration drove them to make their monuments. The Indians, patiently hollowing out the granite caves of Ajanta and Ellora with small chisels, the Balinese forever building their crumbling temples—they seem to be speaking to us from another planet altogether. What monuments have we made to suggest that we desire permanence? Where, in the present world, do men celebrate the human splendour? To do this we shall need to elaborate a whole new series of human values. It will be necessary to insist that men are inviolable and must never again be tortured, and that the whole effort of the state must be directed towards human creativeness and tenderness. The splendour of man should be our weapon against darkness. . . .
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> The time is short. But it is permissible to think that if we build our cities with the same sense of beauty and permanence as the ancients, if we behave towards one another with tenderness, if we give to the individual—every individual—the highest imaginable worth, if we set our minds to discovering and absorbing all the splendours of the past, then at least, I do not say that we shall have won the war against the enemy but we shall have placed ourselves in a position where victory becomes conceivable and infinitely desirable.

Who can help but see that this sort of attitude of man toward man would work miracles in our culture—in our architecture, our machines, in the very fabric of our lives? Then, perhaps, our imagination would be equal to tales of genuine wonder for our children, and all the arts blossom to adorn a new world Acropolis, with temples to all the bright creations of the human spirit.

# *COMMENTARY*
## SHADOWS OF TECHNOLOGY

Two articles in this issue—the lead and the review—converge upon the machine as an object of criticism. Both discuss the psychological consequences of our particular kind of technology, yet neither makes use of a significant fact noted last week by Arthur Morgan in "Frontiers." This was to the effect that the aggressive energies of American pioneers have carried the people "beyond immediate pressure for survival to a condition of relative security and affluence." From this apparently desirable condition, it is but a step, Dr. Morgan points out, to a "softening of character."

A machine-dominated society, let us note, is a society in which recognition of this softening of character is likely to be long delayed. Not only is this so for the reason that the machines do most of the work, making it possible for men to assume that the rigid discipline of the machine removes the necessity for discipline in their own lives; but, also, because the complex social organization which accompanies technological advance tends to create numerous categories of "status" in which men, instead of being productive units, may easily become parasitic upon the system itself.

Then, on top of these developments, there is the obvious relationship between technological organization and modern war. Modern, "total" war would be impossible without technology, so that it not only illustrates a special kind of parasitism, but is itself a wild, cancerous growth within the structure of the technological process.

In general, we remain relatively untroubled by all this. What upsets American leaders is the disturbance of the smooth-running productive machine. We have acquired the notion that our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor are somehow dependent upon turning out more bombers than anyone else in the world, and we tend to visit a vast moral indignation on those who interrupt the process. Nor are the men who strike an arms or aircraft plant in the least bothered by the kind of enterprise which pays their grocery bills; they know only that the bills are getting higher.

The point is that elaborate organization tends to obscure the weaknesses which Mr. Wilson and Dr. Morgan call to our attention. Organization blurs the distinction between men who are creative and those who merely coast, and it depersonalizes responsibility until, finally, no one seems really accountable for *anything*.

# CHILDREN
# . . . and Ourselves

IT is said to be good for one's soul to receive criticism from an expert, and, partly on the assumption that our souls can always use a little assistance in achieving salvation, we present the remarks of a correspondent who takes issue with our praise, here, of the "disciplined virtues of continental European education." This critic, as he explains, has had ample opportunity to contrast European and American education, and he objects most strenuously to undue elevation of the German tradition:

> In its July 9 number, MANAS published a glowing appreciation of that debatable collective undertaking called German education. In my purely personal opinion, both German and American educational systems are equally missing out in their task of giving young citizens of our mortal world an adequate initiation into life's basic substance. Measured against the timelessness and spacelessness of existence as it dawns upon us in the middle of the twentieth century, the subaltern preoccupation with conceptual details will indeed lead to organized frustration, but in no way to an experience of Reality. Having been myself a victim of German education and having actively participated for eight years as a professor in the cycles and gyrations of American education, it is my contention—again purely personal that, generally speaking, in both processes of teaching the novice is simply inculcated with the prejudices, fictions and airtight dichotomies of the intellect that are the plight of Western Man; that German education in its effect is worse, because it is not complemented by a measure of Anglo-Saxon common sense topped by a lackadaisical attitude towards authority; that, on the other hand, American education is in far greater danger than German education, because it has not been regarded by American youth, as German education has been by German youth, as an enemy. In Germany the shortcomings of a scholastic routine that begins and ends in the memorizing of mere man-made concepts have been so glaringly exposed in our time that the protest against the dusty exercises on the part of avowed enemies of the "larger life within" can no longer be silenced.
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> It is perfectly true that one encounters in American universities and colleges a degree of ignorance about genteel bits of information, which Europeans consider elemental, that is altogether shocking; but when I was forced during my academic career in this country patiently to point out to my students that Michelangelo is not, as some of them had assumed, the capital of Egypt, I on my own part learned from those same students that names were really nothing. The whole verbal symbolism with which the tribes of modern Man are bombarding each other is faulty and needs to be replaced by a capacity for essential configurations on a deeper level than that represented by advertisements and newspapers. It is typical that the kind of education Germany has had at least during the days when I had to serve my stretch, and which America unfortunately has adopted to a large degree from Germany, ended up in a total incapacity to perceive Essences outside the self-interest of Man. The beautiful adage, "The truth will make you free," is generally not understood as a liberation from possessiveness, also intellectual possessiveness, but on the contrary, as freedom from the religious sweep of Universal forces.

Certainly, no system or locale of education of itself will provide to youth the wherewithal to solve the most basic problems of human existence. The writer of the above remarks, moreover, lends support to a thesis of Edmond Taylor (in *Richer By Asia*) when he indicates how he benefited by "cultural contrast," while the carelessness of American students in respect to details of the cultural heritage assisted him to see that such details are not actually so important, anyway.

We do feel, however, that while the above qualifying statements are pertinent, the distinction implied in our July 9 essay has been overlooked. There are, it seems to us, two aspects of education, one involving the tools of communication, and the other offering direction to aspiration and idealism. While granting that no education can be humanely mature without affording a bulwark against nationalistic or intellectual divisiveness, the "tools of communication" themselves have a certain value, and it was for the comparatively greater precision in tool-making that we felt the continental tradition should be praised.

While generalizations on national character are always bound to be unsatisfactory, we suspect that the familiar charge against America of excessive "commercialism" applies to American education. A university degree is often typically something which you buy on the installment plan, and which is delivered to you at the end of a prescribed number of years. This degree has a utility value: it is worth cold cash in

certain particular relations with society; and when learning is thus regarded as an *acquisi*tion, it is rarely integrated with the fundamental personality of its possessor.

"Learning for its own sake" can easily become another trap, since some of the most meticulously trained intellects do not avoid being poor citizens, neighbors, and fathers. Yet is there not something praiseworthy in the idea that learning and study are their own rewards? Since European scholars have seldom been able to "cash in" as extensively as eminent American professors, the fascination of learning "for its own sake," in the sense of materially unrewarded accomplishments of understanding, must have exercised more influence in European universities. Dr. Robert Hutchins' proposal that the University of Chicago faculty should forego opportunities to reap substantial emoluments from tours of the women's club circuit and from witty pieces produced for popular journals may be regarded as an iteration that the business of both the educator and the pupil is education, and not the making of money.

The conversation which prompted our July 9 discussion was with a person who had received training in several European seats of learning. In America, where she has lived for many years, she found a natural calling to help the children of her neighborhood to learn correct use of the English language. Since her pupils are all voluntary, and since her "coaching" is a labor of love, she is able to realize that the young do not necessarily try to escape from learning to use the tools of communication. Our present correspondent points out that the heavy disciplines of German education often created in youth the feeling that education was some kind of "enemy," but could not this have been because of the narrow orthodoxy of thought rather than because of rigorous scholarship?

In education, as in everything else, the pendulum swings between extremes. Our original suggestion was that carelessness toward detail can be just as frustrating to the learning instinct as the dogmatizing of education techniques. If we are to profit from the opportunity for "cultural contrast" in a review of the European tradition of scholarship, then it is logical to hope that the precision tools of schooling may be brought once more into intelligent function.

Our correspondent concludes on what he calls a "note of resigned acceptance of the existing educational machines in both Germany and the United States as a merely politically and economically justified part of the 'Defense of the West.'" Machines differ, however, the strong points of one often illustrating the weaknesses of another, even though the latter be "better" as a totality.

The value of good scholarship, it seems to us, is that it inculcates the habit of questioning details, and if the scholarship is good enough, this habit may become the basis for successful resistance to propaganda. Student rebellions during past stages of German history perhaps illustrate this constructive force in operation, although, admittedly, the goal of international or global scholarship was not achieved. A soil of mind prepared by scholarship is still only soil, and affirmative and ethical plantings must be made if the benefits of civilization are to manifest.

In any case, since much of our hope of sanity in the future rests with the questioning proclivities of youth, we cannot help but feel that the integrity of disciplined scholarship is greatly needed in modern education. The best scholars, of course, are also philosophers, and as such are constitutionally incapable of either accepting or perpetuating misleading propaganda.

# *FRONTIERS*

## Psychiatry for the Psychiatrists

THE most interesting pioneers of the psychological world, today, seem to us to be the men and women who are frank to admit the existence of a vast *terra incognita* of the human soul. Karen Homey, Joseph Campbell, Erich Fromm, and Harry Overstreet, for instance, have never presumed to explain all that we need to know about man, but, instead, have pointed with great clarity to the fact that psychological knowledge is still in its infancy. Both Campbell and Fromm have thoroughly dissociated themselves from neo-Freudian dogma and prejudice, proof of which is to be found in their provocative revaluations of religious allegories and symbols. Modern psychiatric knowledge, they affirm, while a very important division of medical science, is as yet largely restricted to insights into the immediate causes of behavior disorders. And although such insights may, in turn, be regarded as throwing light on confusions of the "soul," they hardly constitute *knowledge pertaining to its essential struggle for enlightenment.*

It has always been difficult for a vital and youthful science to practice the subtle art of self-criticism and self-correction, but we can easily find ground for believing that the psychologists and psychiatrists have reached a conscious realization of the need for revaluation of oversimplified theories sooner than any other group of "experts" in modern history. If this be true, then the reason is, we think, clear enough: the psychiatrist is a specialist in the unmasking of delusions—one who, if he is an honest man, will begin to unmask himself somewhere along the way. Theodor Reik, one of Freud's pupils, and a distinguished psychoanalyst, has emphasized the obligation of each psychologist to develop mighty powers of self-analysis before he can hope to be an astute practitioner on others. The psychoanalyst, it is affirmed, should even subject himself to the same conditions as those which will confront his patients—personally occupy the famous "analyst's couch," and suffer analysis at the hands of a colleague. (Psychoanalysts in training must pass through long months of investigatory analysis at the hands of a graduate of the art before assuming full professional status.)

The July issue of the *Bulletin* of the Menninger clinic affords one of the many examples of the modern psychiatrist's growing capacity for self-correction and evaluation. Drs. Robert R. Holt and Lester Luborsky, under the title, "Research in the Selection of Psychiatrists," discuss the results of a project designed to select medical men for special psychiatric training at the Menninger Institute. An incidental though statistically confirmed discovery of this study was that any single psychologist, no matter how competent, may make great errors of judgment in the assessment of a candidate's potential worth in this field.

Drs. Holt and Luborsky report finding that despite the presumed professional skill of the interviewing committees, there was very little accurate prediction of the future value of a particular candidate: "Most of the correlations could have fairly easily been obtained by chance through random sampling of a population in which the true correlation was zero (no relationship whatever). Two of them reach the 5 per cent level of confidence, and only one, Dr. A's, is significant beyond the 1 per cent level." The report continues:

> Thus it appears that the procedure of using three interviewers was wisely adopted. With only one interviewer, you can never tell what you are going to get; his judgments are likely to be only slightly better than chance, and they may occasionally be worse than chance. For there is no obvious relation between the validity of an interviewer's ratings and his psychiatric experience, reputation, age, or the length of time he has been doing the job of selecting candidates. The remarkable and comforting fact is that a modest amount of truth seems to emerge from a pooling of error. One interviewer's biases seem to balance another's pretty well. There remains the largely unexplored possibility that an interviewer, who

> continues to talk to and rate applicants for a long time, may improve his accuracy by making a careful study of his errors after the men he has seen have proved their mettle (or lack of it). This would be a project of quite a few years' duration, but it is being tried by some members of the Admissions Committee.

The implications of the foregoing are fairly obvious and will not be missed by the many professional readers of the Menninger *Bulletin.* No comfortable routine or system, apparently, will unravel the mysteries of the individual human being, and if the distinguished members of the Menninger Admissions Committee find themselves so inadequate in this respect, practicing psychiatrists and psychoanalysts will have to grant a similar coefficient of error in their diagnoses of individual patients in clinics and private offices.

Religious opponents of psychiatry have made much of the "witch doctor" analogy in referring to psychiatrists, and while there have doubtless been a number of pompous charlatans in the psychiatric ranks, innumerable significant advances in respect to the necessity for self-correction have been also noted. Witch doctors, so far as we know, are not reputed for this sort of integrity. Psychiatrists and psychoanalysts have often regarded their present knowledge as but a point of departure, and reasoned that if they are to be truly wise, they must be wise in the manner of Socrates—who was simply a man who was more aware than his fellow Athenians of how much is not fully and finally known.

The same issue of the Menninger *Bulletin* emphasizes that all that any psychiatrist can do is to *start* the patient on the road to self-cure. In "Evaluation of Psychotherapeutic Techniques," Robert P. Knight says that "by the true import of psychotherapy I mean the significance, understanding, insight, whether it be superficial or thoroughgoing, which the patient gains through therapy about himself and his illness. This import may be only a partial truth about himself that the patient has learned and still be effective as a nucleus for re-integration of his previously disturbed conceptions of himself. Ideally, it should include all the self-knowledge he can tolerate acquiring."

This sort of survey may properly introduce a portion of one of the first lectures ever delivered by Sigmund Freud. Described by his closest associates as one forever on the trail of some incipient neurosis or delusion of his own, Freud did his best to see that the psychoanalysts who adopted his views did not misconceive the magnitude of their task.

While the following passages may be held to reflect the use of several rhetorical devices, both Freud's life and his other writings indicate that much more is involved than a "tricky" approach. Dr. Freud, having labored mightily to gain the attention of reputable medical men, was finally rewarded by the enrollment of a number who wished to study psychoanalysis under him. But he addressed his first formal lecture to them in these discouraging and challenging terms:

> The procedure in this field is precisely the reverse of that which is the rule in medicine. Usually when we introduce a patient to a medical technique which is strange to him, we minimize its difficulties and give him confident promises concerning the result of the treatment. When, however, we undertake psychoanalytic treatment with a neurotic patient we proceed differently. We hold before him the difficulties of the method, its length, the exertions and the sacrifices which it will cost him; and, as to the result, we tell him that we make no definite promises, that the result depends on his conduct, on his understanding, on his adaptability, on his perseverance.
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> I shall show what imperfections are necessarily involved in the teaching of psychoanalysis and what difficulties stand in the way of gaining a personal judgment. I shall show you how the whole trend of your previous training and all your accustomed mental habits must unavoidably have made you opponents of psychoanalysis, and how much you must overcome in yourselves in order to master this instinctive opposition. Of course I cannot predict how much psychoanalytic understanding you will gain from my lectures, but I can promise this, that by listening to them you will not learn how to undertake a psychoanalytic treatment or how to carry one to completion. Furthermore, should I find anyone

> among you who does not feel satisfied with a cursory acquaintance with psychoanalysis, but who would like to enter into a more enduring relationship with it, I shall not only dissuade him, but I shall actually warn him against it. As things now stand, a person would, by such a choice of profession, ruin his every chance of success at a university, and if he goes out into the world as a practicing physician, he will find himself in a society which does not understand his aims, which regards him with suspicion and hostility, and which turns loose upon him all the malicious spirits which lurk within it.
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> Psychoanalysis is learned, first of all, from a study of one's self, through the study of one's own personality. This is not quite what is ordinarily called self-observation, but, at a pinch, one can sum it up thus.

Here, in unmistakable accents, speaks a pioneer. It is not necessary to "agree" with all of Freud's theories in order to respect his courage and honor his integrity.