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THE FUNDAMENTAL "SOMETHING"

EVER since that fateful day when modern man first became aware of himself and his environment, he has been struck by a certain "something" which seems to set him off, apart from the other animals of the earth, at a fundamental level. A good deal of the religious and philosophical thought of man, and indeed most of the mental products of his long and unfinished climb up from nothing, can be interpreted as a collection of attempts to define and classify this distinction, to speculate on its meaning and its importance, and to make its implications significant to humanity.

Why does man insist on developing a system or code of ethics? Whether we take the Romans, the earlier Near-East civilizations, Victorian England, the Polynesian natives or the Australian bushmen, we find that, no matter how primitive (by our standards) the culture may be, a certain code of expected patterns of behavior has evolved (or, more properly, has been evolved). This seems to be a constant factor in civilized (and in many cases in uncivilized) human life; any group tends to develop or set up for itself certain moral restrictions, certain patterns which must be adhered to. This may be simply a fundamental feature of our human psychology; it may be that as humans we must have rules and patterns made clear for us; it may be that this minimum stability and security are necessary to our functioning. But, I think, systems of ethics and conduct are in themselves a basic admission of the recognition of the "something" I have spoken of; we realize (or think we do) that we are different from the animals we see, and we feel that we ought to act in a higher, more purposeful manner. Whether "higher" or "more purposeful" means anything in this connection is not the issue at stake here; the point is that we feel bound to act differently, in what we hope is a more purposeful manner.

But ethics is not the only branch of philosophy that recognizes this "something." All of political philosophy, from Plato's *Republic* to Marx's *Kapital*, must necessarily admit the necessity, or at least the desirability, of a government or political unit. The political philosopher is concerned above all with the social unit of many people living together, in a group; he is concerned with them not as individuals, but as a unit: a nation, tribe, etc. To carry this a little further, though, he is not concerned with the human social unit which can be compared to an ant-hill, or a well-organized beaver-lodge; he is considering the "intelligent" *human* society, where thought supposedly is the ruling factor. And merely by the fact of making this basic distinction, and by admitting the premise of government, social contract, or whatever else it may be called, the political thinker is admitting that same basic "something" to be an operating factor. Even Thoreau, Rousseau, and the "back-to-nature" enthusiasts will admit that some factor of organizing intelligence is necessary to a human society, and that a human anthill is unthinkable; again, they are admitting the fundamental "something" we somehow feel.

Metaphysical thought, too, is based on the idea of that persistent "something." Metaphysics seeks to define, or confine, or discuss, two fundamental relationships: Man to Universe, and Man to his world on earth. But this second relationship can be rephrased; to define satisfactorily the relationship between Man and his world is essentially the problem of investigating the nature of that "something." Although many of the modern schools of philosophical thought would have us discard metaphysics as a purely speculative and non-essential form of nonsense, it has played an important, if not dominant, role in man's thought since the Greeks and earlier. This

fundamental problem of the inherent nature of the "something," an important part of this discussion as well as a fundamental metaphysical problem, will be discussed later. Suffice it to say at this point only that the earliest recognition of our "something," an integral feature of Man's original awakening to the universe around him, can be reasonably postulated as the basis of a great deal of the developed evolutionary process, and, we hope, growth, of mankind.

Epistemology and logic, too, recognize as a fundamental axiom the "something" factor. Aristotle, or Bertrand Russell (as a logician, in this connection) would focus the discussions of the "something" with the terms, "mind" and "thought," rather than "spirit" or "soul" (as might be the tendency with religious or ethic thinkers), but the fundamental premise is the same. Whether we call our "something" mind or spirit, we find it necessary to acknowledge its existence, its operation in human history, and its fundamental importance. From the starting point of the acknowledgement of the "something," the logician or epistemologist can build ideas on how men should think correctly, what man can learn, what learning is, what thought is, and so forth. These topics are fascinating problems; they have engaged the most brilliant thinkers of several thousand years, and although a great deal has been said and written on them, we are as far from a comprehensive understanding of them as we ever were. Many thinkers have come to the conclusion that we, as humans, are quite incapable of ever reaching a fundamental "understanding" of anything; in trying to define thought and understanding, they deny the natures of these things. All these paths of thought have pointed the way to a great deal more conjecture; but enough of this digression. The point is that no matter how far such developments may lead us, their basic premise is the idea of thought, of thinking; and in this they acknowledge an important, but *not* all-inclusive, idea of the "something." Too many people will by now be identifying my "something" with the thought process, believing that the distinguishing factor is merely rationality. It is more.

However, it is not only the developments of religious and philosophical thought which can be seen as a consequence, or, if you prefer, an extension, of the basic idea of the "something." Psychology, the science which has seen the most spectacular growth in the past hundred years (in spite of sputnik and lunik, this distinction goes to psychology), seems also to be based on a primary realization of our faithful "something." The root idea of any study of human behavior and mental patterns must admit that there is something more to examine there than the instinct-action of the animal. Unless a fundamental distinction between animal and human behavior is granted, the principle of studying human behavior becomes absurd; why not study the animals instead? (And of course, the simple fact that we are "studying" anything admits the necessity of the "something"!) It is certainly true that psychology has depended very strongly on experimental work with animals; Pavlov's classic dogs, and the countless experiments of putting rats in mazes, etc., etc., will serve to illustrate this point. And to a certain extent this phase of the study is made to cover and learn about *animal* behavior, and the functioning of instinct-desires, reflex actions, etc. But, to dig a little deeper, we hope to link these animal actions with observed *human* actions. The psychologist's use of animal experiments to learn about human behavior could indeed be submitted as a proof of the scientist's admission of a *lack* of difference between human and animal behavior and psyche. But then, it would be a strange evolution process which all of a sudden produced a species with no relation at all to what came before! The "something" remains a basic distinguishing factor, but it is not an all-inclusive *differentiation* device. The psychologist, and indeed any one engaged in a field which seeks to discover something about human functioning or behavior, must begin with the idea that there is more to the human psyche than there is to the animal make-up. This includes, in addition to the

fields mentioned, the sociologist, the teacher, and others. And it includes the mathematician, who, although there is no study of human behavior involved, is concerned with the relationships of abstractly derived symbols and their meaning; by his fundamental dependence on thought and on human mind, he admits our "something." The ants *may* count, but they don't extract cubes or solve differentials.

And, to widen the discussion still further, it is not only the mathematician, the scientist, and the philosopher who admit this. The entire structure of poetry, literature, painting, sculpture, music, is based on the idea of creating beauty, of æsthetic thought. Again, the fundamental distinction between animal and human psyche must be admitted. No further enlargement of this point should be necessary to make its truth, or at least its truth relative to this discussion, evident.

So our recurrent "something" seems to have played a pretty important part in the development of Man as we see him today. It's not quite the perfect key for interpreting everything, however. There have been, and continue to be, fields which, while admitting the "something" for the purposes of a working method, nevertheless reject it as a working hypothesis for interpretation of observation and drawing valid and meaningful conclusions.

In biology, man is seen as an animal. A highly developed (again, only comparatively speaking) animal, perhaps, and one capable of a good deal more than the other animals surrounding us on this earth, but an animal nonetheless. Yet here, too, I think, the admission of our "something" is present, if perhaps lurking in the corner. The biologist studies man as flesh and bone and respiration and digestion. He is not concerned with man's thought, with man's soul. He is concerned with man's liver, with his appendix. In other words, he limits himself to the study of those features of man that represent man the animal (as I have said, no evolutionary process will produce suddenly a species differing in every respect from what came before). For this reason, it seems that the biologist can avoid the thought that man is more than, or at least other than, the animals. However, the biologist does study animals and plants and man by means of a scientific method involving thought, and in *this* he admits our "something." The biological, and more important, the philosophical extensions of Darwin's evolution ideas have certainly done a good deal to emphasize the similarity of man and the animals; at the same time, psychology has tended to swing man's image of his nature in the other direction, toward mind and thought, rather than toward body and brain *structure.*

The philosophical results of the trends opened (or furthered?) by evolutionary thought, characterized by Existentialism, have managed to reduce man to a helpless, rather insignificant little creature on a tiny speck of nothing, nowhere. Here is a train of thought which goes a long way toward minimizing as much as possible the ideas of thought and our "something"; toward making as little as possible of the thing we call mankind. This outlook has a certain attraction; it's an easy thing to be positively negative, the more so in an era and a country where it's fashionable as well. The Existentialists, and their rather ridiculous products, the Beatniks, have been characterized as the bearded cult of attention-maniacs; as the worthless crank-group of their age. The Existentialist thinker (and I mean Sartre, not Kerouac) is much, much more.

But I am going somewhat afield; I wouldn't attempt an estimation or a characterization of Existentialist thought. As a serious expression of sincere philosophic belief, though, and as an outgrowth of the entire concept of evolution as a process of perfection of species, Existentialist thought has made, and will continue to make, an important contribution to man's experience in general, and his interpretations of it; it is important in this discussion as a school of major importance and of current interest (and maybe to some extent even predominance) which denies the

values and purposes of man's philosophic and metaphysical musings, in most cases including the religious metaphysic and ethic, even calling into question the values of the creative arts as well. In its extreme form, Existentialism and its allied schools of "despair" philosophy have denied all these things.

In the light of the new biology, then, and in the light of the myriad ideas in philosophy which have emerged from it, we see that our "something" has been truly challenged. Perhaps this is the time to examine our attitudes more closely. What is this something, anyway? Is it nothing more than a vague feeling—something we, as a species, feel as a necessary function of our particular psychology? Can it be examined as something more than an undefined inkling; can it be identified a little further? I think so.

Especially since Darwin's evolutionary ideas, the dominant tendency in our thought has been to regard the distinguishing factor between man and the animals as the thought process itself. Man is seen as the *reasoning* animal, the *rational* being capable of thought and intelligent decisions based on observed facts. Despite the fact that animals react to stimuli which might harm them, and despite the fact that even we *rational* beings insist on periodic wars, this conception of man is still a very widely accepted one. We tend to separate the instincts we observe working in animals from the thought processes we claim in ourselves; and politicians and philosophers write tons of material to justify wars. We are probably right in the first distinction; our thought is certainly something apart from the reactions a paramecium will display. The second objection to our pat little definition of rationality is another story.

Although we must admit the thought process to be a decidedly important *part* of our "something," we would be missing the mark entirely in regarding the two concepts as identical. The word "psyche," now generally construed to indicate the mind, the psychological make-up of a personality, meant rather more to the Greeks. For them, it touched the idea of soul and spirit as well. Plato's monumental thought, expressed in his dialogues, concerns itself with the thought process, with logic, and so on; but it is concerned to a much greater extent with the true "psyche"; with the soul and heart of man. It is not necessary to admit to a religious or, in a narrow sense, even a metaphysical aspect of belief to include the idea of soul-spirit in one's own credo; the Christian concept of the immortal soul going to its reward in the afterlife, or the Buddhist concept of the immortal soul journeying to its Nirvana through lifetimes, is not necessary, or even desirable, to an appreciation of the "something." Our "something" cannot be identified completely with the Greek's "psyche," though, either. In some respects it is a feeling, a thing too intangible for analysis. On the other hand, it is certainly closer to the psyche than it is to the individual consciousness or the "rational thought-process" explanation of the problem.

As we have said, then, the new biology and the new philosophies derived from it have synthesized a potent challenge to our concept of the "something." At the same time, psychology and creative thought in pure science and the arts have made and continue to make truly fantastic progress. It is a confusing picture; it is the world in which we live today. It is a situation offering unique and infinite possibilities to mankind; mankind of today and tomorrow, for man is a flexible, a growing, a changing phenomenon. The picture presented is an exciting one; a stimulating one. It holds great promises. And, more important still, it holds some fundamental challenges to the integrity and creativity of man.

REVIEW
"FROM DEATH-CAMP TO EXISTENTIALISM"

VIKTOR FRANKL'S remarkable brief volume of this title (Beacon Press) persuasively adds a new "dimension of depth" to modern psychotherapy. Dr. Frankl survived three years in Nazi concentration camps, in which his entire family, save one sister, perished, yet Frankl converted his experience into an inspiring interpretation of the basic psychological structure of the human being. From his fellow prisoners, and from the tortuous course through his own labyrinth of suffering, Dr. Frankl came to believe that the ultimate horror is not suffering, but rather the inability on the part of most of us to convert suffering into meaning.

The preface to *From Death-Camp to Existentialism*—a book translated from the German—is contributed by Gordon Allport, who tells of the impact of the book upon himself, and suggests what others may gain from its study:

> The reader learns what a human being does when he suddenly realizes he has "nothing to lose except his so ridiculously naked life." Frankl's description of the mixed flow of emotion and apathy is arresting. First to the rescue comes a cold detached curiosity concerning one's fate. Swiftly, too, come strategies to preserve the remnants of one's life, though the chances of surviving are slight. Hunger, humiliation, fear and deep anger at injustice are rendered tolerable by closely guarded images of beloved persons, by religion, by a grim sense of humor, and even by glimpses of the healing beauties of nature—a tree or a sunset.
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> But these moments of comfort do not establish the will to live unless they help the prisoner make larger sense out of his apparently senseless suffering. It is here that we encounter the central theme of existentialism: to live is to suffer, to survive is to find meaning in the suffering. If there is a purpose in life at all, there must be a purpose in suffering and in dying. But no man can tell another what his purpose is. Each must find out for himself, and must accept the responsibility that his answer prescribes. If he succeeds he will continue to grow in spite of all indignities. Frankl is fond of quoting Nietzsche, "He who has a *why* to live can bear with almost any *how*."

Dr. Frankl's "existential" view contains mystical ideas which are not especially characteristic of more familiar existential expressions. Employing the word "logotherapy" to indicate that the healing process for a disturbed psyche may indeed begin at the top—in that aspect of man's nature which corresponds to the Logos—he affirms that the continued philosophical "search for the meaning of human existence" is the only protection against neurotic despair when adverse circumstances arise.

The fact that many psychological insights have grown out of the experiences of thoughtful men who suffered concentration-camp confinement substantiates Dr. Frankl's thesis. And to read his own account of what most men would consider an unbearable ordeal is to begin to be persuaded that nothing save the sufferer himself can eliminate his human worth. Frankl found that those who did not break under the fear of torture and death began to be less affected by petty concerns, and as they became "less personal" in the usual sense, their feelings and ideas became more profound. The following passage, as Frankl describes his thoughts about a loved wife, goes beyond the usual concepts of poignancy:

> My mind still clung to the image of my wife. A thought crossed my mind: I didn't even know if she were still alive. I knew only one thing—which I have learned well by now: Love goes very far beyond the physical person of the beloved. It finds its deepest meaning in his spiritual being, his inner self. Whether or not he is actually present, whether or not he is still alive at all, ceases somehow to be of importance.
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> I did not know whether my wife was alive, and I had no means of finding out (during all my prison life there was no outgoing and incoming mail); but at that moment it ceased to matter. There was no need for me to know, nothing could touch the strength of my love, my thoughts, and the image of my beloved. Had I known then that my wife was dead, I think that I would still have given myself, undisturbed by that knowledge, to the contemplation of her image, and that my mental conversation with her would have been just as vivid and just as satisfying, "Set me like a seal upon thy heart, love is as strong as death."

> This intensification of inner life helped the prisoner find a refuge from emptiness, desolation and spiritual poverty of his existence . . . As the inner life of the prisoner tended to become more intense, he also experienced the beauty of art and nature as never before. Under their influence he sometimes even forgot his own frightful circumstances.

Dr. Frankl is now professor of neurology and psychiatry at the University of Vienna. He and his colleagues have evolved the approach to psychotherapy now known as logotherapy. Dr. Frankl explains why, with all due respect to Freud, the therapist is seriously limited unless he grasps the existence of a higher aspect of consciousness. In a concluding chapter, called "The Basic Concepts of Logotherapy," he explains his philosophy:

> Freudian psychoanalysis has introduced into psychological research what it calls the pleasure principle or, as we might also term it, the will-to-pleasure. Adlerian psychology, on the other hand, has made us conversant with the role of the will-to-power as the main factor in the formation of neuroses. In my opinion, man is neither dominated by the will-to-pleasure nor by the will-to-power, but by what I should like to call man's will-to-meaning; that is to say, his deep-seated striving and struggling for a higher and ultimate meaning to his existence. . . .
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> Psychotherapy needs a concept of man as a being that is directed toward meaning—as a being in steady search for meaning. But what psychotherapy had taken as a starting point was often rather a caricature and not a true image of man—man was considered "nothing but" a being that is driven—or that satisfies by compromise the conflicting claims of Id and Superego. What I have attempted to do with logotherapy is this: to supplement—and not to supplant—psychotherapy in the narrower sense of the word. Logotherapy is not a substitute for psychotherapy, but is its complement. Above all, it is destined to make the concept of man (underlying *each* kind of psychotherapeutic work) into a whole, an image of man in all his dimensions—including the noetic one.

The conclusion of *From Death-Camp to Existentialism* shows how Dr. Frankl has synthesized the life-giving elements of religious inspiration, the concepts of Greek philosophy, and the contributions of modern psychological science:

> Modern man needs to consider himself as more than a mere psychophysical being. He is more than a mere organism. He is a person. His noetic existence must not be neglected any longer. In his noetic existence lies an unconditional meaning—his personality *owns* an unconditional dignity—and psychotherapy needs an unconditional belief in this meaning and dignity.
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> This is neither idealism nor materialism—it is simply realism. I am the sort of realist that Goethe was when he said: "When we take man as he is, we make him worse, but when we take man as if he were already what he should be, we promote him to what he can be." If I measure the blood pressure of a patient and find it slightly increased, and I then tell the patient about it, I actually do not tell him the truth, for he will then become anxious and the blood pressure will increase even more; if I tell him, in reverse, that he needs not worry, I do not tell him a lie, for he will be calmed and his blood pressure, consequently, will become normal.
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> Psychotherapy should stick to the words of the Talmud which proclaim: "Whoever destroys even a single soul should be considered the same as a man who destroyed a whole world. And whoever saves even one single soul is to be considered the same as a man who has saved a whole world." The possibility of destroying a whole world was never so imminent as it is today, nor has a boundless respect for the individual person ever been so needed and necessary.
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> The dream of half a century has centered around mechanisms to explain, and techniques to treat, neurotic diseases. I deem that this dream has been dreamt out. What is needed now is that doctors abandon seeing man as a machine and learn, instead, to see behind the diseases the human being: Homo patiens. For if psychotherapy and education aim to cope with existential frustration—this world-wide collective neurosis—they must free themselves from any nihilistic philosophy of man and focus their attention upon man's longing and groping for a higher meaning in life.

COMMENTARY
THE NEW HUMANISM

Now and then a contributor to MANAS asks that his article remain unsigned, the same as the articles by the editors. We have had several such contributions recently, the latest of which is this week's lead article. Repressing the impulse to title it "That Certain Something," we printed the article with pleasure, being interested, also, in the fact that the writer is somewhere between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years. We would have printed the article if the writer had been fifty, or even ninety, but the fact that he is—say, seventeen, to strike an average—is worthy of note.

The article represents a kind of thinking which, if we had to name it, we would call a new kind of Humanism. Its account of man grows entirely from observation of man. It represents, perhaps, a spontaneous fruition of tendencies which have been apparent for some twenty-five years. Alexis Carrel's *Man the Unknown* was a pioneering expression of this view; Julian Huxley's *Man Stands Alone* gave further evidence of the trend; and now, in this week's Review, we have a conception of the meaning of human life which is *sui generic*, derived from specifically human activity.

We speak of this thinking as a new kind of Humanism, and yet, it is not new at all, but harks back to the beginning of Humanistic thought in the West, in the Italian Renaissance. Pico Della Mirandola, the youthful genius of the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, sounded the keynote of modern Humanism in his Oration on the Dignity of Man. The uniqueness of man, Pico said, lies in his destiny, which is *to make his own destiny.*

Humanism has taken various by-paths in the four hundred years since Pico lived and taught in Florence. We have had Catholic Humanism, Classical Humanism, and Scientific Humanism of the sort which pervades modern Humanist societies in the United States. There is room for many viewpoints in the Humanist outlook, so long as the essential doctrine remains, but what we like about this "new" Humanism is its candid return to the spirit of Pico's Oration. Implicit in it is a sharing of Tolstoy's judgment of certain partisan reformers and revolutionaries: "Their chief mistake is the superstition that one can arrange human life."

It seems likely that the new Humanism will help to change the focus of attention from concentration on "arrangements" to the study of man himself. We have had enough of arrangements by others. We have had enough of the insistence of powerful men who know "what is good for us." A few know what is bad for us, but almost nobody knows what is good for us. Dr. Frankl, perhaps, knows. He says that what we need is "a concept of man as a being that is directed toward meaning—as a being in steady search of meaning."

This assigns the highest importance to conditions which favor a "steady search for meaning"—conditions favoring *search*, not conditions supporting some preconceived idea of meaning. Only the men who labor for these conditions deserve to be called Humanists.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
LET THEM FACE IT

WHILE waiting for some argument from readers on the subject of baseball worship (criticized here last week), we can hardly fail to note another and more serious instance of the impressionability of children. Again, the focus is in California. In recent weeks, just about in time to take over a part of the limelight as the Dodger story wore itself out, news dispatches and columns have presented infinite variations on the horrid question, "Will Caryl Chessman actually be executed this time?"

In 1948 Mr. Chessman was accused of armed assault with sexual intent, the evidence against him being largely circumstantial. But Chessman was convicted and sentenced to die, since in 1948 California had a "Little Lindbergh Law"—Sec. 209 of the Penal Code—which, unintentionally, so far as the framers of the law were concerned, could be stretched to respond to the public clamor against Chessman. For eleven years Chessman, acting as his own attorney, staved off death by legal efforts, but last month, until a Supreme Court Justice granted a stay of execution on Oct. 21, it looked as if the defense had run out of time. For Friday, Oct. 23, was to have been Chessman's last day on earth; he had been refused clemency by Governor Brown.

So, until Oct. 21, the question was, "Will they actually kill him?" And if you think that the teen-agers of California, and especially of Southern California, were not asking the question among themselves—brother, you're just not living with your kids.

They were asking the question, but they hadn't been helped to ask it in the right way. An issue concerning a man's life is not something to be regarded as one would a football pool—about which young people also know a good deal. And *they* instinctively know that the issue of a man's life is very different. They are prepared to be deeply shocked by an execution because, as the song says, "You've got to be taught to hate," and executions are clearly the result of inchoate hatred, seeking revenge.

If Chessman should finally be executed, despite this or future temporary stays, we had better find people who *don't* hate to present the issues of the Chessman case to the kids—in the belief that a younger generation is literally the only hope for straight thinking on the subject of either capital punishment or justice.

Armed assault with intent to commit a sexual crime makes an unpleasant subject. And legal murder, to our way of thinking, is even more unpleasant. But since the macabre aspects of the Chessman issue—both as to the crime and to its prospective punishment—have been prominently featured again and again in the newspapers, what, after all, does one have to lose by *encouraging* sons and daughters to discuss and argue the case?

Who is going to help the youth of Southern California to debate the issues involved in the Chessman case? Parents? Teachers? Why not? Of course, even enlightened opponents of capital punishment, as well as parents and teachers, need help, too, but that can be easily arranged. Just call the American Civil Liberties Union, which recognizes grounds for being very active in Chessman's behalf. Or pick up a copy of *The Nation* for Oct. 17 and read Gene Marine's long article, "Seventh Execution of Caryl Chessman."

What are the issues which young people might come to understand? There is, first, the issue of capital punishment itself. The most successful penological systems of the world long ago discarded the death penalty. As a result, crime has decreased, not increased, and, furthermore, psychologists have been able to learn a great deal from the most depraved of killers. (See *The Offenders* by Playfair and Sington, reviewed in MANAS for March 12, 1958, for a description of the Swedish system which works successfully with even the worst sort of

murderers. In Sweden Chessman, if convicted, would have quietly been given several months of hard labour while he was being studied, *and while the legal case against him was also being studied,* but with no publicity to titillate the curious in the newspapers.)

Few countries among those still using the death penalty exact death for anything but premeditated murder. In a few Southern states, "rape" can bring death—provided the attacker doesn't happen to be white and the injured party is of darker skin. But Chessman has never been accused of either murder or rape. He was accused of being an "evil genius," "diabolical," etc., by the newspapers, and his previous prison record clearly suggested that he was a candidate for aggressive prosecution by the State. Yet in the latter part of 1950, the law under which the penalty of death had been asked for Chessman was amended. Further, in June of 1959, the same Gov. Brown commuted the death sentence of another man, convicted under the same Sec. 209.

The record shows—and Marine's piece in the *Nation* alludes to this—that every independent investigator of the case has emerged from his study with serious doubts as to Chessman's guilt. Marine and other disinterested observers feel that Chessman did not even get close to a fair hearing. He was denied access to a full transcript of the previous day's proceedings during the original trial—even though the prosecution had its copy. Shorthand notes on the latter part of the trial have never been established as accurate, since the court reporter died before transcribing them, and his work is often illegible even to experts—save for a man paid a generous sum by the State of California to bring them into shape in a manner which Chessman's defense claims to find great difficulty in recognizing.

Yes, we have some conclusions of our own: First, that whenever legislation is designed or affected by vengeful public sentiment, the laws of a State will fall far short of any reasonable measure of justice. Caryl Chessman was condemned under a law which is no longer in force but the underlying reasons for the vengeful law remain, and so, therefore, does his sentence.

These are some of the issues which we should like to see young people discuss; on such matters their judgment—including even that of the most beat of the beatniks—is apt to be saner than that of the moralists, the policy-acceptors, and politicos who are fearful of hostile public sentiment.

FRONTIERS

The Two Sides of Freedom

THE writer of the letter printed here in MANAS for Oct. 14 has sent us another communication, commenting that he thinks our article, "The Trap of Abstractions," entirely missed his point. We do not think that we missed his point, which was to affirm the apparent or real helplessness of modern man. And we think that in the present letter, he has changed his point in a way that makes partial agreement with him quite easy. He writes:

> You pose the questions: (1) What do I mean by freedom? (2) How is man prevented from obtaining it?
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> By freedom I mean the opportunity to develop the potentialities that lie within man. In a mechanistic society man becomes standardized. Machines take away initiative and individuality. This society calls upon conformity far more than upon intelligence. The price paid is high for passive adjustment. A mechanized society minimizes creative effort. It imposes upon man the necessity of doing the same things in the same way at the same time.
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> Our amusements, as evidenced by TV and the movies, our opinions, our ideas, conform to a single pattern. We get our news, be it in Chicago or Los Angeles, at the same time, with the same editorial content. We are exposed to the same jokes, the same exhortations and advice. All this makes for uniformity, stupidity, and monotony.
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> All this makes man a prisoner and renders it almost impossible for any variant to take root and ripen. We are truly regimented at the hands of this mechanized, materialistic society.
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> Standardization of our man in bondage begins in the public and parochial schools. The mass instruction by means of standardized lessons imparted in standardized ways provides the garden on which the large regimentations of the community feed and thrive.
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> In this materialistic society the individual is assimilated to the mass, his intrinsic value is rejected; his creative significance is ignored. We know that, as man thinks, so he is.
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> Herbert Spencer thought that he had an all-inclusive ethical formula in the evolutionist's phrase, "adjustment to the environment." But the upsetting question for evolutionary ethics is: "What sort of adjustment?" Sociologists can show you records of slaves who were nicely adjusted to their environment: they gladly took orders and they had masters to give them orders: they were content with menial self-effacing work and a secure existence. Perhaps you would say that such an adjustment was good, but Spencer chose to qualify the adjustments he would approve.
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> Our society belittles and nullifies individuality, repressing significant individuals. Our society is composed of averages and masses, as evidenced by the large research departments in advertising agencies. These agencies are interested only in how to sell more of this and that, regardless of whether or not the products offered have any utility value.
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> Our military treats war as a phase of human nature; the business cycle is regarded as an economic law, no matter how severe the hardship on people. Selfish men exhibit unprevented greed, which makes for inflation and depressions.
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> This all brings us back to the term freedom.
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> Freedom is an assertion of the autonomy and naturalness of the individual of his freedom to win to such success or excellence as lies within his scope or his own belief, in his own way, by his own effort, at his own risk during his own unending struggle to live in this changing world which was not made for him—this altogether unguaranteed world.
>
> The struggle, the initiative, the courage, the faith and the inventiveness of the individual—these are the precious qualities, and not those of the keepers of this materialistic society.
>
> Freedom and chance are just what they are felt to be. Activity, effort, struggle, they are what they are known as.
>
> In a mechanistic society, the individual does not count. I believe he does. Be he ever so humble, he counts, his effort counts. He is at least the master of himself. Eliminate him for a complete machine society and you eliminate one of the conditions each of which must come together with the others before one particular aggregate opportunity for freedom can be. The faith and effort of the individual enter into the texture of the things all men work on. The faith itself may be just that added difference in the compounding of events which finally makes them over according to his need. Like his intelligence and other traits, faith is an instrument in his struggle for survival. Freedom, then, is the ingredient which makes man's life significant.

The first portion of this letter undertakes to describe the conditions of modern society as they confine or affect the exercise of freedom by the individual. The second portion declares that freedom is nevertheless possible, that the effort to be free modifies the environment, increasing the opportunity for freedom.

This letter may be taken to illustrate a basic paradox that enters into all such considerations. For this purpose, we need to say that the subject of freedom has two sides—the side of society and the side of the individual. Criticism and discussion from the viewpoint of society is not and cannot be the same as criticism and discussion from the viewpoint of the individual.

Criticism and discussion from the viewpoint of society, or as an examination of the nature of society, is of necessity pursued in the light of some social or cultural ideal. If we say that our present society is mechanistic and confining to the original and freedom-tending behavior of the individual, what we really mean to say is that society ought to be *different.* We may have trouble in formulating the precise conditions of the ideal society, but we make little mistake about what is wrong.

Fifty years ago this sort of criticism had a somewhat different primary focus. It had a fairly clear objective, which was expressed in terms of economic justice. It was then believed that elimination of economic justice would change the environment to produce the conditions of freedom. If we had the right *system,* men believed, they would become free. The "enemy," in this instance; was the class or group which maintained a bad system in power.

We still speak of economic justice when we make social criticism, but we don't speak of it so much. Now we talk more directly about the importance of freedom. The desirable values are more psychological than they were fifty or even twenty-five years ago. We are less certain, however, about the ideal system, so we say less about it. We speak of an ideal system only by implication, or not at all. For this reason, the identity of the "enemy" has become somewhat vague. Today, the enemy is some kind of manager of a system of conformity, instead of the manager of a system of economic injustice. The two go together, of course, but the emphasis is different. There is a further difference in that present-day social criticism makes no clear call to the colors of a revolutionary party or movement. A revolutionary movement—of the sort, at any rate, we are familiar with—requires tight, and even autocratic, organization, and we are suspicious of any kind of tight, autocratic organization, even for the best of declared purposes. So the criticism remains, on the whole, criticism without a dictated program of action. For this reason it seems weak, or even irrelevant. It may be neither, but it certainly *seems* that way.

Some critics have given up social analysis—or rather social analysis with a political end—as a bad job. Some have turned to Existentialist criticism, some to Zen, some to the insights of psychotherapy, some have become pacifists, and some have stopped doing much of anything.

The most courageous and the most effective social critic of our time is probably C. Wright Mills. He is probably also the best of the social scientists who have not changed the base of their intellectual operations. We would call Mills a Humanist Liberal, except for the fact that his disdain for any kind of prudent conformity really makes him a Humanist Radical. In his most recent piece of social criticism, "The Decline of the Left," Mills gives chapter-and-verse particularity to the sort of indictment our correspondent has drawn up in general terms, then proposes that the thinking men of the United States must recover the ground they have lost to the prevailing system. This is the most important thing that Mills can think of to do. He writes:

> Now, we ought to repossess *our* cultural apparatus and use it for our own purposes.

He means that the channels of communication, or *some* channels of

communication, ought to be recaptured from the hidden persuaders and the military propagandists, and used by the men who originally brought those channels into being—the men who think and write and attempt impartial judgments. He continues:

> This should be done personally and literally. It is a mistake for us to swallow ourselves in some great, vague, abstract, political "We." Of course, as creators and upholders of standards, we *do* want to generalize for other men the ideals for which, as public men, we stand; but we ought not to do so in a merely optative mood. We ought to do so, first of all, by acting in our own immediate *milieux.*
>
> We are free men: Now we must take our heritage seriously. We must make clear the perils that threaten it. We must stop defending civil liberties long enough to use them. We must give content to our formal democracy by acting within it. We must stop whining about our own alienation long enough to use it to form radical critiques, audacious programs, commanding views of the future. If *we* do not do these things, who will?

This is the point of central importance in what Mills says, and in what our correspondent says." If *we* do not do these things, who will?" This is the essential junction between the individual and society, for reconstruction, for freedom, for a better environment for free behavior. Mills continues:

> National establishments and official lines have always benefited by denying the close connection between culture and politics. Left thinking has always assumed these connections and tried to make them explicit. Now, we must make clear the absurdity of the definitions of reality and the pretensions to truth of established culture by debunking it and revealing its political meanings. As intellectuals, we should conduct a continuing, uncompromising criticism of this established culture from the standpoint of—what so-called practical men of affairs call—utopian ideals.
>
> Unless we do this we have no chance to offer alternative definitions of reality. And, of course, that is our major business. If we, as intellectuals, do not define and re-define reality, who will?
>
> The writers among us bemoan the triviality of the mass media, but why—for the money and the prestige—do they allow themselves to be used in the silly routines by its silly managers? These media are part of *our* means of work which have been expropriated from us and are being used, now, by others for corrupting purposes. We should write and speak for these media on our own terms or not at all. We should ostracize the ghosts and the hacks who accept the terms of the expropriators and attack them as men who prostitute their free talents and who disgrace us as an intellectual community.

Mr. Mills challenges college professors to refuse to perform like trained animals; he invites writers and newspapermen to stop hiding from the public the confusions and obfuscations of Congress and of the two major political parties; he suggests that scientists should no longer collaborate with the military metaphysicians in developing new weapons and becoming obedient political servants. Why, he asks, do clergymen permit religion to "become a mere blessing of the thrust toward World War Three"? Why, he asks, "must preachers and rabbis and priests support the moral irresponsibility of the elite that is serving this thrust?" Finally—

> It is easy to see that official definitions of world reality are often absurd and, sometimes, even paranoid lies. But why must scholars and publicists disseminate these absurd, inadequate definitions of reality? Why must they study the trivial subjects they do, rather than confront the insistent and significant problems of our time?

Mr. Mills is obviously a moral force and a figure connecting past with future social criticism. He gives continuity to the principle of intellectual integrity and outspoken impartiality, to carry these qualities through a period of extreme apathy and disillusionment.

We have space for only a brief treatment of critical writing in behalf of the individual—the second side of the subject of freedom. What soon becomes apparent, however, from a study of what has been written from this point of view, is that "criticism" has very little place in such a discussion. We have at hand, for example, a paper by A. H. Maslow, titled "Creativity in Self-Actualizing People." Interestingly enough, Dr. Maslow has practically nothing to say about the prejudicial character of the environment in relation

to the creative—and "free"-—activities of these people. Environment is only incidental. Whatever men do, whatever happens, happens in *some* environment. If we take Dr. Maslow's meaning correctly, this suggests that the man in search of freedom will use whatever environment he has as his raw material. Speaking of his research, Dr. Maslow says:

> I soon discovered that I had, like most other people, been thinking of creativeness in terms of products, and secondly, I had unconsciously confined creativeness to certain conventional areas only of human endeavor. That is, I unconsciously assumed that any painter was leading a creative life, *any* poet, *any* composer. Theorists, artists, scientists, inventors, writers could be creative. Nobody else could be. You were in or you were out, all or none, as if creativeness were the sole prerogative of certain professionals.
>
> But these expectations were broken up by various of my subjects. For instance, one woman, uneducated, poor, a full-time housewife and mother, wife and homemaker. With little money, her home was somehow always beautiful. She was a perfect hostess. Her meals were banquets. Her taste in linens silver, glass, crockery and furniture was impeccable. She was in all these areas original, novel, ingenious, unexpected, inventive. I just *had* to call her creative. I learned from her and others like her to think that a first-rate soup is more creative than a second-rate painting, and that generally, cooking or parenthood or making a home could be creative while poetry need not be; it could be uncreative. . . .

We wish there were more space to give several other of Dr. Maslow's illustrations of creativity, or free behavior, since there is a tendency to remain unimpressed by a "homely" example of this sort; but, take our word for it, he has plenty more illustrations. Here, the point is that the man who practices freedom is only carelessly or incidentally an angry critic of his environment. He makes the seeds of his freedom sprout in the most unlikely soil. The kind of creativeness Dr. Maslow is describing—self-actualizing creativeness, he calls it—belongs to people who are unspecialized, that is, their specialty is the very freedom we seek as ordinary human beings. Their capacity, he says, "showed itself widely in the ordinary affairs of life, and . . . showed itself not only in great and obvious products, but also in many other ways, in a certain kind of humor, a tendency to do *anything* creatively: *e. g.* , teaching, etc."

This is obviously a subject which deserves a great deal more exploration, but our point is made—that an entirely different direction of research is called for, when the inquiry into the nature of freedom concerns, not social prohibitions and confinements, but the nature of the individual. who is, or is to be, *free*.