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THE QUEST FOR A "NATURAL" LIFE

IF you look at the surface of historical events, it is easy enough to characterize the present. You will say that it is the time of the Cold War between Communism and Democracy. Or, if you are skeptical of contemporary labels, you might say that two rival systems of the management of men and property are struggling with each other for control of the world. But whether this account of what is now happening all around us will survive the perspective of even so short an interval as another century, is an open question. It seems entirely possible, for example, that a hundred years from now people will look back on our time as the period of crisis in the sense of human identity.

It may be that something more than the historical situation is involved in this crisis. Some emergent quality of awareness may be at work in human beings, pressing questions that men used to take for granted. In any event, the dying out of old eschatological beliefs, coupled with the external compulsions of a technological society, have produced a psychological vacuum in the region once occupied by traditional ideas of the self. So long as people are intensively engaged in the satisfaction of needs or in the pursuit of conditions which are held to be practical or moral necessities, the question of man's identity as a philosophic issue does not arise with any urgency. Such problems are commonly left to mystics and metaphysicians—individuals who, for reasons by no means clear, have always concerned themselves with issues that have seemed unreal to the great majority. But today, by a concatenation of causes, the philosophic question of identity seems to be slowly turning into a popular question. You could say that the familiar forms of engagement have been losing their attractiveness or their pertinence for something like a generation, and that the need of the individual to relate himself to his environment with a sense of fulfillment is becoming increasingly difficult to satisfy.

There is the further consideration that the cultural environment provided by our acquisitive, technological society is an indifferent host to a whole range of human impulses and searching intuitions which well up in the human being. The rationalized capitalist society, like the rationalized socialist society, is a coarse-grained affair. Both these modern social orders, under the pressure of the cold war, make exorbitant demands upon the individual, recognizing in him, not what makes him different from all other men, but only what makes him the same. This is a dehumanizing process. It is as though loudspeakers everywhere were shouting, "You are a nothing, only part of a process; your identity depends upon your having no real identity, since the process would stop working if you should develop any unique or unpredictable qualities."

This condition is of course only *relatively* established, but it does represent the most notable tendency of the technological society and its rules for well-being and survival, so that it becomes the condition to which the essential individuality of human beings responds with rejection and alienation.

The interesting thing about the present is the fact that today, when high longings, delicate imaginings, and driving feelings of purpose beyond any socio-economic end rise in our consciousness from the depths of the *psyche,* there is no one ready with handy labels to tell us what these things mean. So far as the truest expressions of identity are concerned, we are really and at last on our own. Ancient religious and philosophical traditions may be suggestive to us, but they are no longer an enclosing matrix of

belief. They may suggest, but they have no *authority*. There is a sense in which we are now obliged to read the meaning of our own feelings without outside help or interpretation. This means that, increasingly, the responsibility for holding ourselves together falls upon ourselves instead of upon the community. In practical terms, it amounts to a transfer of the sources of identity from the group to the individual. How much of his own identity can an individual bear? To be yourself seems a capacity which varies from one individual to another. Some youngsters need an overt sense of "belonging" more than others. Signs and symbols of the class of one's being are a necessity to some college students, while others do very well without fraternity pins or any special costume on the campus. The adolescent's longing to be "loved" is a hunger for secure identity. Many adults, of course, have the same sort of dependency on external symbols of being, but the functioning of the marks of their identity achieves a kind of invisibility through conventional acceptance. It is when the shallowness of these devices becomes noticeable that the crisis in the sense of human identity begins to be widely felt.

It would be easy enough to put together a lot of evidence of alienation of people from conventional roles in the present society. The books and articles on the Beat Generation constitute only one segment of reaction against the morally devitalized and æsthetically barren culture our machine-tending civilization has produced. Less sensational paths of disaffiliation are being pursued by many others, and in many other ways. There is greater interest, however, in considering the fact that a certain proportion—a very small proportion, unfortunately—of the population is made up of individuals who have never seemed to have had much difficulty with the question of identity, nor to be especially bound by the conventional ideas of their time. These are people—how shall we describe them?—who obtain their feeling of wholeness from within themselves. Perhaps they are born with a strong sense of mission; at any rate, they seem to know what they want to do with their lives, and circumstances seldom get in their way. What are vagrant intuitions or temporary enthusiasms for other men, for them are dynamos of purpose. Very little has been written about such human beings. They are not "typical" people and don't interest the statistical sociologists. There is no way to explain them in terms of norms and averages. If you try to explain them, you might find yourself coming up with a book like R. M. Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness,* or Ralph Waldo Trine's *In Tune-with the Infinite*—practically a fate worse than death for the academic psychologist or any practitioner of what are known as the "behavioral sciences." Even though Bucke's book had a lot to do with getting William James started on his *Varieties of Religious Experience,* we have a long way to go before Bucke's sort of metaphysical psychology will gain a serious hearing. A corner has been turned, however, with the studies of what A. H. Maslow calls "self-actualizing" people, and the related work of those who are becoming known as the "self" psychologists. Essentially, the significance of such psychological research might be said to represent the discovery that the most constructive, original, courageous, and independent human beings are people who get their idea of the self from themselves. This view of the potentialities of human beings is the foundation for a new kind of Humanism and is also a broadly emancipating break-away for modern psychology from the bonds of mechanistic scientific theory.

What is at issue here is the validity of the entire catalogue of human aspirations and longings—the element of the visionary and godlike in the subjective life of man. The question is whether it is right to dispose of these threads of noëtic casting by indiscriminately labelling them "wish-fulfillment" fantasies. The very terms habitually used to denigrate the subtleties of the subjective life come close to being an insult to the dignity of man. What is in the immature individual an uncarried-out resolve is in the rare man a fount of stubborn determination. When Gladstone,

upon being shown Faraday's first model of an electric generator, asked, "What good it it?", Faraday replied, "What good is a new-born baby?" So it is with the visions and ideals of self which fall at the feet of most of mankind, for lack of development.

But however optimistically we estimate the potentialities of human beings, there are two great facts about our present situation which must be faced.

The first is the fact of our uncertainty about ourselves. After we acknowledge that a kind of holy intensity of purpose absorbs and directs the energies of the very great, as though they were beloved of the gods, the rest of us, while we strain after truth, are very unsure of ourselves. A native but quite natural question is often asked: "But is this situation *fair?"* The question of what is "fair" involves us in a very ancient argument with the universe. Emmanuel Kant made a side-comment on this argument when he said: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder and awe—the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

The question, "Is the Human Situation fair?", is a theological question. The problem of theology is to " justify the ways of God to man." Kant was a philosopher and would not attempt a theological solution, but was willing to call attention to the external display of universal order and to insist upon the reality of the internal *sense* of order in human beings. Kant, you could say, was reconciled to being left alone with his feeling of the moral law. To want a better authority than this feeling is to demand an outside Revelation to settle the matter, and our experience with outside revelations has not been good.

What can we say about our "uncertainty" that might be reassuring? The only thing that we can think of to say is that, if we *had* the certainty we long for, we should have nothing important left to do. On this view, the transformation of our uncertainty into the kind of limited certainties which are possible for human beings is the true project of our lives.

All that we are after, here, is a successful effort to avoid the conclusion that being "uncertain" is somehow unnatural for man, a sign of "sin," or evidence of a hopeless situation for human beings. We are after the stipulation that our uncertainties are the natural raw materials of a creative human life. This stipulation seems quite necessary, if we are to get rid of such debilitating emotions as resentment, self-pity, and the fond expectation that, eventually, some Cosmic Friend will step out from behind the clouds and explain All to us.

The second great fact about our present situation is the ugliness and desperately negative quality of much of the man-made environment. How are we to think about this?

People who have become very much aware of these depressing circumstances often succumb to the temptation to blame them on a large, abstract "they"—the ones who are responsible for the "rigged society," for war and the plans for war, for the saccharine intonations of radio and television commercials and the vulgar intrusiveness of the hard sell. This reaction is not inaccurate; the "they" are real, and it is easy enough to see them perform. What is hard to remember is that this is an almost completely futile reaction. It does nothing for anybody, least of all for oneself. If you start to move around in the society of the Philistines—and who can avoid it?—you begin to see that these people are also victims. They *think* they are enjoying themselves and living the good life; they are acting out an idea of the self and are miserable without knowing why. They haven't even the consolation of honest pain. They are captives of a doomed and paling image; they feel the sucking invitation of the quagmire of history but fear to let go of their illusions. And so, while trying to fill our minds with a reluctant sympathy, we are again haunted by questions of "fairness" and the need to equate

the human situation with some schedule of being that has a place in the order of nature.

What, then, is "natural," for man? This is the philosophical jack-pot question—the question which has led to more lies and theological and ideological inventions than any other problem the human race has set for itself to solve. A kind of climax of alienation was reached in the twentieth century by the Existentialists, who say that *nothing* about man is natural, that he is absurd. This is cutting the Gordian knot with a vengeance. But such iconoclasm was perhaps necessary before there could be new conceptions of both nature and man.

At issue, here, is the problem of evil. And we are obliged to say that the problem of evil has the same solution as the problem of the self. If we are to understand it, we shall have to find the explanation within ourselves. An externalized account of evil is as misleading as an institutional source of the idea of self. Just as man's uncertainties are the raw material of his intellectual life, so are the evils of his time the raw materials of his moral life. It doesn't really matter who the "they" is made up of, in particular. The therapist who undertakes to work with a group of disturbed and hostile children wastes no emotional energy writing editorials about how they menace the peace and propriety of the "normal" community. He gives all his strength to trying to get through to them with the solvent of his human understanding. The point is, if you could design a world where beings such as we call *human* beings might work out their destiny, are you sure that you would really change anything? Anything essential, that is?

This is not to repeat any pieties about ours being the best of all possible worlds, but to raise serious questions about the Good people and the Bad people and about all habitual thinking in terms of "we" and "they." Whom, among men, after all, would you feel competent to redesign? Do you really want to tinker with anyone except yourself? If you could actually change another man, you would only carry him on your back like a piece of excess baggage. He would have become a part of yourself, and you the invader and dissolver of his being, since you, not he, made him what he is. So we shall not even think of redesigning other men, and we shall be careful of what we do to nature, which is also alive.

The physical world has many bare and rocky places. There are parched and desolate lands and cold lonely hells on earth. But there is life that is at home in all these places. The metabolism of existence continues everywhere, in tropical swamps as in tundra tablelands. At another level of nature—the level of consciousness—all these dimensions of good and evil appear in human beings. We may be far from understanding, and certainly far from justifying, all the constructions flowing from man's consciousness, but we have no sanction for selecting those we feel we can do without and calling them "unnatural." They all came about as fruits of the process of life and consciousness, and if some are to be changed, it will be by the same means. Denunciation means nothing to Nature.

You could even say that the brassy face of technological society is an unknowing collaborator with the individual who is seeking a new understanding of himself, by strengthening his will to dissociate from the dominant cultural institutions. This sort of world, he says, has nothing to do with me, and he learns to be in it, but not of it. It is not necessary, he says to himself and his friends, to do everything as it has been done before. We must do things which have meanings we understand, meanings we can *feel*. So you notice the gathering strength of revolutions in the arts and in literature. A man with a new and more immediate idea of the self soon begins to pay attention to the way in which the self acts. He studies what it sees and how it sees. This results in new art forms and experiments in literature. Often we feel the shock of death in these forms. The death, however, is not in the artist, but in the institutions that are no

longer alive for him. One thing, perhaps, that the artist has discovered, or intuited, is that the subjective side of perception plays a far more decisive part in what we hold to be "real" than men had previously supposed. Feeling this, the artist turns with greater deliberateness to the subjective aspect of his experience. What I see, he declares, is far more real than a photographic image of what is physically there. That image is only the shadow of a thing, whereas my perception is an awareness in consciousness, and human beings live and move in consciousness. I shall represent, therefore, what a thing appears to be in consciousness.

Man, we have learned, is not a thing. And even the things man sees, it follows, are more than "things." They have dynamic relationships with human consciousness. There is a sense in which the spirit of modern art represents a revival of animism. It sees no "dead" things anywhere. The realities of life have a new organic unity in existential perception. Man, once again, is at the center and is the measure. As yet, you may say, the work of many modern artists remains incoherent, unsatisfying. This may be so. Perhaps the warmth of a universal sympathy is lacking in much of this work. Perhaps there is too much preoccupation with the new tools and the avenues of vision, and not enough of a sense of wholeness in what is seen. Perhaps these artists are not ready to make declarations about wholeness. Yet who, in the modern world, is ready to do this?

What if you don't like the world our forefathers have made? A man can still treat it like a dusty road. In any event, he has to walk on it for a while. People looking for oases in the desert often have to tramp many miles across burning sands. You can always treat the mess that is around us as a special case of the "natural situation." You may feel nothing but contempt for the soap operas, but you don't have to listen to them and the silly stuff will still get your clothes clean in the washer.

One of the basic secrets of the new awareness—if it is really a new awareness—is that it is a serious mistake to feel let down by the universe because people are the way they are and have done the things they've done. Most of the trouble with people and what they've done comes from collectivist delusions—delusions about what human beings are and what is good for them to do. If people are ever going to find out what is really good to do, it will have to be from individuals who have already started doing what they *personally* see is good to do.

The myth of the millennium—of the returning savior—dies hard. Perhaps it shouldn't die at all, but be understood in new terms, the terms of a quickened perception of the self and the capacities of human beings to live good lives which are their own lives. If there is any kind of salvation available to human beings, it will eventually have to be worked out in this way, with or without the help of a divine advent.

But the chief thing, these days, is to accept the uncertainty without feeling lost or put upon. It is this uncertainty which is *natural* to man, and the false certainties we could not possibly know for ourselves which have caused all the trouble. The art of life is the eternal experiment, the tentative and searching combination of what we know with statements of what we dream, hope, or only suspect.

REVIEW
BEYOND THEOLOGY

FOR many years, and undoubtedly like many of our readers, we have encountered somewhat esoteric references to Nikos Kazantzakis, Greek philosopher, poet and novelist. In 1960 Simon and Schuster put into print an English translation of Kazantzakis' credo, called *The Saviors of God,* first published in Greek in the Athenean periodical *Renaissance* in 1927, This is a unique work and stands as a key to Kazantzakis' novels, one of which led Albert Schweitzer to nominate Kazantzakis for the Nobel prize in literature.

The title, *The Saviors of God,* means precisely what it says—for in Kazantzakis' thinking it is man who "saves" God, not the reverse. Take for example these verses:

> Even in the most meaningless particle of earth and sky I hear God crying out: "Help me!"
>
> With the light of the brain, with the flame of the heart, I besiege every cell where God is jailed, seeking, trying, hammering to open a gate in the fortress of matter, to create a gap through which God may issue in heroic attack.
>
> We do not only free God by battling and subduing the visible world about us; we also create God.

The "Saviors of God," whom Kazantzakis also calls "bodyguards of the Odyssey," include such diversified figures as Buddha and Shakespeare, Christ and Lenin, Leonardo da Vinci and Nietzsche. These are men who help, in other words, to discover the "beyondness" or "transcendence" of which the human being is capable. Kimon Friar, translator of *The Saviors of God,* summarizes this aspect of Kazantzakis' religion, saying that the author's study of transcendent men "helped him conclude that God is not a teleology, not an entelechy, not a predetermined Father, Son, or Holy Ghost who aids in the salvation of his soul; and that Man himself is only one manifestation in the long, evolutionary, upward progress of mysterious and vital forces—perhaps the finest yet evolved in the history of earth, the most capable of spiritual refinement, yet certainly not the last or the best possible; and that it is Man in his struggle with the material elements of his nature who might be the Savior of God and bring Him to more and more spiritual essence." Mr. Friar continues:

> No religious dogma, no political ideology may claim Nikos Kazantzakis. His works will always be a heresy to any political or religious faith which exists today or which may be formulated in the future, for in the heart of his *Spiritual Exercises* lies a bomb timed to explode all visions which are betrayed into the petrifaction of ritual, constitution, or dogma. His works are not solid land where a pilgrim might stake his claim, but the ephemeral stopping stations of a moment where the traveler might catch his breath before he abandons them also, and again strives upward on the steep ascent, leaving behind him the bloody trail of his endeavor. The fate of all heresies is to solidify, in the petrifaction of time, into stable and comforting orthodoxies. It would be the deepest happiness of Nikos Kazantzakis to know that those whom his works have helped to mount a step higher in the evolutionary growth of the spirit have smashed the Tablets of his Law, denied him, betrayed him, and struggled to surpass him, to mount higher on their own naked wings.

Kazantzakis' Prologue is striking in its blend of poetry and transcendental feeling:

> We came from a dark abyss, we end in a dark abyss, and we call the luminous interval life. As soon as we are born the return begins, at once the setting forth and the coming back; we die in every moment. Because of this many have cried out: The goal of life is death! But as soon as we are born we begin the struggle to create, to compose, to turn matter into life; we are born in every moment. Because of this many have cried out: The goal of ephemeral life is immortality! In the temporary living organism these two streams collide: (*a*) the ascent toward decomposition, toward matter, toward death. Both streams well up from the depths of primordial essence. Life startles us at first; it seems somewhat beyond the law, somewhat contrary to nature, somewhat like a transitory counteraction to the dark eternal fountains, but deeper down we feel that Life is itself without beginning, an indestructible force of the Universe. Otherwise, from where did that superhuman strength come which hurls us from the unborn to the born and gives us—plants, animals, men—courage for the struggle? But both opposing

forces are holy. It is our duty, therefore, to grasp that vision which can embrace and harmonize these two enormous, timeless, and indestructible forces, and with this vision to modulate our thinking and our action.

In this respect like Walt Whitman, Kazantzakis seems to be *sui generis* as a writer. The reader is often reminded of Whitman, since Kazantzakis moves easily from the earthy and blunt to metaphysical subtleties. For these reasons and others which will be apparent to readers of *The Saviors of God,* Kazantzakis is one of the very few who can speak of "God" without committing philosophical treason. Though his approach is that of a mystic, all that Kazantzakis says fits beautifully in the context developed by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and *Masks of God.* The concluding paragraph of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* serves as both commentary on and explanation of themes found in *The Saviors of God.* Campbell writes:

> The modern hero, the modern individual who dares to heed the call and seek the mansion of that presence with whom it is our whole destiny to be atoned, cannot, indeed must not, wait for his community to cast off its slough of pride, fear, rationalized avarice, and sanctified misunderstanding. "Live," Nietzsche says, "as though the day were here." It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal—carries the cross of the redeemer—not in the bright moments of his tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair.

A final quotation from Nikos Kazantzakis, which appears under the title, "The Vision":

> You heard the Cry and set forth. From battle to battle you passed through all the war service of militant man.
>
> You fought within the small tent of your body, but behold, the battle arena seemed too narrow; you felt stifled and rushed out to escape.
>
> You pitched your camp on your race, you brimmed with hands and hearts as with your blood you first revived the dead ancestors and then set forth with the dead, the living, and the unborn to give battle.
>
> Suddenly all races moved with you, the holy army of man was arranged for battle behind you, and all earth resounded like a military encampment.
>
> You climbed to a high peak from which the plan of battle branched out amid the coils of your brain, and all opposing expeditions united in the secret encampment of your heart.
>
> Behind you the plants and animals were organized like supply troops for the front-line battling armies of man.
>
> Now entire Earth clings to you, becomes flesh of your flesh, and cries out of chaos.

COMMENTARY
DR. REYNOLDS "NOT GUILTY"

MANY MANAS readers will be pleased to know—if they have not already learned it from another source—that Dr. Earle Reynolds, American anthropologist, has been freed of the charge of violating the Atomic Energy Commission regulation which prohibited entry into the Eniwetok region of the Pacific ocean during a cycle of nuclear bomb tests in 1958. On Dec. 29, 1960, the San Francisco Court of Appeals unanimously ruled that the regulation did not have the force of law, thus reversing Dr. Reynolds' conviction by a lower court in Honolulu.

The Appeals Court noted that Dr. Reynolds might be considered to have "trespassed" on the grounds being used by the Commission—a statement which may open the way to another prosecution. However, this part of the decision has been interpreted as follows:

> It means *only* that if the AEC again moves to prosecute Dr. Reynolds, the action will have to proceed under the "trespass" provisions of the AEC regulations. It does *not* mean that he has been found guilty of trespass. "Trespass," further, is a misdemeanor, not a felony, charge.

Dr. Reynolds observes: "Personally, we feel it would be impossible for the AEC to prove, in any competent court, that sailing a yacht upon the high seas constitutes a trespass against AEC facilities!"

Not only are Earle Reynolds and the *Phoenix* crew vindicated by the decision of the San Francisco court, but the five men of the *Golden Rule*, similarly convicted in Honolulu, are now shown to have served six months in jail after a conviction based on this illegal regulation.

Along with an announcement of these developments, Dr. Reynolds and his family have sent out to friends and supporters a "membership card" certifying the recipient's presence "in spirit" on the voyage of the *Phoenix* into the Eniwetok testing zone in July, 1958. There is also a reprint of an article by Brooks Atkinson (from the New York *Times of* Jan. 10) which tells the story of the whole adventure.

It began early in 1958 when Dr. Reynolds, his wife Barbara, son Ted and daughter Jessica, and Nick Mikami, of Hiroshima, sailed into port at Honolulu, enroute to Hiroshima, after a round-the-world voyage in their fifty-foot ketch. There they found the captain and the crew of the *Golden Rule* standing trial for attempting to sail into the testing area. As Mr. Atkinson tells it:

> Dr. Reynolds had never been in a courtroom before. But the trial of the crew of the *Golden Rule* engrossed him more and more because it involved something he had strong convictions about.
>
> Before sailing around the world he had studied the effects of radiation on children at Hiroshima, as a representative of the National Academy of Science. He had been appalled, and still was, by what his research taught him. The more he thought about the court trial, the more he was convinced that the crew of the *Golden Rule* was right and the Government wrong.
>
> It seemed to him that he ought to complete the mission of the *Golden Rule* by sailing his ketch into the restricted zone. It was a decision of conscience, involving risks that rather frightened him; but his family and the Japanese crewmen agreed with him. Before he got under way he notified the appropriate government agencies of his intentions. That's how it all happened.

The *Phoenix* got sixty-five miles within the testing area before being stopped by the Coast Guard. Dr. Reynolds was sponsored by no organization. He and his family and crew members undertook the voyage on their own, as a matter of conscience. His feelings, however, were shared by some 5,000 Americans who among them raised the $25,000 needed for legal expenses in defending him in the courts. "Since there was no organization behind me and I was not backed by any group," he told a New York *Times* reporter, "I was considerably amazed by the response of the American people. It reconfirms my faith in Americans as people."

Dr. Reynolds has written a book, *The Forbidden Voyage*, to be published by David McKay. He is at present visiting professor of anthropology at Methodist Hiroshima Women's College, but will be in the United States during April and May, on a lecture tour sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee. His friends and admirers are invited to write to their local AFSC office for his itinerary.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

CHILDREN DOING BETTER THAN ADULTS

IN a column with the above title in the Chicago *Daily News* (Jan. 13, I96I), Sydney J. Harris reflects on some themes similar to those developed by Paul Goodman in *Growing Up Absurd.* Mr. Harris writes:

> Most people today profess to be surprised that we are producing so many delinquent children. I am surprised that we are not producing more. Far more children should be delinquent than actually are.
>
> As Dr. Lauretta Bender of New York University observed recently, "Children have an amazing capacity to tolerate bad parents, poor teachers, dreadful homes, and chaotic communities."
>
> It is the strength of the human personality, not its weakness, that astonishes and heartens me. We live in an era of continual revolutions in all aspects of our life, the rate of change is greater in a year than it used to be in a decade.
>
> Traditions have been shattered, patterns broken, old certainties removed, the whole ancient picture of the universe, the world and the breed of men has been turned inside out within our lifetime.
>
> The sense of continuity is missing from contemporary society. Fathers change jobs with distressing rapidity. Mothers work. Families move from town to town. Neighborhoods are demolished and new ones built. Speed, power and violence are the special marks of our time.
>
> Delinquency increases? Everything increases—adult crime, divorce, traffic fatalities, narcotics addiction alcoholism, mental breakdowns, suicides, all the heart-breaking pathology of a social order in upheaval.
>
> Children are stronger and more resilient creatures than we commonly think. The power of the ego to restore and integrate the whole personality has only begun to be explored by psychiatrists. We are not nearly so much at the mercy of our dark unconscious forces as we previously thought. Our children are proving that daily.

In an earlier comment in the same paper (Dec. 15, 1960) Dr. Theodore Van Dellen draws on a study of the Arawak Indians to argue that primitive cultures often do a better job of fulfilling their obligations to the young than we do—because they actually "respect individuality" more than the parents living in highly-routinized technological societies. Dr. Van Dellen writes:

> The Arawak Indians never spank their children. They rely upon natural discipline and avoid those traps of civilization that lead to everlasting and ineffective nagging, scolding, fuming, and fussing. It is a positive approach in which the child is coddled until weaned; from that time on, he is taught manners and how to behave like an adult.
>
> According to Dr. Frederick W. Dershimer, the parents don't attempt to sell their children on the idea that people are wiser than nature and can improve on natural laws. There is no such thing as "Mother knows best"; hence, no bickering at the dinner table when the plate is not cleaned.
>
> When the children learn to walk they are allowed to wander to the river or into the forest. But they are watched carefully and protected against drowning. The little ones are not criticized for getting wet. . . .
>
> The parents assume the attitude that the child is born with full intelligence but lacks the tools to demonstrate it. These youngsters do very little yelling, screaming, and irritating their parents. The grownups behave in the same way toward their offspring.

A certain impatience with arguments based on this material may be justified. After all, we are not raising our children among the Arawaks and have surprisingly little choice as to external environmental conditions. But, on the other hand, we have a great deal of choice in respect to environments of ideas and attitudes. It is here that examples of constructive tradition in less harassed societies provide food for thought.

We certainly agree with Mr. Harris' emphasis on the "resiliency" of children, but the environment in which the innate capacities of the young must have their play is obviously the responsibility of older generations. In this context, one naturally sympathizes with the recent campaign of New York *Herald Tribune* columnist John Crosby, bent on arousing citizen protest

against sadistic violence on the TV screen and in comic books. Mr. Crosby is really stirred up, and who can blame him?

> You are surprised at the rise of juvenile delinquency? We teach juvenile delinquency on television and in books and in the movies. No other civilized country in the world permits the horrors we allow on our television screens. In Washington we have a sublimely blind, hopelessly inefficient and frequently corrupt Federal Communications Commission which has permitted the abominations of "The Untouchables" and of all other TV felons to continue without taking a single step to enforce its powers.
>
> The last time I was in France a country notoriously open-minded, a representative there of Ziv TV films told me the French simply would have nothing to do with our violent TV films. He added: "The French agree that the violence would probably be just as popular in France as it is in America but they say simply that it isn't good for the little ones or for the big ones."
>
> The public itself ought to raise the roof over the misuse of violence—not only on television, but in comics and movies and books. The ordinary citizen has at his disposal vast powers of social disapproval—and this, used against the corner drugstore which sells and displays sadistic pocket books, or against the TV station, or against any store selling those awful sadistic comics, should accomplish much.

In general, MANAS opposes literary censorship, but the sort of corrupt merchandise which Mr. Crosby declaims against seems to be another matter. His suggestion that rejection of the worst dramatized horrors can always begin with public expressions of disapproval to local newspapers, theatre managers, and TV stations, is a good one.

FRONTIERS

Is Society Entitled To Punish?

MANAS says that the Chessman case should not be forgotten. Rightly so. One is therefore encouraged to call attention to a point which has apparently not been sufficiently discussed.

Chessman was killed by legal procedure—by "Justice." But what is Justice? What is its end? Is it retribution, punishment, revenge? Is it determent? Is it protecting Society? Is it rehabilitation of the evil-doers? Or can it be all these things at the same time?

It can not! Retribution is looking into the past. Only what the man has done, formerly, matters in retribution. The Greeks showed this in a rather perfect way. Œdipus loved his mother, without knowing that she was his mother. The Gods were offended by his incestuous emotion, so there had to be retribution to balance the account.

Rehabilitation is not looking into the past, but to the future. What the man has once done becomes irrelevant. What is he *going* to do? That is what matters, and that alone.

Determent? Protecting Society? These are simply practical aims. They should be pursued by whatever seems the best means. If retribution were sure—if there was certainty that every evil act would carry with it serious and painful retribution, then Justice would mean determent and protection of Society.

Yet determent would protect only Society, and *if* retribution *were* certain. If the criminal were convinced that apprehension is unavoidable, he would shrink from any infringement of the law. Actually, he knows that this is not the case. He knows only that he runs a certain risk, no more. A German professor used to begin his first lecture about criminal law, showing the young students a book he had in his hands, and saying:

> "This book deals with a certain class of people, with those who let themselves be caught. It does not say a word about those who do not let themselves be caught. It is the Penal Code. I give you some advice: Don't let yourselves be caught!"

The right of society to crush evil-doers loses part of its moral essence if about half of them—the lucky ones and the clever ones—get away. And one thing is certain: Retribution is a purely negative, destructive measure, while rehabilitation is positive. Plus and minus together are zero, as every mathematician will confirm. Thus, if what we call Justice is so ineffective, it is because it pursues two aims that are basically opposed to each other, one negative and one positive.

The execution of Chessman was a decision in favor of the negative, of retribution, of revenge. Seldom has the opportunity for rehabilitation been so promising as in the case of Chessman. He was granted eleven years to show what he was worth, and he showed it.

I have been a prisoner in jails, as a political prisoner, with daily contact with thieves, murderers, etc., for nine years. Later I was a social worker in prisons for another eight years. I know a little of what "criminals" are. One day, Society will have to decide between the negative way of retribution and the positive way of rehabilitation. With all my heart and out of my own experience, I am for the positive way. Society should not crush those who have failed to observe its laws, but attract them back into its own ranks. That is wholly possible! I fully agree with Gustav Radbruch, Minister of Justice of Germany in 1926, who said:

> "It is the basic sin of the Law and its representatives to believe, that there are circumstances in which one can deal with men without Love. Such circumstances do not exist."

But there is still another aspect. Has society a right to punish? I am not a member of any Christian Church and cannot be called a believer. And yet, I cannot forget a little story which has appealed to me since the early days of my youth. Officials of some sort brought into the presence of a man called Jesus a woman whom they had seized for committing a crime for which the law

exacted the death penalty. They asked his opinion. His answer was: "The one who is without sin may cast the first stone." And we are told that all the self-righteous men stole away, one by one, and no stone was thrown. This was a sign of the high moral level of that century. In ours, I am afraid, the stones would come like hail.

Has our Society the right to punish? Is it without sin?

I have known a gipsy called Walter. He owes his life to the gracious fact that he was carried into a concentration camp quite early. Even that was good luck. While all the other members of his tribe—his parents, sisters, and brothers, cousins, etc.—hurried away from Germany, with two wagons and five horses, southward, they were caught in Croatia by the Ustachis, who locked all 38 of them in a barn and burned them alive. Walter, meanwhile, was marched into Czechoslovakia, with the last thousand inmates of Oswiecim concentration camp, without food. Only three hundred of the thousand survived. Walter himself was heavily beaten. The end of the war found him in a hospital at Pilsen, with a broken spine, a damaged skull, and his health ruined for ever.

Walter came to Berlin, finally, unable to do real work. He lived by petty theft. Gipsies do not respect nor consider frontiers, so Walter stole a little in East Berlin, a little in West Berlin. Society was offended, and Justice in the East gave him three years, Justice in the West, four.

But Walter is not very repentant for the evil he has done. The balance of Society with him is still to his credit, he thinks. Thirty-eight members of his family burnt alive, the loss of two wagons and five horses, and a broken body on the one side—with only some petty thefts on the other. Walter thinks that Society has sinned more against him than he against Society.

A Berlin attorney named Hirschfeld, once prosecuted a murderer in a trial. The sentence was for life imprisonment. Next day Hirschfeld visited the man in his cell and asked him: "Do you consider the sentence to be fair?" The man mused for a while, then he said: "Yes—and no. Yes, because I killed a man. He was my enemy, he did me much harm, but one is not entitled to kill for that, and in this way the sentence is fair. But it is not true that I killed one man. I killed many more. During the war in Russia my unit got orders from Headquarters to 'liquidate' the population of a village near a district where Russian partisans had been active. We drove the few old men and the many women and children all together and killed them. I did this, I killed innocent children, who had not done me any harm as that man had. And I was not punished for that. In this way the sentence is not fair."

"What could I answer the man?" asked Hirschfeld. "I didn't know what to say."

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I am living now in the German society. I did not myself take part in the atrocities of those years. I was, during all this time, in the only place in the world where one is preserved from any moral responsibility. I was in jail. The prisoner is not guilty, not even for tacit consent. There was no merit in my being in jail; it was simply a privilege, a moral privilege in those times.

Millions of Germans knew nothing or very little about what was going on in the concentration camps. They knew there was "something" and shrank from investigating. Others knew much, or even all, and some of these are now in high government positions or acting as judges, giving heavy sentences to some poor devils whose crimes are insignificant by comparison.

Millions of Germans, many millions, knew well that Hitler was attacking all the neighboring countries. They could not help but know what this meant to the victims of these aggressions. And yet they hailed Hitler as long as he was successful. Have they a right to throw stones at others?

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Now you may say: We Americans had no concentration camps and have not done anything of this kind. Certainly not, and I am glad for you, but wasn't it an American President who gave orders that atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Hundreds of thousands of people were annihilated, many innocent children amongst them were burnt alive. A new era of mankind's history was initiated by that order—an era of universal Fear. Major Eatherly heard the voice of his conscience, after learning of what had happened down there. It was too strong for him, he lost his mental balance. But conscience is a very individual thing. President Truman's inner voice does not seem to have been so strong. He said, later, that he was glad he made the decision and would do it again. And the majority of the American nation, knowing this, re-elected as President the only man in the world with such a record.

I think we are all in the same boat.

During my lifetime I have seen two world wars. Over 50 million people were killed. I have seen and am seeing things even worse. I have met people, am even living among people, who still find some "glory" in all this. I read newspapers from different countries in which the question of atomic war is discussed as a matter of expediency. The people who write for these papers and the many millions who read them all know perfectly well that atomic war means the burning of millions of innocent people in atomic heat. They think that the end justifies the means. I can think of no end to justify such crimes. Yet these people talk about atomic war the same as they talk about football or film stars.

I sometimes feel lonely in this "society" of ours. I sometimes think I am longing for the society I had while I was in jail. Some of the people there had committed serious crimes indeed. But none of them crimes such as our "good" Society now is planning to commit.

Such a society as ours has no moral right at all to punish anybody. It may take measures to protect itself against people who are dangerous to others. But nothing more.

I once read an utterance by a German minister who wanted to have the death penalty re-enacted. "We decent people," he said, "can not be expected to live together with such beasts in human disguise as murderers are." I, for one, do not believe I am too decent to live together with a man like Chessman. I should have preferred him to many of those who are now, complacently, preparing for crimes much worse than any Chessman has ever committed, or was accused of committing.

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