

## THE DEFINITION OF ISSUES

THE great question, in any period of break-up of old historical patterns—of which the present is an obvious example—is how the issues will shape up in terms of popular decision. Since it is impossible to describe or state a view of the basic issues of human life without taking a position on those issues, we shall not attempt this sort of "objectivity," but will propose the possibilities which seem to us to have the best chance of being real or "true."

First, some background considerations need to be explored. Human beings define issues according to their ideas of meaning and desirable ends. At root, therefore, all the issues of man's life are philosophical. Even if you say that getting enough to eat and a decent place to live are the main issues, the contentions on how to go about securing these ends turn out to be philosophical, since they amount to judgments about the nature of man and the nature of the world. The so-called "ideological" war of the present can be reduced to a conflict between concepts of value and theories of human development. While there may be some justification for claiming that behind the ideological fronts of the East-West struggle, the old rivalries of power continue among the great nation-states, the fact is that what honest heat exists in the cold war comes from earnest human beliefs concerning philosophical issues. Without deep convictions concerning these issues, there could hardly be a serious threat of war. It is fairly plain that the managers of the affairs of modern nations are continually obliged to justify whatever they do in terms of philosophical values. The Communists tell the world they are unselfishly laboring for a world emancipated from imperialism and economic exploitation. The Western nations declare that their policies and actions are the only possible means to secure the conditions of freedom from totalitarian tyranny.

It is fair to say that, in the present, the important issues of human life are characteristically defined in political terms. The focus of interest in

politics has at least two explanations. First, politics is the most obvious means to power, and it is generally believed that power is necessary in order to gain the good, or whatever it is that we want to gain. Second, a strong ethical current in human thought demands that the good that we seek be a *general* good. Some men may be determined to pursue only a private good, but they know better than to advertise their intentions. Usually, they endorse some program or political theory of the general good which promises to serve their self-interest.

Let us examine for a moment the idea of political issues. It should be apparent that when men consider political issues, they do so on the basis of certain assumptions. They assume, for example, that human beings have the right and the capacity to make political decisions. They have decided that politics represents a region of the external environment over which they have some control. The questions of how to control it and how it ought to be controlled are practical and philosophical questions. Constitutions are statements which define methods of political control and justify them according to some philosophic declaration of values. If there is a serious disparity between constitutional declarations and the actual practice of governments and political parties, this shows not only the inconsistency or hypocrisy of human beings, but also the power of philosophical ideas about the good, since political agencies feel obliged to give at least lip-service to those ideas in their statements of principle. The point, here, is that the men who want to affect the course of history or the social and economic arrangements of mankind recognize the necessity of relating their political programs to ideas of the general good, if they are to hope to influence human behavior in behalf of their plans. Recognition of this fact gives a positive cast to our discussion, since it reduces the importance of comments to the effect that history is mainly the work of Machiavellian schemers. Whatever the

Machiavellians are able to do, the scope of their activities is limited by prevailing ideas of the good and of means to the good, at any given time. The Machiavellians are parasites who live on the positive moral and philosophical convictions of mankind.

Because of the dominance of political issues in the present and the recent past, there is a tendency to overlook the vast stretches of time during which there were practically no political issues at all for human beings. Political consciousness began with the ancient Greeks, lapsed during the Middle Ages, and burst into full flower in the eighteenth century. By "political consciousness," we mean the idea of independent decision on the part of the members of the social community in regard to the principles and mode of the government under which they will live. You could say that some two hundred years since the beginnings of political revolution in Europe have been spent in exploring the full possibilities of political forms of action. The revolutions of the eighteenth century were essentially political in the sense that they gave the people the power to define their own political system, but they were limited in the sense that they reserved an area of human activity which politics was not supposed to touch—the area covered by the American Bill of Rights. The major revolutions of the twentieth century were different in that they moved on the assumption that *all* human issues are capable of being dealt with at the political level of action. The surviving revolution of this character, the Communist Revolution, left no room for nonpolitical human identity. Communism is Total Politics.

Total politics, which is the reduction of all issues to political terms, is a lethal threat to all other views of human issues, since the basic tool of politics is power, and power, as a method of control, knows nothing of compromise. The only compromise possible in the competition for power is what modern observers refer to as the "balance of terror," and this is rather a kind of emotional paralysis which destroys all the values subsisting in that area of human life where power has no role. Total politics, in short, is an infection which seems to require that it be opposed by a similar infection, so that whoever tries to deal with a total political

power on its own basis must invariably infect his own side with the reliance on total political power.

This is the dilemma of the nations which represent a philosophy of limited political power, when confronted by nations which have gone the whole way, politically, to the position of absolute political power.

There is no resolution of this dilemma, in political terms. The issue, thus presented, is not political. It is a philosophical issue having to do with questions of ultimate value, concerned with the nature of man and the nature of the world.

There is no point in bandying words and entering into long and indecisive arguments as to how to meet the threat of total politics with limited political action. Such arguments only give a specious appearance of rationality to the confrontation of incompatible systems of action. They are like trying to control a neurosis with diet, or treating a case of rheumatic fever with the laying on of hands.

Let us go back to the days when the issues of life were not regarded as political. In order to do this, it will be necessary to forget the relevance of political issues to the theory of the good life. This will be like reading one of Grimm's fairy tales to your children, and restraining the impulse to say to them, "What the bad king needs is not a brave young prince to teach him a lesson, but a social revolution to do away with both kings and princes!" It will mean that you accept the social system of the time in much the same way that we accept today the temperature of the Atlantic ocean, the hot sun on the Kansas prairies, or the smog over Los Angeles County—something you can't change, since it was put there by a Higher Power.

We are speaking, essentially, of the mythopœic age, when conceptions of reality are formed by the subjective response to primeval religious philosophy—say, to take the best of antique thought, the philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. What was "real" for the devotee of the Upanishads or the *Gita*? Fundamentally, the reality for this man is the built-in moral law of the universe. The teacher or community elder fulfills his role by calling attention to the obligations of individuals as

citizens of the moral order of life. Duties are scaled to capacity, but eventually each soul will be confronted by the ordeal of heroic tasks. Every man must some day reclaim his spiritual kingdom in the ultimate struggle upon the plains of Kurukshetra (earth life). The individual existence of man is the micro-life of the macro-life of the world. He is born to high drama, but he is free to choose the great undertaking, or to reject it. (Although, in the closing discourse, Krishna warns Arjuna that if, through self-indulgence, he should decide to avoid the struggle, he will still be drawn into the contest. "The principles of thy nature will compel thee to engage. Being bound by all past karma to thy natural duties, thou wilt involuntarily do from necessity that which in thy folly thou wouldst not do.") In this scheme of things, the personages of the social system are no more than a kind of scenery for the drama of the soul. In the *Gita*, the old, blind king, Dhritarashtra, is a type of the physical body, helpless without some animating impulse and directive intelligence. The usurper of Arjuna's kingdom, which he must now recover, is Duryodhana, the Kuru prince who is the type of the earthly, acquisitive spirit, and whom Arjuna has to vanquish. Both the *Gita* and the *Mahabharata*, its epic matrix, are works abounding in complex symbolism.

Don Quixote, to the man of this ancient faith, would be no hallucinated fool, but an embodiment of the authentic spirit of knight-errantry. The fools were rather those about him who were unbelievers, who could not see the profound mysteries and the truth hidden behind the humdrum events of daily existence. In the mythopœic age, men were believers in a universal doctrine of signatures. They read divine intentions in even casual happenings and saw in the cycles of nature the imprint of spiritual transactions. In his *Man on a Rock*, Richard Hertz wrote of these feelings:

Chinese peasants, moving into the mountains every morning to gather tea, sang a hymn in honor of their enterprise, which they compared to the Western paradise. The Volga boatmen "accepted the universe," and the women of Madagascar acted, when they cultivated the rice fields, like bayaderes trying to please a god. . . .

The medieval fraternities of workers in Flanders and Lyons, . . . rolled the stone from the tomb of their narrow space; their triumph over the refractory material of the world was not mere routine, but was understood by them in its vast metaphysical connotations. Work interpreted as spiritual discipline gave these people a superhuman patience, detachment from results.

This polytheistic and pantheistic view has pervaded human thought almost until the present, and it survives among peoples who remain more or less unaffected by the modern world, among tribes who are isolated, either by geography or by determined policy, from the encroachments of Western civilization. In a book concerned with these matters, *The Primitive World and its Transformations*, the cultural anthropologist, Robert Redfield, says:

Primitive man is . . . at once in nature and yet acting on it, getting his living, taking from it food and shelter. But as that nature is part of the same moral system in which man and the affairs between men also find themselves, man's actions with regard to nature are limited by notions of inherent, not expedient, rightness. . . . "All economic activities, such as hunting, gathering fuel, cultivating the land, storing food, assume a relatedness to the encompassing universe. And the relatedness is moral or religious.

In so-called "primitive societies," this feeling of relatedness sometimes goes beyond the more or less passive attitude of needing to conform to the universal moral order. The Hopi people, for example, a small tribe of Indians of the American Southwest, are convinced that human beings have a positive role in even the affairs of nature. Writing of the Hopi religion and ceremonial practices in *The Hopi Way*, the authors, Laura Thompson and Alice Joseph, say:

Hopi ceremony has never become stereotyped, and has never degenerated into mere formalism. It emphasizes control of the universe not only by means of the supernatural or magic, but also through mind or will. The Hopi conception of man as differentiated, in the universal system of mutual interdependency, through his role as an active rather than a passive agent in the fulfillment of the law, compels the active participation of the individual in the ceremonial at not only the physical but also the ideational and emotional level and imposes upon him a high degree of personal responsibility for the success of the whole and not just for one small part of it. This in turn operates as an

important influence in bringing about the internalization of the law and its apprehension as a whole and in its parts, which is very different from the sort of participation which following one's littler part by rote without responsibility or need for concerning one's self with the whole at the ideational or emotional level would give.

The Hopis, interestingly, make no distinction between prayer and the exercise of the will. The same word in the Hopi language is used for both ideas. These writers continue:

Praying is willing. The Hopi believe not only that man can control nature to a limited extent by observing these rules, but that if he does not do so, the universe may cease to function. That is, the movements of the sun, the coming of the rain, the growth of crops, the reproduction of animals and human beings depend (to a certain extent, at least) on man's correct, complete, and active carrying out of the rules.

There is really nothing extraordinary, from the viewpoint of antique religious philosophy, in this assumption of an almost cosmic responsibility by the Hopis. The *Bhagavad-Gita* has this passage:

Beings are nourished by food, food is produced by rain, rain comes from sacrifice, and sacrifice is performed by action. Know that action comes from the Supreme Spirit who is one; wherefore the all-pervading Spirit is at all times present in the sacrifice.

A little later, Krishna says:

Even if the good of mankind only is considered by thee, the performance of thy duty will be plain; for whatever is practised by the most excellent men, that is also practised by others. The world follows whatever example they set. There is nothing, O son of Pritha, in the three regions of the universe which it is necessary for me to perform, nor anything possible to obtain which I have not obtained; and yet I am constantly in action. If I were not indefatigable in action, all men would presently follow my example, O son of Pritha. If I did not perform actions these creatures would perish; I should be the cause of confusion of castes, and should have slain all these creatures.

It is again this background of belief in immanent justice and human participation in the universal life process that we must examine the emergence of the modern—sometimes called the "scientific"—world view. Speaking of this great change, Prof. Redfield writes:

Man comes out of the universe within which he is orientated now as something separate from nature and comes to confront nature as something with physical qualities only, upon which he may work his will. As this happens, the universe loses its moral character and becomes to him indifferent, a system uncaring of man. The existence today of ethical systems and of religions only qualifies this statement; ethics and religion struggle in one way or another to take account of a physical universe indifferent to man.

The historical explanation for this great change in attitude on the part of human beings is usually explained by suggesting that, with the beginnings of modern scientific discovery, the Truth began to be known to the human race, after untold thousands of years of ignorance and superstition. Science is held to represent the human encounter with actual Reality—an experience which came, logically enough, concurrently with the epoch of Revolution, during which the progressive Western peoples overthrew the combined tyrannies of Church and State and began a cycle of self-determining existence, guided by the scientific theory of knowledge and maintained by democratic political philosophy.

This explanation has plausibility, but it overlooks the deep subjective elements, brought forward from the past, which entered into both the scientific and the political revolutions. The first great scientists were objective idealists of a Platonic cast of mind. They certainly were not materialists; if anything, they were neo-Pythagoreans, not too distant in philosophy from the thought of Sir James Jeans. There was profound inwardness, also, in the origins of the revolutionary movement. Justice and freedom are ideas which have no meaning at all for material things. They are values which relate only to self-consciousness.

But somewhere along the line in the evolution of Western thought, there came a break with the primary intuitions of antiquity. The ideas of there being a moral order in the universe—the feeling of "immanent justice"—and of man's role as being both "natural" and transcendent, were abandoned. This alienation was no doubt precipitated by the corruptions of religion, but it may also be due in part to a kind of "mutation" in human development, bringing on a cycle of greater psychological

independence for individuals. If there is any analogy between individual development and racial evolution, this interval of radical change might be attributed to a process which requires a letting go of ancient traditional ideas and the initiation of more self-reliant means of orientation for human beings. Every youth goes through this process of emancipation from the wisdom and protection of the family circle, and when the familial influence has itself gone bad, the break may come with violence and bitter hostility. Here, the parallel is accurate enough, since the independence movements of Western history have almost all been marked by passionate and angry rebellion against restraining forces which had long since lost any semblance to ancestral wisdom. The emancipation of the West from its traditional past and its dead shell of institutional versions of subjective ideas of truth—the truth which springs from man's inward feeling of the meaning of his life and of nature—eventually turned into a nihilist rejection of all that the past had known. This terrible sequence of history was mediated by the intellect, which sought to substitute devotion to "objective" truth as the source of new assumptions about the nature of things.

Now, today, humanity is again pressed by the agony of events to seek new sources for its basic assumptions. The objective world alone, and our scientific knowledge of its operations, are turning out to be barren of any guide to the human spirit. The definition of issues in the terms of science and politics seems like the empty repetition of worn-out slogans. There may be truths in both science and politics, but they do not speak to our condition. The claims of total objectivity and of total politics leave out the only thing we care about—the human beings themselves, considered as living, hoping, suffering and striving individuals. In them all the values lie, and in them, according to total science and total politics, we find only the virtually inert products of external manipulation.

The present is therefore a moment of very nearly absolute need for human beings—the need to find a point of balanced synthesis between the subjective and objective accounts of reality. The important fruit of finding this point will be a new definition of issues along lines which have actual

meaning for individual human beings. And then the task will be to conceive of forms of action consistent with the meanings thus made plain. Only an undertaking of this sort has any hope of exposing the false dilemmas which now confront the human race.

## *REVIEW*

### MEDICINE AND MAN

DR. FRANZ WINKLER'S *Man: the Bridge between Two Worlds* (Harper, 1960) is a pioneering effort in relating illness, psychology and non-orthodox transcendental philosophy. This is Dr. Winkler's first book, fruit of seven years' practice of psychotherapy and thirty years of medical experience in internal disorders. Though influenced by the Viennese schools of psychoanalysis and an admirer of Carl Jung—Winkler graduated under the Vienna Faculty of Medicine in 1932—he became convinced that the proper study of man must recognize a source of potential profundity and clarity in the individual which is in no way dependent upon conditionings of the psyche. In effect, his book affirms that Plato's "noëtic" element of the mind is a true and primal entity, and extends in specific ways the conceptions of Viktor Frankl's *From Death Camp to Existentialism*.

The opening chapter of *Man: the Bridge between Two Worlds* gives Dr. Winkler's view of the relationship between the problems of illness, the problems of psychology, and the problems of philosophy:

A few more words about the purpose of this book: Our generation's consuming interest in psychology has a good reason indeed. It originates in the feeling that orientation within the intricacies of modern life is possible only through self-knowledge. Since it is believed today that understanding of the healthy self can best be attained by a study of pathological deviations, psychiatry has gradually assumed a leading role in the sphere of psychology. I do not believe, however, that its methods can actually uncover the roots of the emotional agonies of modern man. While paralyzing inferiority complexes, overpowering sexual conflicts, and many other facts play an unquestionable part in emotional maladjustments, to me they are symptoms rather than causes. Every human being has to bear his load of suffering, frustration, and unfulfilled desires. Yet, almost three decades of medical experience have taught me that this load will cause neuroses or emotional disaster only to the degree in which a person has lost his innate sense for the existence of purpose and meaning in life.

I am deeply convinced that we are living in a moral universe, in a universe which holds not only meaning for evolution as a whole, but for every single individual in his struggles through life and death. And where is the proof for such an optimistic view? In immediate experience. It has grown dark in the sphere in which experiences of such kind occur. In their longing for inner light many today turn to drugs or seek illumination in artificially induced ecstasies. My own experiences with a great number of such seekers after truth are unfortunate. Short periods of rapture and "certainty" are only too soon followed by spells of doubt and despair, as if a weak but still living spark had been whipped into a blinding flame, to be burnt to extinction soon thereafter. No, inner vision, at least for modern man, is not the gift of drama and ecstasy, but the hard-won fruit of patient labor.

A provocative aspect of this unusual book is its criticism of drugs and sedation, implying, incidentally, that the individual should give some personal attention to solving his particular problems of ill-health. Dr. Winkler writes:

Even in medicine we believe to serve the cause of life, whereas often we are merely prolonging the process of dying. For we must not forget that every powerful chemical introduced into the human organism must needs have a deadening effect on the vitality of consciousness, mechanizing it to a greater or lesser degree. Whenever we calm grief by the anesthetizing effect of a sedative, we suppress not only the manifestations of suffering, but also the personality of our patient. As in fighting a blazing fire with a chemical extinguisher, we may control a conflagration in the soul of a human being through modern medicine. But unless we learn to strengthen the intuitive, creative qualities in the coming generation, the flame of humanity itself may yet be extinguished along with its illnesses, conflicts, and rebellions. Just as we use tranquilizers to deaden our emotions, we use stimulants to create a semblance of spiritual animation. Actually, however, living to the full is experience of grief and joy, is courage to live, and willingness to die. It would be a victory of death should we succeed in prolonging the processes of human vegetation beyond the scope of useful existence.

All this is not said as a criticism of modern medicine itself; nor as a warning against the use of drugs, but merely as an attempt to evaluate the price we must pay for the benefits which they bring. Only when we learn to know what this price actually is, can we pay it without impoverishing our inner life, and our scholars themselves are in worst need of such

knowledge, for a man entrusted with the tremendous power and responsibility of science requires more than intellect to bring true blessings to the world.

On first taking up *Man: the Bridge between Two Worlds*, we were afraid for a time that Dr. Winkler might be getting around to saying that both the physician and the patient need "God." But while this confusing term occurs occasionally in broad references to transcendental realities, it is apparent that Winkler finds the "godlike" within the creative potentialities of the individual man. As a reader of Eastern philosophy and religion, and as a student of the ancient Greeks, Winkler quite naturally rejects any conception of deity which allows petitionary prayer. His point of view on such subjects in some ways resembles that of Erich Fromm in *Psychoanalysis and Religion*.

*Man: the Bridge* clearly involves rejection of "materialism," whether classical or merely personal, but this is balanced by a sympathy for the ways and means of thought which lead so many practicing physicians and scientists away from anthropomorphic religion. Today, Winkler feels, the anomalies of the conventional opposition between science and religion call for a new synthesis:

Owing to the growing knowledge of biological and chemical influences on human psychology, spiritual concepts of the human psyche are now considered unscientific. Nineteenth-century science has contributed to this dangerous development, since many of the then leading scientists were actually convinced that increased knowledge of natural laws would lead to an ever more comprehensive intellectual world picture which in turn could be the foundation of a paradise of peace and happiness on earth. At that time matter still appeared a safe and solid ground on which to base an understanding of all that exists in the world and of man himself. Fortunately, the farther science pushed the borderlines of knowledge, the thinner grew the foundations of a materialistic world picture.

For a conclusion, we quote from a thoughtful review of *Man: the Bridge between Two Worlds* which appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune* (March 27):

Dr. Winkler argues movingly and persuasively that what we need to recognize everywhere is this old triple: the physical, the spiritual and the uniting self; and in so doing, he has written what is conceivably one of the truly meaningful humanistic documents of our day. . . .

Words in our time are mostly geared to the "lower" world which the majority of men have preferred to lock themselves into—the world of sensual things and intellectual ideas, the world of the mathematically or logically demonstrable. But the world to which Dr. Winkler seeks to reopen our consciousness is the world of genuine moral imagination.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **EDITORIAL NOTES**

DOZENS of attractive Christmas cards came in to the MANAS office last year. The one we liked the most had this inscription:

If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

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During the last few days of 1960, the members of the San Francisco-to-Moscow Walk for Peace came through Southern California. They explain the peace walk project in these words:

We are walking to stimulate people all over the world to think about the problem of international peace. We believe that the present policies of most governments, including the United States and the Soviet Union, are greatly endangering the existence of our families, our country, even the human race. The most dangerous and horrifying result of these policies is the arms race. It must be stopped!

Full information about the Walk may be obtained by addressing an inquiry to its sponsor, the Committee for Nonviolent Action, 158 Grand Street, New York 13, N.Y. Money, of course, is needed to support this project. The permanent Team of Peace Walkers is made up of persons committed to nonviolent methods and, if necessary, civil disobedience, in behalf of the objectives of the Walk. The Team members, two of them women, visited the MANAS offices on the evening of Dec. 22, and talked to a small group of interested persons. Statements by the Walkers were characterized by clarity of purpose, intense convictions, and a sober recognition of the obstacles which stand in the way of world peace. They ask all people everywhere to withdraw as much as they can from contributing to the world-wide preparations for war. C. Wright Mills, Columbia sociologist, provides a text for this position:

If you do not do it, you at least are not responsible for its being done. If you refuse to do so

out loud, others may quietly refrain from doing it, and those who still do it may then do it only with hesitation and guilt. . . . To refuse to do it is an act of a man who rejects "fate," for it reveals the resolution of one human being to take at least his own fate into his own hands.

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Lowell Naeve's book of drawings, *The Phantasies of a Prisoner*, issued in a hardback edition (\$5) by Alan Swallow (Denver) in 1958, is now available as a \$2.50 paperback. This is a large book—7 1/2" x 11"—with seventy-one drawings which record Naeve's feelings while in a federal prison as a conscientious objector to war, and a brief text which illumines the thought of the drawings. Naeve calls his work a "visual novel." Anyone who buys this book is likely to have a treasured possession.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

### "THE SECRET PLACES OF EDUCATION"

There's a place that I know  
A secret place  
That no body knows of  
But me that knows of it.  
I go there when I'am lonely.  
And when I'am sad  
It makes me happy,  
And glad that I'm alive.

THIS verse, laboriously inscribed by a little English girl, is the text of an article, "The Secret Places of Education," by David Holbrook in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (Nov. 17, 1960). Mr. Holbrook is convinced that by failing to encourage spontaneous writing today's teacher of young children neglects an opportunity to appreciate the "secret places" in a child's mind. This writer says:

The feeling which chiefly overcomes me when I am teaching children to write is one of awe. It may not be very evident when I am dealing with the scramble of leaking pens and squeaking tables, or the writhing of a boy from a difficult home round the impossibility of beginning any kind of work at all. But it is there at the beginning of each session, and it returns when I look through the books after they have been gathered from the rambling lines of desks. Surprisingly, even in this atmosphere one may touch the secret places of life.

When I read children's stories and poems I know that I could only understand much of what they are getting at after a long "training" in psycho-analysis. Obviously, for the teachers we require in such numbers and in the circumstances of the normal professional life, such preparation is impossible. How, then, can one improve one's imperfect understanding of the process in which they are engaged; this process which seems to me at the centre of education—the imaginative ordering of the flux of human experience in words? Only, I think, by the experience of poetry and other literature oneself, and by experiencing the creative process.

Yet how many courses will you find for teachers in literature—or in creative writing or in free drama? How many, even, in English? How many training colleges or departments of education "find time" to do anything more than a little "practical English," or at

most work of the "culture and environment" kind or "social studies"? And in my own experience, teachers are not on the whole the most sensitive students of poetry, in adult classes, or courses at institutes of education. Yet there will be dozens of courses in psychology and "education" to one in English—hardly any in poetry itself. Method, precept, theories of practice, knowledge of facts about children—everything is provided for but those qualities of delicacy of response and awe which one daily requires in working with children.

A story on the education page of the *Los Angeles Times* (Oct. 31, 1960) deals with the inadequacies of the IQ as a means of gauging the mind potential of the child. A Whittier College professor, Dr. Albert Upton, has proved that the IQ, far from being stationary, can be "moved" by as much as a 32-point improvement. Dr. Upton proceeded on the assumption that each child has "dormant analytical powers" which can be evoked by the perceptive teacher. Well, we don't doubt that a bit, but behind the analytical powers in both pupil and teacher lies the imaginative domain to which Mr. Holbrook refers.

The teacher needs, for one thing, to increase his appreciation of literature and share some of his enthusiasms with the children. Mr. Holbrook concludes:

To encourage such developments requires a training that teachers, if they are ever given it in their crammed courses, have little chance of refreshment in, except what they seek out themselves, as many do, of course. But the need is perhaps not even "officially" understood.

Recently, in the lists of an educational establishment devoted to the training of teachers, I noticed that there was only one course in English. It was devoted to a discussion of how to get children to write like C. S. Lewis. But would the same institution welcome the suggestion, I wonder, that teachers might instead of taking courses in experimental psychology, or method, spend some weekends at courses studying "Women in Love," or the novels of E. M. Forster, or the poetry of Edward Thomas, or Eliot, or Hardy—so they may themselves understand the creative process, and the nature of the modern sensibility, before leading their pupils into those secret places?

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The following on "Sex education in adolescence" appears in a volume recommended by a subscriber who is much impressed by the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. This book, titled *The Recovery of Man in Childhood*, is in large part an exploration of essential themes found in the works of the founder of Anthroposophy, but the points made seem to stand entirely on their own merit. Mr. A. C. Harwood, the author, writes:

Most modern children are aware of the nature of birth, if not of conception, before the twelfth year. The special opportunity of the school—in this as in much else—is to give the right setting and tone to the knowledge the children may have acquired. The danger in modern frankness over questions of birth and sex is that with the information the children insensibly imbibe materialism. The child asks: "Where did I come from?" The parent answers: "Out of your mother's body," and never realises that he has equated "body" and "I"—an equation which the Buddha, Socrates, Boethius, Aquinas (and a good many other wise men) were at some pains to deny. To those who believe in the incarnation of the immortal spirit the old fairy-tale of the stork bringing the baby from the skies has more truth in it than the bald "factual" answers which children are given today. To make physical birth or physical conception, however much it may be characterised as "the way in which God works," the origin of the individual ego is the same as to make the physical earth the origin of all consciousness. When Natural Science can answer the question of the origin of consciousness in general, it may also be in a position to explain the origin of the individual conscious ego. At present it cannot pretend to answer the child's question: Where do I come from? It can only describe certain processes necessary to the child's bodily arrival on the earth.

The adolescent is ripe for the discussion of such questions of the origin of life, consciousness and the self-conscious ego they release the question of sex from its purely physical associations and can be raised quite objectively in the study of History, Literature, Zoology or what you will. But he will probably prove indifferent to the great issues involved if he has been conditioned as a younger child by purely materialistic explanations of what are in reality spiritual events.

The whole question of materialism needs investigation from a philosophical point of view. Often, as in the eighteenth century, the technical materialists are the devotees of human freedom,

and for this reason protagonists of a spiritual outlook. Similarly, popular conceptions of "morals" may reflect little more than the religious materialism of an age, having the effect of inverting ideas of both good and evil.

## *FRONTIERS*

### **Medical Ethics: Shield or Cloak?**

SOME day a hair-raising book is going to be written about the plight of the modern physician. If it should happen to be done by a genius, that book may very well tell us more about the soul of twentieth-century American man than any other study our time is likely to produce. Who else is trusted with so much power over our lives? From whom do we expect both mercy and wisdom? The doctor's ethics and dedication, we are taught, are above those of any other profession. He has lengthened our life, decreased infant mortality to a statistical fragment, saved myriads with the knife, whole races with the test tube, and is enabling the mentally ill to step out of darkness into the light of reality.

Each man who bears the title of physician, however unworthily, is swathed in the raiment of the great healers, much that they have discovered is at his fingertips. As we go to him in illness, or dire medical emergency, it is almost unthinkable that we should discuss such things as fees with him or question his judgment as to laboratory charges, hospital costs, or the price of the drugs he prescribes. We're helpless, we reason, if we are having our first experience with severe illness, and surely no truly ethical man is going to gouge us.

And then reality enters stealthily on neatly embossed stationery. A surgical procedure lasting two hours costs us more than two months' pay for the surgeon's fee alone, while our physician, acting as an assistant, gets another month of our pay. The anæsthetist settles for a little less than a month's income, but the operating room, recovery room, medications, and a week's stay in the hospital can cost the patient a sum that with the doctor's bills may come to a half or two-thirds of a year's earnings. Even with the best medical and hospital insurance, you will be lucky to get away with fees that cost you less than two months of your income. A sizeable number of doctors feel that since the part of your fee that is

paid by insurance isn't costing you anything, you should also be billed according to your ability to pay. Your physical recovery will probably be good and without complications, for American physicians are the finest technicians on earth. Your economic recovery, however, may be long and painful and may even threaten the health you paid for so dearly. You may still be resistant to socialized medicine, but the chances are that flaws will develop in the all-out trust you gave your physician and that you'll be wondering why the hospital your contributions helped to build now charges you \$25 a day for poor food and uninspired service by people who will tell you, quite honestly, that they are overworked and underpaid.

At about this point in any article about the high cost of medical service the writer is supposed to suggest that only an unscrupulous minority is responsible for high fees and for adding a "charge for service," when the fee has already been paid by insurance, and that the majority of physicians are ethical, and many of them selfless. Although I have personally been extremely fortunate with physicians, having had some truly great ones as friends, the only conclusion I can reach after much reading and personal observation is that ethical and selfless physicians are rapidly becoming a minority group.

Even a cursory study of doctors in any given community will offer a variety of indications that economic status has generally seemed more important to them than ethical or clinical status. I'm not suggesting that physicians shouldn't prosper, live in expensive homes or drive fine cars, but I am saying that there ought to be a point beyond which those who have captive and helpless customers shouldn't go, however much pecuniary prestige is desired. If a doctor is supposed to have any special quality, it is that of being a mature human being. The sort of "status" he seeks is the best measuring rod of that maturity.

Recently I met with five doctors who were interested in seeing to it that their colleagues got help in writing medical papers in which they could report on significant clinical experiences that might be of use to other physicians and could possibly save lives. "Not over one doctor in a thousand will take the trouble to do the writing," one physician said. In an aside, addressed to no one in particular, another said, "But seven-hundred and fifty out of the thousand will drive Cadillacs." This little gambit is one of the most telling commentaries I have heard on the plight of Medicine today.

Medical *mores* have changed and the physician, as the man that we have been taught that he is, and expect him to be, is becoming more and more of a myth. The fact that there is almost no such thing as bad medical training in America today gives enough substance to the myth to keep Medicine from becoming exposed as the outright and unabashed commercial transaction that it is rapidly becoming, and with the advantage of denying the customer bargaining rights.

*It's Cheaper To Die*, published by George Braziller, and written by a skilled and experienced medical writer, William Michelfelder, is a thorough study of how the commercial wing of medicine goes about bleeding the patient of his money in a way that would have put the barber-surgeons of old to shame. After reading it I felt that larceny had at last found a mystique.

It seems certain that Mr. Michelfelder didn't intend to write a sensational book and, where he can, he tries to make it clear that the average physician isn't the transgressor. Perhaps he isn't, but to remain pure he has had to eschew such common practices as taking kick-backs, or gifts, from drug stores and surgical supply houses; having intern and resident physicians in training treat you for nothing while he charges his fee; making use of a ghost surgeon or split tiny fees with other specialists; using substandard laboratories because he has a special arrangement

with them, and on and on. In a time when a doctor in general practice averages less than ten minutes per patient for a fee that will be, at a minimum, five dollars, he doesn't have to resort to shady practices to wax prosperous. What with modern diagnostic techniques and antibiotics, he may be giving you a pretty fair shake.

Where the doctor most often fails the patient is in his refusal to take a stand against his local medical society or the AMA—one and the same thing, when, acting as his agent they lobby against decent medical care for the aged and indigent; protect chemical cartels that have driven drug costs up 600 per cent since 1947, and generally block any law that questions their omnipotence and tends to protect the patient. When an enlightened officer of a progressive medical group, Dr. Paul R. Hawley, director of the American College of Surgeons, began an effective fight on fee-splitting, and got the doctors of his organization to open their books to auditors from the College of Surgeons, who should oppose him but the AMA? Quite obviously, the ethical physician has to fight the official keeper of his ethics if he is to remain ethical. Dr. Hawley went directly to the public to fight for the rights of the patient, but Dr. Hawley is an exceptional physician.

*It's Cheaper To Die* has much to say uncomplimentary to the AMA (American Medical Association). Where unions, or aroused public groups open their own hospitals, or organize comprehensive prepaid medical plans, they can be sure that the AMA will fight them to the last ditch, and by methods that in any other industry would be "in restraint of trade." Though the AMA decries organized labor in any form, it routinely resorts to practices that would at once bring a labor union into the docket. The verbal incantation, "We're ethical, you're not," gives the AMA immunity to all the controls that apply to big business and organized labor, yet Medicine is a \$16 billion a year business exploiting our greatest natural resource—human life—as a monopoly under the AMA. In the pretense of protecting you against impure drugs and

nostrums, it also has the power to suppress the medical use of drugs that might prevent suffering or cure diseases that are now incurable. The federal government also has that power, but the AMA has chosen to put itself between the government and the physician. The drugs he can use on you must be approved, and advertised in his "Journal."

The power of the AMA is fantastic and all the more so when you realize that this power was created by and continues because one group of men lays claim to an unchallengeable ethical standard that is supposed to protect us even when we cannot understand it. Actually, the hierarchy of the AMA is not made up of practicing physicians, but rather of men who have retired from practice to enter medical politics. Men who love the practice of medicine, and are dedicated to it as an art and science, are too busy to hold office or even attend conventions. They have the least to do with organized medicine yet they are the men who by their acts give it stature. Along with the great innovators who appear in each generation, they lend stature to the officeholders and the rapidly growing number of practitioners who exploit human suffering by placing material prestige above that which is given naturally to any member of their profession.

At the beginning of this article, I said that the greatest story of our time might well be that of a physician. No other man has so many moral and ethical decisions to make or such a confused hour in history in which to make them. As his science grows, so does his responsibility. Even during his school days he will have to grow vigilantly aware of the subtle forces that may erode the human qualities that made him want to be a physician. In the poverty of his early years, material things are likely to take on an undue importance. To compete successfully, he may have to consider compromises. As a man who should understand human self-justification better than any other, he may find himself horrified at his own skill in rationalization. Matters of life and death will become at the same time matters of dollars and cents. He will understand the

psychopathology of society and at the same time be a part of it. In his true moments of greatness he will have no audience. Only if he is very lucky will he have another understanding physician to turn to in the very great loneliness he is bound to feel. Two varieties of ethics will be offered him: one he can hide behind in moments of crisis and be publicly protected; another that will sustain him during painful ordeals and meet the requirements of his conscience. His is a lonely battle, but it may be among the most important battles of our time. In him, the moral and ethical structure of our age can be tested by man. If the majority of the physicians of our age become materialistic opportunists, there isn't much hope for the rest of us. When he who dreamed of becoming a healer becomes a dealer, I think we can safely say that the dealers are in charge.

There are today enough really great physicians to justify hope for the profession and for a humanity that can make men reach the heights. At the same time I, personally, do not want my death profaned by the presence of some of the men who appeared in the all too aptly titled, *It's Cheaper To Die*. This book is more than an expose on a rather circumstantial level; it records the ugly symptoms of what one would like to believe is not a general moral malignancy. It is not a great book, but it may be a hint that a great book is on the way.

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