

## TIME OF LONGING

MORE than courage is needed to deny and oppose the doctrine of the impotence of modern man, to reject the claim that he is unable to change the rigid pattern and ominous direction of his life. A certain shallowness—a kind of moral gayety—attaches to free-wheeling exhortations which ignore the psychological realities which keep us as we are.

The evidence for pessimism and despair is multiple and particular. The call to change, too often, is rhetorical and self-righteous. We somehow lack the capacity to give our ideals and projected reforms the full-bodied substance of real possibilities. We have the faith, but it is not strong. We have the longings, but they are not integrated with a knowledge of the processes by which they may be realized.

Against this account of our present psychological circumstances may be set certain countervailing elements in our experience—the conceptions and actions of great men. Where else can we turn for encouragement? The private individual may find depths inside himself which suffice to raise his spirits and energize his will, but the cultural problem remains. The private individual, indeed, as he finds a personal solution, becomes an embodiment of the qualities which make up human greatness. But when this happens, the triumph of the individual is diminished by his difficulty in communicating what he has done. What vocabulary does the modern world afford such a man? How will he tell his secret? Where is the flesh-and-blood speech of human greatness, today?

The deadly mediocrity of the times drives men of vision either to traditional forms of expression, which no longer move us, or to exotic vocabularies which we distrust.

Take for example Gandhi. It seems a pity that we have no other ready contemporary illustration of human greatness. How shall we understand the genesis of Gandhi's inspiration? This can hardly be done in the abstract. We have to seek to understand Gandhi in terms of his liens and obligations, which were, first, to the people of India, and after that to the world.

Let us make some sweeping judgments. India, we might suppose, is some sort of sleeping giant. In their past and their present, the Indian people embody a full spectrum of human kind. In their past, they have had representatives of every sort of human greatness—great spiritual teachers, great poets, great moralists, great mathematicians, great warriors. The philosophic resources of Indian religion are without parallel among world faiths. Yet in their recent history Indians have suffered practically every indignity that can be imposed upon a proud people. Worst, perhaps, of all, they found their own weakness exposed to themselves. They saw, that is, themselves conquered by a barbarian invader—conquered in the only way that their ancestral religious philosophy would define a conquest: by making them imitate the invaders. The military conquest was nothing—that was only Karma. The moral conquest was the real defeat.

To suffer a moral conquest makes people impotent. Hence India became impotent. Gandhi saw this, but Gandhi—why or how, who can say?—was himself an undefeated man. For Gandhi, there was only one thing to do. Those of his contemporaries who fancied themselves "spiritual" leaders or teachers spoke in belittlement of Gandhi's "political" interests, but Gandhi's politics were not politics in the ordinary sense. People who had suffered a moral conquest would have to learn the mode of moral regeneration. This was the essence and totality of

Gandhi's program. He worked at it all his life, and he used whatever tools were available. He worked to stir the moral circulation of the Indian people. His "opportunism" was aimed at this goal. He borrowed from any and every moral vocabulary he could find, using anything that he thought people would listen to—Ruskin, Tolstoy, Thoreau, the New Testament, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the teachings of Gautama Buddha. But the building of Gandhi's vocabulary was no calculated thing. He used what moved *him*. He rendered what moved him into a speech that could be understood, at least in part, by the Indian masses—the villagers whom he loved.

Why did Gandhi love the villagers? This question is folly. No one can answer it except tautologically, in circular terms. Motive is primary, not derived. He loved the villagers because, for him, they were pure types of mankind. He loved them the way Tolstoy loved the Russian peasants. We do not have to explain man's love for man. We have only to explain why, in so many instances, it fails.

Out of Gandhi's life arose a magnificent jargon—a speech controlled by the nature of his audiences. Why should we call it jargon? Because it is not constructed according to the conventions of the scholarly and educated men of our time. It makes little contact with Western theories of knowledge. It defies many phases of science and it blithely ignores accepted theories of human nature.

Yet this jargon may grow into a swiftly moving current of speech that will help to animate a living language of the future.

What can we learn from Gandhi? We shall be wise, perhaps, if we take from Gandhi only one thing—his demonstration of the capacity of a single man to turn against the tide of his times, to reshape its vocabulary and reject its pessimism and its low estimate of man. That is all we need to take from Gandhi. The rest we can work out for ourselves. The things that seem his oddities and

quirks—what have they to do with this massive demonstration?

How did Gandhi work? He examined the life of the people about him and decided that the combined effects of their poverty and their unemployment made moral regeneration impossible without a change in their circumstances. One man, Gandhi, could not change their circumstances, but he could devise a means by which they could begin to change their circumstances for themselves. This means was the spinning wheel. He started the peasants spinning. He spun himself. He appealed to Indian intellectuals and other leaders to spin, as an example. Out of the spinning arose the *Khadi* movement and out of *Khadi* arose the beginnings of self-respect for the Indian masses. The economics of *Khadi* has had many critics, but these critics miss the point. The problem of the Indian masses was and is only incidentally an economic problem. Fundamentally it is a problem of moral regeneration.

People are the same everywhere. Everywhere, the human problem is a problem of moral regeneration—of the need to believe in our own capacity to take control of our own lives. Here, in the West, we cannot adopt Gandhi's program mechanically and spin, weave, and churn our way to a new awakening. We need, instead, to seek out the basic obstacles to moral regeneration in the West and work away at *them*. Those obstacles are not economic.

This is hardly the place to attempt a careful study of the causes of moral stultification in the West. The assignment is too large and too far-reaching. What is possible, however, is an impressionistic judgment of what most Westerners—Americans in particular—consider to be the goals in life worth their close attention.

The simplest way to characterize these goals is to say that they all represent some kind of personal happiness. In our popular novels, the consummation of romantic love is the dominant theme, while some writers, still intoxicated by the

freedom recently achieved from Puritan controls, distinguish hardly at all between love and sexual climax. The symbols of "success" have undergone some refinement, so that the rags-to-riches theme is now qualified by having the hero develop certain "creative" abilities, but the concept of self-realization seldom goes beyond private adjustment or achievement of the individual.

The novels of protest end either in stark despair or in some kind of peripheral life for the protagonist, who manages to remain free by living in the interstices of society. The "social message" novels are a thing of the past. They are as dead as the old-style radical movement in the United States. As one thoughtful reviewer has suggested, the men who twenty-five years ago would have written social novels are now writing books concerned with the issue of *identity*—*The Hairy Ape* is replaced by *The Catcher in the Rye*. Action has given way to tortured reverie, programmatic certainty to passive and painful indecision.

In Europe, the transition seems more precise. The Existentialist novelists are still haunted by the theme of social obligation, yet their primary sense of duty is to the plight of the individual. So, combining these themes, they write of the individual as *victim*, not as hero and regenerator. Sartre's *Troubled Sleep* and Camus' *The Stranger* will do for illustrations.

It seems an ironic inevitability of our situation that few modern writers can become optimistic or simply hopeful without becoming shallow and more than a little unbelievable. It is always possible, of course, for a writer to turn away from the total situation and draw cameo-like portraits of the personal integrity of individuals in timeless niches of the human scene. The artist can always find fissures in the rocks, and an occasional oasis in the desert, but a great art will speak to our condition, here and now. We do not have this great art. Instead we have glosses on our psychological suffering and our indecision.

There are certain possibilities to consider in seeking release from this impotence. First, there is the Emersonian doctrine that the chains which hold us down are entirely self-made. Emerson would say that we have only to *stop* doing what we think we have to do. This has of course to be filled in. But you can find individuals who are declaring themselves as free individuals. There are men in the prime of life who suddenly turn their backs on what the rest think of as "success" and accept the precarious conditions of an existence which leaves them free to work at what now seems vitally important to do. In many cases, a deep sympathy for the unfree masses of the world prompts this decision.

Another possibility is that we have been misled by our utopian thinkers. The utopians may have painted the wrong kind of picture of the future good of mankind. They have led us to believe that we shall be able to make things easy for ourselves, or at least for our posterity. This belief may have given us a delusive conception of Progress. At any rate, it seems certain that we have come to grips with the wrong set of factors, since out of these factors we have fashioned the means to destroy ourselves and everyone else. How do you decide whether or not you have made a mistake, except by looking at what you have done? See what we have done.

But there has been enough of dwelling upon our mistakes. If we can't see a dead end when it stands opposing us at every point, then we have already lost the human capacity to know. What should be obvious, by now, is our need for a theory of human progress—a theory which somehow contains a burning faith, yet no fanaticism—which we can begin to test in various ways.

And it is obvious, also, that there is no use in trying to imagine a master-plan for the regeneration of *everybody*. The last master-plan we tried was called Communism, and there have been others. Not the least of the trouble with master-plans is that they despoil the vocabulary of

idealism and leave it a ravaged harvest for the cynics to glean.

We need a flesh-and-blood vocabulary for our idealism from which can grow practical activities embodying man's love for man. We need a theory of man that will supply the anatomy of that vocabulary, and at least the beginnings of some knowledge of the metabolism of a life of service. Education is about the only untarnished word that is left to describe altruistic undertakings. A man can speak of his determination to be some kind of teacher without sounding pompous or pretentious. We have a considerable literature concerned with the joys and satisfactions of teaching. We ought to become more attentive to that literature and expand its scope.

Finally, we need a conception of man that is unprejudiced by the pessimism of our age. We can say that we don't *know* that we are immortal souls or anything about all that transcendental stuff; but then we can answer that our deepest longings, our highest resolves, have little in them that is consistent with mortality. This, it may be, is the meaning of our great pain in the present: it is the means of freeing us from our unbelief in ourselves.

## *Letter from* **GENEVA**

GENEVA.—"I pledge allegiance to the flag—."

In the Hague recently I was surprised to have an intelligent Dutch woman, a senior secretary in an important government office and a recent visitor to the U.S., express herself at some length on the beauty she found in this Oath, and on the values she felt its daily repetition held for U.S. school children. Said she, "We have nothing like it at all."

My disagreement, fairly wholehearted, was found upon examination and discussion to be on two grounds. In the first place, I had daily produced this oath beside my school desk during a portion of my youth (before God was added, incidentally)—even now I can repeat it verbatim—and yet I am morally certain it meant nothing to me then, and still means nothing. In fact, this conversation was the first time I can recall examining the question in any manner at all, even though the problem of oaths has been much on our minds in the past several years. My second objection was that, since it meant nothing, it was both dishonest and conducive to the substitution of fetishism for healthy truth. She was more than a bit startled at the vigor of my reaction, and obviously needed time to think it over.

Well, what's in an oath, anyway? I, in turn, chanced upon one in Holland whose beauty deeply moved me. It was found in a bountifully illustrated volume about Holland and its dikes, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for information purposes, and now out of print. In the dim ages, perhaps a thousand years ago, the Dutch were taking this oath:

With five weapons shall we keep our land, with sword and with shield, with spade and with fork and with spear, out with the ebb, up with the flood, to fight day and night against the North King (the sea) and against the wild Viking, that all Frisians may be free, the born and the unborn, so long as the wind from the clouds shall blow and the world shall stand.

Here is a case of total commitment, a shared determination, as one looks back on it, to join in making something from nothing. And the Dutch are still at it, with the magnificent enclosure schemes which year by year are throwing great dikes across open sea-lanes, if necessary filling the enclosed areas and significantly increasing the land area of the country.

Someone might dilate usefully upon the difference between being committed for something, and committed against something. Our recent spate of oaths is clearly the latter, negative variety, unconstructive and essentially uncreative. How do you build the Good Society of such materials as this? Indeed, how do you build the Good Society if you spend all your time and energy standing still, trying to prevent change and to hold on to what you have?

Prof. Arnold Toynbee put the dangers of this attitude with his usual clarity when he said: "Where the frontier between civilizations stands still, time always works in the barbarians' favor." If our hope is to be placed in a policy of containing the barbarians, we had better think again, of oaths, commitment, or none. I think the early Dutch lived the answer to this problem.

We have been spending a week in the lovely Val d'Anniviers, a valley set high among the Swiss mountains: Matterhorn in view at one end from the balcony of our modest hotel room, and the great Rhone valley at the other, backed by the dark bulk of the Bernese Alps. Each day we have hiked up into the mountains, impressed beyond power of words by the majesty of the peaks, the long vistas, the changing light and shadow, and the meadows filled with seemingly hundreds of varieties of spring flowers. And impressed by the works of man, too: the carefully cropped forests; the intricate systems of water control, from the dams, pen-stocks and power plants to the meandering *bisse*, or water channel, which, edging everywhere along the contours of the hills, has made this a stunning demonstration of irrigated mountain agriculture.

Yesterday we passed a great cooperative cow-barn, in the yard of which was a water-wheel powered by a brawling little stream. On the shaft of the waterwheel, revolving at a smart pace, was what looked like a drum-churn, similar to one I once saw in a museum, busily making butter. Like the early American farmer, who discovered the economic advantages of carrying his corn to market in liquid form, the Swiss farmer finds butter and cheese much simpler products than liquid milk to haul down from the high meadows. Here, in its simplest form, was the essence of the meaning of Swiss agriculture. A few men, working in the meadows with the tools Nature provides, personified the productive agricultural base upon which has been erected a notable industrial economy, exporting to all the world.

Yesterday, too, we talked a little with a countrywoman on a mountain trail. She came striding down the trail in her heavy shoes, knitting a sock as she walked, a heavily loaded pack-basket strapped on her back. We asked her the name of a mountain across the valley and discovered that in her life the things deserving names were not the mountains, but the meadows, each being called by the name of the village whose people worked it. It seemed a sensible arrangement. Why name a barren peak? She said life here was hard, which indeed it is, but her manner held no self-pity. The people of these mountains are supposed to be fanatically devoted to their mountain way of life. Their attitude bespeaks a choice purposely made and consciously kept. A cliff-dweller from Geneva can hardly understand the values of this life. Basic loyalties are to church, family, cooperative organization and to the ruling concept of local autonomy, perhaps of about equal importance. My guess is that none of them involves an oath.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW*

### RELIGION—SCIENCE

SOME common generalizations on attitudes in contemporary religion and science are found in two current articles, one by a philosopher, the other by a psychologist. The former, Prof. C. J. Ducasse, notes the tendency of religion to over-personalize philosophy. Writing on "What Has Science Done to Religion?" in the Spring *Centennial Review*, Dr. Ducasse says:

The great majority of persons in our part of the world, if asked what religion is, would probably answer that it consists in—or at least it requires—belief in, worship of, and obedience to God. But this, of course is a hopelessly parochial conception of religion since it uncritically takes monotheism for granted and therefore tacitly leaves out of account both the polytheistic and the non-theistic religions. For the purposes of the present occasion, no conception of the nature of religion is adequate that does not cover, in addition to what we may personally regard as the only true religion, also all the other religions of mankind whether monotheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, or non-theistic; and whether they be religions of primitive peoples or of civilized ones.

The decline of conventional religion, of course, can be attributed to the depersonalizing influence of "scientific objectivity." Science, quite obviously, has weakened religious faith in a God who may be called upon to grant personal favors, an aspect of religion which has long been dominant in the Western world. There has been much talk of "good and evil," but chiefly in the context of that which pleases or displeases the reigning deity—the one who "laid it on us," and who controls our future. But there is, as Prof. Ducasse explains, another sort of concern—with *ethical* value. This concern is one which neither conventional religion nor "objective" science has been able to turn to benefit. As Ducasse says, "The fact is only too evident in our days that the power which science gives man to achieve what he wills can be used to implement evil purposes as effectively as to implement good ones. Possession of it does not make man good rather than evil, or

evil rather than good; but only enables him to avoid doing evil by mistake when good is what he intends; and, equally, to avoid doing good by mistake when evil is what he intends. In this sense, scientific knowledge is, in itself, wholly indifferent to good or evil. The only evils it automatically diminishes are ignorance and such helplessness as springs from it."

On the other hand, while the influence of science has tended to depersonalize religious faith, it has also moved in the direction of "de-individualization." In a lecture before the faculty members of schools of nursing affiliated with the St. Francis Hospital at Pittsburgh, Prof. Adrian van Kaam finds encouragement in the "revolt against the one-sided mechanization of society." He explains:

The thought and writings of Bergson, Buytendijk, van den Berg, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Romano Guardini, and others in Europe, of Buber in Israel, of Tillich, Maritain, Rogers, Stern and Maslow in America are some of the symptoms of a rising resistance to the over-powering technical way of life. No cultural situation escapes this conflict which pervades even the relationship between nurse and patient.

The relationship between human beings is functional insofar as it comes about mainly because one has the ability to perform a task in behalf of the other. The focus is on the functions which somebody can fulfill. Contacts are existential when we are interested in the person as a person apart from any services he may render us. The technician who can be of service to us in certain areas of life tends to remain anonymous as a person. He is recognized mainly by certain exterior clues telling everyone that this person can be of specific technical assistance. We recognize in this way the nurse, the policeman, the operator of the gasoline station, the barber. We may be inclined unconsciously to reduce their full human existence to the technical dimension which their uniform expresses. The policeman then becomes only a policeman, the soldier only a soldier, the streetcar operator only a streetcar operator, and the nurse only a nurse. We are no longer able to encounter them as people with happiness and sadness, with problems and pain, with ideals and disillusion. Conversely, the technicians concerned may be tempted to experience themselves in these

relationships as only policemen, only barbers, only soldiers and only nurses. If our society would develop to an extreme in this direction, life could become a nightmare and the human person could feel as lonely among the crowd as a traveller lost in the desert.

Nor is this the end of the complexity, when one attempts to trace the psychological effects of scientific influence. Unfortunately, many psychologists regard their field as but an extension of physical science, tending to rely on the authority of the older mechanistic disciplines. And, as Prof. Ducasse would surely say, this is because the all-important middle ground between religion and science, which is that of philosophy, has been almost entirely neglected.

In another paper prepared at Duquesne University, Prof. van Kaam describes the error into which the specialist falls, becoming another sort of religionist, doctrinal in his own way. He points out that it matters little whether or not a man calls himself a scientist, since he may easily condemn himself to a single viewpoint and become "less and less sensitive to other possibilities of understanding man." Prof. van Kaam continues:

He is like a judge who would try to understand a traffic accident on the testimony of one witness instead of asking what the situation looked like from the viewpoints of a driver, of a victim of the accident, and of pedestrians who saw it from various distances. The wise psychologist asks himself how man is understood not only by certain schools of experimental psychology but also by philosophers, poets, novelists and other people who spend their lives in cultivating the understanding of man from one or other point of view. The realization that the standpoint of the experimental psychologist is as subjective as that of the others makes him less contemptuous concerning their ways of understanding man. This openness to viewpoints of all is the more important because it is on this level that science, philosophy and art meet each other as subjective creative endeavors. A scientist who would not cultivate the fascinating play of trying out various points of view would be a dead element in science. The student of the lives of inventors is struck by the fact that these men showed a deep interest in art and philosophy and that they thoroughly enjoyed the play

with ideas and imaginations. The educational system of a nation will produce inventive scientists when it cultivates minds which are playful and imaginative. Therefore a preparation for scientific work which would consist only in training the students in certain rigid patterns of experimentation based on certain subjective postulates which are falsely supposed by the victims to be objective would turn out highly skilled technicians, perhaps perfect technicians, masters in experimental operations but not creative scientists. Imagine for a moment a nation populated by these well-trained scientific technicians. This nation could maintain its scientific know-how. It would even be possible for its scientists to advance within the limits allowed by the rigid subjective assumptions naively believed to be necessary and immutable points of departure in science. But there would be no room for revolutionary inventions. Because for creative innovation one would have to be aware of the relative subjectivity and one-sidedness of one's assumptions. One would have to be trained in shifting to other subjective viewpoints and in respectful interest in other ways of knowing. It was only in this way that an Einstein was able to realize the theory of relativity. Such an imaginary country would have to invite at every crucial point of its development, scientists of other nations who because of their liberal education would be able to escape the prison of subjectivity and by doing so to overcome the dead point in science.

What seems to us to emerge in these able commentaries is that we badly need a philosophical distinction between "personality" and "individuality." The typical religious view of the past cannot sustain itself in the face of scientific thinking because it is too personal, whereas scientific habits of mind, in tending toward an excess of "objectivity," have also directed attention away from the core of the human being—composed of those elements which contribute to individual inspiration and genius.



## COMMENTARY

### REFLECTIONS ON CHANGE

IF MANAS readers are anything like MANAS writers—and we suspect that the two are very much alike—they often encounter in these pages discussions which lead to a restlessness of the spirit. There is the generalized demand for change, yet not enough particulars. Change *how*, into *what*?

There is a reason for this difficulty. It is that "change" has had too superficial a definition throughout many years of Western history. Men have changed the form of their government, but not their real ends. They still want the same things for themselves, still expect happiness and fulfillment from the same sources.

We have an instinct—or an intuition—about these things. The fancy, when we let it roam, enjoys revelling in the dream of *total* change. Nothing to remind us of the past—a clean, fresh start, like walking away on a crisp, snowy morning and never coming back; finding a place where there are no wars nor rumors of wars, where we can work at what we like to do, have all that we really need, wanting no more, secure in our minds and feelings—a kind of Golden Age.

Some of the revolutionists of history have let this dream dominate their conception of the good society. They wanted to change everything, leaving nothing standing which had the taint of the old corruption. The wild longing for a completely new beginning, when fed by hunger and resentment, easily becomes a fury to destroy, and thus we get the nihilists, the men of the terror, those whose vision of the good has become a passion for turning civilization back to a primitive beginning. Like a man trapped by circumstances who suddenly thinks how wonderful it would be if he could *shoot* his way out, these revolutionists dream of a magnificent holocaust that will wipe out the past and usher in an age of goodness and purity.

You might say that a man has something the matter with him if he doesn't think or feel this way once in a while, and very much the matter with him if he gives in to this tendency to the extent of becoming an ideologist of some violent social panacea.

The idea of changing *everything* is not necessarily a bad idea. We know without being told that tinkering with the *status quo* accomplishes very little. The argument between the revolutionists and the reformists is an old one, with the ideal values on the side of the revolutionists, and the practical values on the side of the reformists.

But you can't change everything successfully. All you do is turn people loose in a totally new or strange environment. Nothing is familiar and they tend to run amok. Then you have to control them. You have to make severe laws and create new patterns of human relations. And then, to make them work, you have to devise slogans and conceptions of "morality" that the people will understand. And if the people are slow or reluctant to conform, then you have to frighten them into behaving the way you want them to.

People won't accept a totally new environment they had little part in creating. So, if there are to be real changes, they have to come in two ways—as a result of a decline of attachment to the old ways, and from at least a little hungering after new ways. In short, change is a psychological process before it is a social or political process.

The fact is that nobody can keep old institutions alive or maintain old ways of doing things, once people lose their feeling for them.

Today is a time of social and psychological doldrums. We are rapidly losing our taste for the old institutions and old ways. But, unlike some past periods of change, this one lacks a great social inspiration. We don't seem able to *believe* in a great social inspiration. Yet most men cling to the familiar idea that the "social" way of doing

things is the only way there is to engineer a change. As a result, people aren't doing much of anything, except to feel frustrated, unhappy, and ground down.

The idea that is seeping into our times is the idea that you can't do anything good under or with a great big State. The State gets in its own way. It attracts rivalry and devours itself by preparing to devour its rivals. People are consumed in the process.

On the other hand, you can't *abolish* a great big State. It takes a State to destroy a State. There is no solution to this problem at the level of the State.

So change, if it is to come, will come by the slow development of another kind of thinking on the part of the people. They will cease to think of the State as an essential part of their lives. This will mean gradually changing relationships, without violence, without destruction, without the wild desperation produced by a totally new environment and without the artificial mechanisms introduced by paternalistic social managers to make the new environment function.

The change will not grow from a big plan, but from an altered attitude. This way, the change can even be—or must be—democratic: that is, an expression of the will of the people. The beginning, however, will come from the changing acts and attitudes of the few.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves THE UNSILENT WORLD

IN the London *Spectator* for April 24, "Strix" notes the gradual passing of "quiet" from the face of the earth. We have before reported in MANAS on "anti-noise" conferences, these being chiefly concerned with the psychological effect of loud automobile horns, noisy motors, etc., in congested areas. Usually, the conclusion of such deliberations is that the lives of people exposed to such pandemonium will be shortened appreciably by the psychosomatic effects. The *Spectator* article, "Silence and the Sabre-Toothed Tiger," raises larger questions. "Strix" writes:

Silence played a part in our lives until a short time ago, and it seems odd that its liquidation should have passed without comment. I can remember, as a very small boy, seeing a thick layer of straw covering the width of the street in front of a London building (it may have been a hospital but I think it was a private house) and being told it meant that somebody inside was seriously ill; the straw was there to protect their ears from the intolerable clatter of the traffic which, since most of it was still horse-drawn, could be partially muffled in this way. The idea of such a noise-trap being laid today is ludicrous.

The institution of the Two Minutes Silence as an act of commemoration shows that forty years ago silence was regarded as not merely seemly but attainable on a national scale. If this method of homage had not been devised in 1919, it is scarcely conceivable that anyone would have proposed its adoption in 1945. With coaches thundering down the roads and aircraft droning or whining overhead, it is only in remote and fortunate parishes that this part of the Remembrance Day Service can be fitly observed.

Is some clever fellow measuring the effect upon man of the increasing volume of noise to which he subjects himself? I imagine we are steadily losing, through lack of practice, the last vestiges of that power to see in the dark without which *homo sapiens* could scarcely have survived in a hostile world. Is our ability to hear small sounds being atrophied by a similar process? Are our voices getting louder? Will the day come when we shall all need to plug our ears with not-hearing aids? . . .

A few years ago we acquired two paragraphs by a twelve-year-old-boy, setting down some of his reactions to a trip into the mountains. On the subject which "Strix" writes about, these simple words seem not only apt, but poignant:

This summer we visited a place where it seemed that nature was almost untouched. A few feet off the road you seemed to be alone in the wild. There were huge redwoods and pines and many meadows. There were countless squirrels and chipmunks and all sorts of flowers such as snow flowers and others.

This place is not very well known to the general public. What a shock it is, then, surrounded by this quiet peace and beauty, to hear not far off the sound of gunshots.

In his study of the universal symbolic significance of dreams, *The Forgotten Language*, Erich Fromm points out that our consciousness may be clearer at some points in dreams precisely because we are then free from the "ceaseless bombardment" of noise. This same sort of consideration, taken to the level of philosophy and education, is beautifully expressed by Joseph Wood Krutch in *The Desert Year*. This passage has already appeared in MANAS, but in 1950, so that its repetition here is hardly amiss:

Not to have known—as most men have not—either the mountain or the desert is not to have known one's self. Not to have known one's self is to have known no one, and to have known no one makes it relatively easy to suppose, as sociology commonly does, that the central problems are the problems of technology and politics. It makes it possible to believe that if the world has gone wrong—and seems likely to go wronger—that is only because production and distribution are out of balance or the proper exercise of the franchise has not yet been developed; that a different tax structure points the way to Utopia. It is to forget too easily that the question of the Good Life—both the question what it is and the question how it can be found—has to do, first of all, not with human institutions but with the human being himself; that what one needs to ask first is not "What is a just social order?" or, "In what does true democracy consist?" but "What is Man?"

That question neither the usual politician, nor the usual economist, nor the usual scientist has ever asked, because he has never been alone. No man in

the middle of a desert or on top of a mountain ever fell victim to the delusion that he himself was nothing except the product of social forces, that all he needed was a proper orientation in his economic group, or that production per man hour was a true index of happiness. No such man, if he permitted himself to think at all, ever thought anything except that consciousness was the grandest of all facts and that no good life for either the individual or a group was possible on any other assumption. No man in such a position ever doubted that he himself was a primary particle, an ultimate reality.

Respectable universities, before they confer the degree which certifies that the recipient is now wise in philosophy, in science, or in sociology, commonly require a minimum period of "residence." They might well require also a supplementary period of "non-residence," to be passed neither at the university nor at any other populous place but alone. They might consider the fact that a knowledge of one's self is as important as a knowledge of Latin and two modern languages. Already having an athletic field, they might even persuade some wealthy alumnus to make a gift of a Thebaid to which candidates could retire for six months. I can think of nothing more likely to change the direction of our thinking, and many who agree on nothing else agree that it ought to be changed.

Those who have read Bruno Bettelheim's "Joey: the 'Mechanical Boy' "—either in the *Scientific American* for March or the *Reader's Digest* for June, may see the psychotic Joey as a frightening symbol of our times. Deprived of human affection, Joey felt himself to be a machine. True to his role, he required himself to clank and whirr as he performed the few tasks of which he was capable. So we think that Mr. Krutch is right, and profoundly right, in affirming that we can have no self-knowledge without silence, no education in which respect for quietude does not play a part.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Heresy Hunt at Stanford

THE Sibley-Kendall Debate, held at Stanford University last May, was a discussion of a sort seldom heard in modern universities. The issue was "War and the Use of Force: Moral or Immoral? Christian or Un-Christian?" Half an hour before the speakers were to begin, Stanford's Memorial Hall was crowded to capacity (1800) and loudspeakers were set up in adjoining buildings to accommodate the overflow.

As an effort to arouse a university audience to vital current questions, the debate was an outstanding success. As an intellectual event, the debate was of less importance. It was rather evidence of the fact that a man who has been elevated to the high position of professor of political science at Yale University (Prof. Wilmoore Kendall) can at the same time conduct his thinking in a sphere of discourse which almost nowhere has contact with the facts of life. Arguing for the position that war *is* Christian and *is* moral, Dr. Kendall gave evidence of never having raised his eyes from the rule-book of Christian orthodoxy. He did not look at war—what war does to both victors and vanquished—and he hardly distinguished between the "sword" that Jesus is said to have brought, and the atom bomb. In fact, almost his sole reference to atomic instruments of destruction is in a passage which accuses his opponents of practicing "the art of nuclear-weapons blackmail," whatever that may mean. He accuses pacifism of diabolism and disposes of the pacifist by calling him "Heretic: barbarian: parasite."

Dr. Mulford Sibley moves in an entirely different universe of discourse. He is inhibited by a lack of absolute certainty. He had the misfortune, in this encounter, to bring to it something of the scientific spirit toward questions of fact. He employed no grandiose "we believe" in his investigation of the question. He even admitted that the Gospels are not crystal-clear in their direction to a pacifist attitude. Dr. Sibley, in short, addressed himself to the question of the evening in the manner of a civilized human being, deeply concerned with the course of world affairs in our time, and he

presented a temperate, if searching, analysis of the issue.

These two professors of political science just barely made contact with one another. For this reason, the published report of the debate is a disappointing document.

Thomas Aquinas, Edmund Burke, and G. K. Chesterton are Dr. Kendall's principal sources of inspiration. The terrible offense of the pacifist is that he can not, will not, accept that alliance between Church and State which dictates the orthodox Christian's obligation to fight in "just" wars. Any questioning of his assumptions earns from Dr. Kendall only epithets. Pacifism, for him, is hateful heresy. The Christian State must be preserved, and the traditional Christian doctrine is that a just war declared by lawful authority, undertaken for legitimate and necessary defense, or even to "punish a guilty nation," is a war in which conscientious Christians must take part. With great piety, Dr. Kendall notes: "I ought to be concerned enough about the moral and spiritual health of my enemy to *fight him for his own good.*" Here, his argument is to the effect that pacifism is a species of spiritual selfishness. The pacifist wants to preserve his own virtue, whereas the warlike Christian has the good of the enemy at heart.

The foundation of Dr. Kendall's contentions lies in his explanation of Christian orthodoxy.

We shall not [he said] understand each other about. . . why Christian pacifism must be judged a heresy, until we have said something more about the meaning of orthodoxy—at least this: The mark of a mind civilized by our Christian inheritance and therefore pervaded through and through by *civility*—a term I take from Dr. Johnson—the mark of such a mind, I say, is its ability to entertain intellectually and experience emotionally a complex of propositions whose unity consists, difficult as the idea may be for some persons to grasp, in the very tension among them. We confront here the paradox of intellectual opposites caught up together in a unity that gives vision and therefore peace to the man who possesses it—so that precisely what makes a man an orthodox Christian is his will's assent, under the impetus of the Grace of God, to a vision of reality based upon a fusing of opposites. The man who fails to be moved

to that assent by the Grace of God, the man who fails there but is still able to entertain the vision intellectually, is what we may call a civilized unbeliever and not, in our terms, a heretic at all. The heretic is a different kind of man altogether, and his delineation is of central importance for our discussion this evening. The heretic is the man insufficiently civilized to understand—to get through his head—the complex of propositions that make up orthodox Christianity, and are thus a major part of the intellectual inheritance of Western Civilization. He is not, let us note carefully, an unbeliever. The heretic believes, but believes only a portion of the Deposit of Faith; and he believes *this* portion to the exclusion of *that* because (I repeat) he is temperamentally or intellectually incapable of getting hold of that fusion of opposites that is the fullness of the Christian faith.

Dr. Kendall did not refute Dr. Sibley's arguments or examine them in order to dispose of the latter's facts. He looked at Dr. Sibley's conclusions, found them deviations from orthodox Christian conclusions, and thereupon excommunicated Dr. Sibley, who proved himself a heretic by his intellectual "incapacity" to hold in his hand that "fusion of opposites" that constitutes the Christian defense of war.

There are no doubt things that might be said with benefit and profit by non-pacifists to modern pacifists, but Dr. Kendall did not say them.

In any useful discussion of the issue of war and peace, in this period of history, both pacifist and non-pacifist should exhibit some kind of doubt. It is not enough, for one thing, to speak glibly of just wars. It is necessary to show how a modern war can be just. It is necessary to weigh the inevitable injustice in the most justly conceived of wars. It is necessary to acknowledge that a modern war means the slaughter of innocents by the million—assuming that, in a *just* war, somebody is guilty.

It is necessary to acknowledge that the great mass of people cannot be moved to take part in war except by insidious appeals to their emotions and by distortions calculated to make them fear and hate.

The only way these considerations can be ignored is by making the assumptions that the managers of a prospective war are *right*, and that anything they find it necessary to do to put people in

a proper warlike mood is also *right*. When you make these assumptions, you don't have to ask any of the questions we have raised. All you have to do is say that a just war ought to be fought.

According to Dr. Kendall, the needs of the State are on a par with the will of God. In one place he says:

A state which will not wage war in any circumstances, however serious, would condemn itself, we are saying, to extinction. Now: if the natural law demanded that, then God, who is the Author of the natural law, would both *will* and not *will* political society. He would will its end, and at the same time forbid it the means *necessary* for attaining that end, and we say "necessary" because the state that cannot protect the life, liberty, and property of its citizens fails in its appointed function. If, therefore, the state can sometimes perform its function only through the use of force, it must have the right to use force. And, naturally enough, the common orthodoxy of the West has always maintained that among the most precious rights of man is the right to go to war.

In this context, we readily see what is wrong with pacifism as a doctrine. If the pacifist were merely an opponent of militarism, of the use of aggressive war as an instrument of imperialistic expansion, the West would not always have turned a deaf ear to him. But the pacifist contents himself with nothing so modest or sensible: he condemns *all* war, and in doing so logically plunges himself into anarchism—an anarchism which, implicitly and often explicitly, wills the nothingness of civil society. This is a nihilism as dangerous as that of *Zarathustra*—nay, more dangerous, because it masks itself under the cloak of the very Christian responsibility that it denies.

This intimate knowledge of the Will of God frees a man from many responsibilities. He need not inquire, for example, if the time has come to outgrow the national state as a social form. Dr. Kendall *knows* that God has not grown tired of the national state and would prefer the holocaust of nuclear war to any sort of threat to the sovereignty of the "good" nations. Dr. Sibley should find a more worthy opponent.