

MORAL LAW OR PRINCIPLE?

EVERYONE admits that there are or can be moral principles, but are there moral *laws*? There is considerable difference between the two. A moral principle is a basis for conduct in human life. A moral *law*, however, is or would be a basis in Nature from which to deduce a moral principle. The stimulus to adopt moral principles is subjective and personal, but the moral law, should it exist, stands in objective relationship to human beings. A man might devise or invent a moral principle as a means of giving order to his life, but a moral law is something to *discover* and then conform to.

Quite possibly, for human beings, moral principle and moral law should be thought of as the subjective and objective aspects of the same order of relationships, but to think of morality or ethics in this way requires that some decision be made concerning the existence of a general moral law. The possibility of such a law formed the basis of the article, "Idealists and Materialists," which appeared in *MANAS* for Dec. 11, 1957, in which some of the views of the late Hans Reichenbach, author of *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (University of California Press, 1956), were examined. The question, as there stated, was this: *Is there any ground in Reality or Nature for ethical first principles?*

From letters received from readers concerning this question, we have selected two to present in part or whole—"answers" which approach the problem from differing points of view. One correspondent proposes the following argument:

(1) Evolution (Darwinian) is a process of Nature.

(2) Evolution produced man, *i.e.*, his characteristics, upright stature, dexterous hands, adaptable voice, etc.

(3) Evolution continued to work on primitive man, developing social organization. Cohesion of family, clan, tribe, etc., had survival value, better adaptation to environment.

(4) Social organization required of its members a yielding up of some degree of personal freedom, including a certain respect for the rights of their neighbors.

(5) This respect was amplified by philosophers (Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, Zoroaster, Christ) to the principle the Christians call the Golden Rule. Love thy neighbor as thyself, or do unto others as you would be done by.

(6) The Golden Rule is an example of an ethical first principle—and grounded in a process of Nature.

This argument is a simple one. Men have evolved the Golden Rule. Evolution is a process of Nature. Therefore, the ethical principle of the Golden Rule has a ground in Nature.

Following are the portions of our other correspondent's letter directly applicable to the question:

There is one universal principle which is active in the life and development of all men. That is: As a man thinks and acts, so he becomes. The same type of thoughts and actions produces similar results in the individual in every culture. The Indians express this as the law of Karma (of course, there is more to Karma than this). Continued selfishness, to the exclusion of others, eventually defeats the true needs of the self. Continued hate and suspicion of others leads to self-disgust or degeneration of character.

If this be so, then there must be something basic in the *nature* of man which determines this. Even if this "something" may be eventually explained wholly in scientific terms—which I doubt—the same conclusion is inescapable: because it operates in the best interests of both the individual and the group. The man who loves, helps, and creates, inevitably grows in joy and character and uplifts those about him.

If the validity of my logic be admitted, then only the first premise, stated above, remains subject to dispute. An argument for this premise would take more space than is available.

Interestingly enough, these two arguments are complementary. The first is empirical in method. It affirms that by observing human behavior we come upon the natural evolution of an ethical principle which may be understood or recognized as a device of nature to assure the survival of the human species. Probably this correspondent would accept Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and *Evolution of Ethics* as supplying volumes of data to support his thesis. In this view, the evolution of ethics is a continuous process. Through the practice of the social sciences, men may develop their ethical principles further, finding from observation and experiment better and better rules of social organization and human relationships.

The second argument moves from what might be termed an intuitive assumption—the proposition that "one universal principle is active in the life and development of all beings." From this is elicited the familiar idea that form follows function. The moral form of a man's life reflects his moral behavior. Again, survival is the criterion, for "selfishness" is said to defeat "the true needs of the self." The fact that the service of others benefits, while selfishness harms, the self, is taken as evidence of the fundamental nature of man. The implication is that man's being or nature has a community of interest with others, or that he is in some sense a larger self which includes others.

This, then, is a postulate concerning the human self, which is regarded as united with other selves through the law of moral relationships; and that unity may be conceived of as a kind of identity, which is, however, in our observation, extended in space throughout the human family and recognized only in terms of the *connections* among human beings.

Our first correspondent, therefore, declares an objective unity which men perceive through experience and come to define in terms of rules of conduct in order to preserve and facilitate that unity. Our second correspondent declares the subjective unity of all men, inherent in their being, the reality of which is proved by experience.

It would be pleasant indeed to be able to say, from a comparison of these views, that men already

have sufficient grounds for composing their differences and learning to live with one another in harmony. After all, a great variety of moral positions are assimilated under these two outlooks, and what does it matter how a man gets to the idea of a moral law, so long as he does get there.

But difficulties remain. First, those who acknowledge the reality of moral law may still differ radically on practical questions. Certainly men who regard themselves as practitioners of social science have strongly conflicting opinions concerning what are ideal political and social arrangements. Second, it is not enough to acknowledge that men have either (a) interests, or (b) some kind of self-hood, in common. This acknowledgement is only the compulsion to *seek* a principle or law of moral order. Finding it depends, we should like to suggest, on determining the basic character of how men's interests are *different*, and in what sense their identities are *not* the same.

For no problems or conflicts arise from common interests or being. The source of trouble is always in the differences. You don't need help from the moral law in matters of unity. You can always get people to agree on the principle of unity. The conflict comes from trying to get them to agree on how unity ought to work throughout diversity. This is the essential problem of our age; at our present degree of self-consciousness or self-awareness, it amounts to the need to obtain some kind of definition of the human individual: what is he, essentially? Why are people different and *how* are they different?

It is easy to show the practical importance of this question. All law-makers, for example, need to reach some conclusion on what can be expected of a human being. Parents and educators have the same need. There is a fundamental difference, moreover, between what it is sensible to *require* of human beings, and what it is reasonable to *hope* for. It is the business of the legislator to require, while the educator can only hope: hence the basic difference between law and religion.

A theocracy which combines both law and religion makes a fundamental judgment about human beings. The anarchist makes an opposite judgment.

The one declares that the moral life of men must be regulated by external rules, while the other insists that the moral life does not exist except in freedom of all external rules. The one proposes the moral incompetence of the individual; the other insists that morality is a matter of free individual decision. All theories of human government fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Now it is a fact known to all observers of human behavior that men do better with their lives when much is expected of them. Men given responsibility develop into responsible men. We must conclude, therefore, that the moral capacities of the individual vary with subtle psychological factors, and that they vary more with some men than with others. The well-integrated individual is less subject to flux in his moral attitudes than the suggestible or somewhat passive individual. All such differences must be taken into account in any definition of the human individual. We practically have to say that some individuals are more "individual" than others. This is unhappily bewildering to the maker of definitions.

It is a further fact that the moral attitudes of the individual seem to result from different causes. One man's temper in human relations will be largely spontaneous and intuitive. He will be generous without deliberation or any inward reference to a "rule" he has decided to live by. Another will carefully examine his own behavior to be sure that he is "consistent" with his avowed principles or philosophy. Some men seem to strike a balance between both procedures. What do these facts tell us about the human individual?

Then there is the vastly complex area of behavior represented by the term "rationalizing." So many people busy themselves with finding a high moral principle for having their own way. They want to be "universal" in every particular. They want to be "thought of" as moral men. Why should this be important to them? More material for the definition!

Whatever else we say, we shall have to assert that a human is a being who thinks a great deal about himself in relation to some ideal of human behavior and identity, and attempts, either wisely or foolishly,

to close the gap between the actual and the ideal. This is true of nearly all human beings, regardless of their theories about either the actual or the ideal.

Unfortunately, evolution (Darwinian) doesn't help us very much with our definition of man at this, the psycho-moral, level. Darwinism, except for a few scattered comments in passing, is entirely devoted to the development of organisms. It has nothing to say about the attributes of the self-consciousness which is seated in the organisms. And it is the attributes of self-consciousness which are the significant data for the definition of man. Organisms have no morals. The laws of organisms are concerned with the fixed relationships of biology and chemistry and physics. The laws of morality (if they exist) are concerned with the variable relationships of conscious subjects, self-aware identities, minds or souls. The laws of morality change with perception of moral or ethical issues or with the conception of self, and since a single individual may in a single day traverse a wide gamut of ideas of the self, depending upon his emotional condition and his capacity to control his feelings, his "morality" must be regarded as a wholly private and unpredictable affair. His relation to the moral order is likewise obscure—obscure to others, and often obscure to himself.

We are not now going to hazard, in conclusion, a formal definition of the human individual. But it may be said that the clinical experience and consequent theorizing of modern psychotherapy have already provided us with a conception of the human individual which approximates, although in far greater detail, the sort of being whose behavior we have been attempting to outline.

This is an empirical conception of the human individual, psychologically considered. Conceivably, what is needed, in addition, is a theoretical or rather a metaphysical conception of the individual, to go with the empirical account. Our space is used up, but if we had to choose such a conception from the available resources of Western philosophy, we should incline to the Leibnizian doctrine of the monads, or its metaphysical ancestor in the philosophy of Plotinus.

REVIEW

"THE LEGACY OF THE MAHATMA"

UNDER this title, Taya Zinkin, Indian correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (Feb. 6), explains why the life of Mohandas K. Gandhi will leave a permanent impression upon the social, political and psychological thinking of India. All Gandhi's energies, Zinkin points out, were directed toward awakening the spirit of self-reliance in *individuals*. The freeing of India and the development of non-violent methods were, in a sense, incidental to this great end. It is therefore natural that, as Zinkin writes, "Gandhi has left behind few Gandhians." If he had been an easy man to follow or imitate, or if he had encouraged disciples to regard him with worshipful awe, no doubt the Gandhian influence would long ago have been corrupted, so easily do "worshippers" stop thinking. Mr. Zinkin's article seems to us to be the best brief evaluation of the Gandhian impact we have seen for a long time. He points out that the statistics on the riots and disturbances of post-Gandhian India may be evidence of the success rather than the failure of Gandhian influence. Such disturbances might have been far worse and more prolonged. Zinkin writes:

Gandhi had realized early that the new India would be pulled by revolutions galore, revolutions which in the West are settled in blood. India is encompassing in a decade the linguistic battles which tore Austria-Hungary to pieces, the religious reformation which led to the massacres of St. Bartholomew's Day, the political revolution which led to the fall of the Bastille, the economic revolution which resulted in the Red Star flying over the Kremlin. This is why Gandhi insisted so much on non-violence and satyagraha. He had no illusions about men, and said himself that non-violence was a mere means with his followers, whereas it was an end for him. Nevertheless, he trained the Indian masses in the art of fasting for their rights, and proved that non-violence, even as a means, could be an effective weapon.

According to official figures, there have been in the nine and a half years since independence 1,020

police firings, 840 killed, 3,136 injured in riots, and in the last few months there has been a caste riot in the state of Madras which claimed hundreds of victims. Nevertheless, considering the stresses change is inflicting on the Indian social fabric, these are tiny figures; but for Gandhi they would have been infinitely larger.

Finally, in the field of government and politics Gandhi made compromise not only respectable but effective. This is why the whole development of India since independence is one long history of compromise; at no stage has the door been closed, or a position stated which made retreat or deviation impossible. Gandhi has left behind him an invaluable tradition of flexibility, and it is, perhaps, because he had detected this quality in Mr. Nehru's mind that he made him his political heir.

If one really wants to know what Gandhi has left behind, one must go to Rajghat, the monument built by the nation to Gandhi's memory. There is nothing at Rajghat—merely a cement platform on which pilgrims lay garlands of marigolds; and it is as it should be. The air around Rajghat is different: it is still permeated with the presence of a little old man who walked from village to village to try and make human beings into men.

Gandhi's determination to uproot the caste system may be called a complete success, insofar as there seems to be no possibility of restoring its worst aspects. Mr. Zinkin explains that the campaign against "untouchability" was also an expression of Gandhi's foresight. Gandhi sought not only to raise the untouchables, but, through driving a wedge into the caste system at its weakest point, eventually to loose the bonds of every caste:

By calling the untouchables Harijans, children of God, and insisting that the "sin of Hinduism be wiped out" Gandhi dynamited Hindu society. His argument was that India cannot be one until caste goes, but that butting at caste would only harden it and defeat one's purpose. The only effective way, therefore, was to attack caste from its one vulnerable flank: the sense of shame among the educated at the practice of untouchability. Gandhi argued to the impatient Nehru that once a Brahmin can take water from an untouchable, for him to inter-dine with a Kshatrya becomes nothing, but that nobody can demand of a Brahmin that he eat with a Kshatrya, while public opinion can be mobilised in favour of

taking water from a Harijan. And once the Harijan has a vote and becomes educated he will himself see to it that he is treated as a citizen, and caste will cease to exist. This may take a very long time, but the State has done all it can to bring about Gandhi's wish: the practice of untouchability has become unconstitutional and a criminal offence, and the Government is spending millions of pounds to educate and emancipate Harijans.

While few Indians of today seem able to carry on a true "Gandhian tradition" in political life, it seems that no politician is allowed to neglect the comparison of his own stature with the father of the new India, even though the reminders may sometimes be annoying. Mr. Zinkin explains:

Gandhi has left behind few Gandhians, although the men who came in close contact with him have all been made better men, because, sinners that they might be, Gandhi brought out the best in each of them; he knew he had to work with the material at hand and made the best of it. However, one of the besetting crosses of India's political life to this day is Gandhi's personal austerity, which has become grafted on public life, putting a terrible strain on politicians, many of whom are forced to pretend to fewer wants than they have, few though their wants may really be. Gandhi was genuinely austere; his austerity, exacerbated by a deep consciousness of India's poverty, was watered during his first visit to England by contact with the nonconformist tradition of English radicalism; he even joined a "No Breakfast Society" in Manchester. Because Gandhi was austere and because Hinduism places such high value on renunciation, conspicuous austerity has become a political imperative. But the flesh is weak, so while nobody dares challenge austerity many try to nibble at the fringes.

While pretense to austerity, like pretense to anything, is hardly a good thing in public life, there may nonetheless be some educative value in the Indian politico's case—and public servants in the West have failed to even conceive such total dedication. In any event, Gandhi seems very much alive, today—not only as a legend of saintliness, but as a dynamic force as well. He wanted men and women to think and not to reverence *him*. On this he was explicit: "There is no such thing as Gandhism, and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have

originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems. There is, therefore, no question of leaving any code like the Code of Manu. . . . The opinions I have formed and the conclusions I have arrived at are not final. I may change them tomorrow."

Gandhi, like all great men—perhaps that is why we can call them great—was first, last and all the time an educator. His personal "austerity," carried to what many felt were almost ridiculous extremes, in both theory and practice, still bore the impact of high example. And who, really, can achieve anything of value without a measure of self-discipline and self-denial? Gandhi's capacity for humor in the face of adversity, his sense of the ironic, taught the lesson that no man need cease being human because he is either saint or statesman.

Gandhi's legacy of a formal educational program is properly called "basic education." To this day, so far as we know, the most alert and promising school teachers and administrators of India are getting their training at an impoverished location in the central provinces where Gandhi's school, Sevagram, was born. Here, working with those who worked with Gandhi in the school, discussing current problems in the atmosphere of his influence, these young men and women give promise that there will always be philosophic depth in the Indian approach to the teaching of the young. What these teachers learned from Gandhi is really the ancient law of Karma—the law of natural balance and harmony existing between man, society and nature—a law in plain evidence when violations of balance cause obvious disruptions, but really operating all the time.

COMMENTARY

MARGINAL SIGNIFICANCES

BY interesting coincidence, we have in our files an extract from a review of a book by Harry Price (referred to by our correspondent in *Frontiers*) which more or less confirms the explanation of Spiritualistic phenomena that grows out of the psychology of Plotinus. The Price book is *Fifty Years of Psychic Research* and the paragraph of review is from the *Medical Record* for Oct. 15, 1941. The reviewer summarizes Price's "emanations" theory:

"An emanation of our ego or personality, or a part of our intelligence persists after death, and can be picked up by a suitable mind attuned to that emanation." He [Harry Price] interprets his "emanations" theory in this manner. There is, he says, a periodicity about hauntings which tend to occur after regular and fairly constant intervals and suggests that a room or place may become saturated with the emanation of a dead person which "increases" or accumulates in the same way as a storage battery, and when accumulations have reached saturation point beyond which they can go no further, they burst into phenomena, when the so-called "battery" gradually goes again through the process of storing. As a matter of fact, there is no theory which covers more than a few atoms of the phenomena to be explained.

With this may be put an introductory paragraph by G. W. Lambert, writer of the paper on Plotinian psychology in the *Proceedings of the London Society for Psychical Research* (1927, xxxvi, pp. 393-413). The point, here, is that the psychology of Plotinus enables the student of psychic phenomena to form a theory which accounts for fragmentary and confused communications, as well as for the more intelligible kind. Plotinus allows the assumption that there may be incoherent "ends" and "bits" of the *psyche* of the deceased, so that the medium or sensitive picks up these fragmentary memories and repeats them. Lambert says:

The student who adopts Plotinus' far-reaching theory of the nature of man's psychical constitution, with its immense range and organic structure, will

find that it throws new light on many current problems. He will, however, find himself more than ever impressed with the difficulty of establishing the identity of "communicators." The question whether a given "communicator" is identical with some particular deceased individual raises the whole question of the structure of the two personalities one is attempting to identify. Both Plotinus and Frederick [F.W.H.] Myers were profoundly right in making a theory of human personality the groundwork of their theories of survival, and many of the difficulties experienced in co-ordinating the data of research are no doubt due to imperfect and one-sided theories of personality. Plotinus theory at any rate gives us a scale by which to classify the various kinds of identity tests which are applied to trance personalities.

The great amount of nonsense and unintelligible material obtained by mediums from unknown "psychic" sources has always been a barrier to serious attention to the Spiritualistic sort of phenomena. This rejection of mediumistic communications is probably a wholesome reaction which prevents most people from supposing that the "departed" may be reached by going to séances. However, it remains possible that *some sort of meaning* ought to be attached to psychic communications, even if discontinuity and confusion seem to be their outstanding characteristics. This was the conclusion, for example, of William James, who insisted that some communications have a genuinely "supernormal" element in them, despite the discouragingly irrational aspects of much of séance phenomena. It is these marginal significances which give to theories based upon Plotinian psychology their manifest importance.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

DISCUSSION OF A GENERATION: VII

BY now we have assembled opinions from several optimistic apologists for the "beat generation" who feel that something "affirmative" is stirring among the peculiar writers and artists who call themselves "hip"—and even, perhaps, among the hipsters of the street. This is a view we are unable to share; instead, we see only a culture that is whirling around—or rather several cultures that are whirling—which have failed to establish continuity of ethical insight.

Kerouac's characters in *On the Road* may be described as "seeking God" in their own razzle-dazzle fashion, but it seems likely that they will encounter a number of uninformative hard knocks along the way. You can, unfortunately, kill a number of people if you drive "a steady 90" down the highway in the company of alcohol fumes, and you can also, if you gaily father enough children which you are disinclined to support, run right into paternity suits and their sequelae.

An AP dispatch from New York (Feb. 7) points out that some of the younger hipsters have outstayed their welcome in the New York public schools:

New York City's schools today suspended 644 pupils as chronic troublemakers. Both boys and girls were suspended from elementary, junior high and vocational high schools and at least 100 others were suspended from academic high schools.

The largest exodus was from Brooklyn, area of many of the recent school stabbings, disorders and criminal attacks.

The action brought into immediate focus the problem of what to do with the ousted pupils.

In our experience, schools will put up with almost anything, and the fact that New York has had "enough" means that it has had plenty to put up with. Jail or expulsion from school does not, so far as we can see, lead to a "cool" situation, nor

can these temporary terminal points be regarded as happily "frantic."

There is a pretentiousness about the articulate hipsters, moreover, which needs to be recognized. Allen Ginsburg, hipster author of a controversial book called *Howl*, describes his work as "an affirmation by individual experience with God, sex, drugs, absurdity." As to the last-mentioned quality, we find ourselves more or less in agreement. Another example: poet Philip Lamantia modestly explained to a *Time* interviewer that "beatness is really a religious movement." TV's Mike Wallace carried the conversation with Kerouac and Lamantia on a few bars, with these results:

Wallace: You mean beat people are mystics?

Kerouac: Yeah. It's a revival prophesied by Spengler. He said that in the late moments of Western civilization there would be a great revival of religious mysticism. It's happening.

W. What do beat mystics believe in?

K. Oh, they believe in love. They love children . . . they love women, they love animals, they love everything. . . What I believe is that nothing is happening . . . We're an empty vision—in one mind.

W. In what mind—the mind of God?

K. That's the name we give it. We can give it any name. We can call it tangerine. . . god . . . But I do know we are empty phantoms . . . And yet, all is well.

W. All is well?

K. Yeah. We're all in Heaven, now, really.

Interrogator Wallace asked San Francisco Poet Lamantia to explain two of his lines: *Come Holy Ghost, for we can rise/Out of this Jazz . . .*

Said Lamantia: "You have to be pure. You gotta get through this life without getting hung up. That's the whole question—not to get hung up . . ."

W. What is getting "hung up"?

L. Freezing. Freezing from others, from yourself, from the Holy Spirit. If you're hung up, you can't love, or care for others.

W. Why are so many members of the Beat Generation bums and tramps?

L. Oh, you see, Christ says go out and find the bums. . . Find the blind and the cripples . . . Christ invites everyone, including the outcasts. So there's no contradiction at all between Christ and a bebopper and a hipster. . . .

No—no necessary contradiction—except that Christ's aim seemed to be to encourage his disciples to establish constructive continuity of consciousness, to get Satan in the back seat and keep him there. The Beat Generation, from bottom to top, seems to be exploring the joys of irresponsibility, which fits in neatly with discontinuity in thinking as well as in life. Some of the most articulate exponents of hipsterism have fastened verbally on certain concepts encountered in Zen Buddhism. But the Zen Buddhist is also seeking "continuity" in his stream of consciousness. The *means* chosen to do this, it is true, involve those disciplines which enable the pupil to see the timelessness of each moment. But it is the increasing *capacity* to bring mystic detachment to bear upon the events of daily life which is the reward.

Two observers have pointed out that the "hipster" is not simply an American phenomenon. We have no doubt that a don't-care type of rebellion and violence will manifest in every country shaken by the disruption of war. But in Japan and in Russia youths face a tough situation for which they are not in any way personally responsible. The same manifestations in America, and among the privileged classes of England, seem somewhat phoney—save for the case of the American Negro and those who identify with his predicament. Many of our hipsters appear to be little more than spoiled babies who have had too much offered them for too long, and who have yet to face a situation where survival or comfort must be won by grim effort. Of course, this state of affairs is not quite *their* "fault," either. The parents, too, have had too much, too easily, and for too long. We live in the "everything-is-taken-care-of" age—everything, that is, except our development of a sense of order and discipline, and a sense of orientation in values. Meanwhile, the hipster-writers seem to believe that, by casting away all moorings, they can drift to some kind of "heaven" or illumination. It doesn't work that way.

Not every youth, of course, who uses hipster language has these characteristics. We know of one young man who gave up the lingo and the life simply because he got tired of aimlessness. As John Clellon Holmes might put it, this fellow found he was saying "man" to everyone because he didn't know anyone's name—yet sensed that really getting to know *people*, apart from the cultus to which they belong, turns out to be one of the more important aims of existence. There are young people who can and do think intelligently even though they seem unable to talk without using the orthodox hipster terms. But we doubt that they think very much like Kerouac, Ginsburg, and Lamantia. While hipsterism need not corrupt the soul, it hardly can be said to elevate in any true sense, save for its implication of tolerance for all oddities of human behavior.

Having spent more than enough time with hipster writers and critics, we should like to turn to J. D. Salinger, whose perceptions in regard to the psychological predicament of modern youth do lead you from somewhere to somewhere. There is a kind of "inwardness" in Salinger's leading characters. Salinger hasn't deserted the image of the "hero" entirely; he has, in large part, only changed the form and radically altered the emphasis. And Salinger seems to understand Zen in a way that Kerouac and Lamantia do not. If "real-life" counterparts of Salinger's characters exist, they are youths worth knowing.

FRONTIERS Psychic Mysteries

WE have a rather lengthy communication from a reader who reacts with dissatisfaction to our review article, "Survival After Death?" (MANAS, Feb.12), objecting in particular to the concluding sentence, which suggested that the thinking of philosophers like John McTaggart, Macneile Dixon, and C. J. Ducasse is of greater value than Spiritualist reports on the after-life obtained through mediums. The objection is clearly expressed and may be quoted almost in full:

As a philosophical Spiritualist, I was somewhat amazed and a little shocked by your phrase, "some kind of discarnate existence in the shadowy nether world of the mediums," as your article left the impression that this is what Spiritualists and spiritualistic philosophers generally believe. Let us look at this.

First: "discarnate existence." The general Spiritualistic concept is that the spirit acts in its own world with greater facility than we do in this. Or take "shadowy." This might be appropriate to Græco-Roman or early Jewish concepts, but the supernally bright world of Aldous Huxley (*Heaven and Hell*) is much closer to the modern concept.

As for "nether," this has leftover connotations from Christian concepts of spirits being "evil"—"Devils," etc., with a few exceptions called saintly miracles—the reversal of official attitude toward St. Joan's "voices" being a classical example of this. The higher spiritualistic concept is that our world is, in a sense, the "nether" world, that one can scarcely go lower, and that for some individuals communications via seances, mediums, etc., would involve a process that might be called "descent."

Finally, take the phrase of the "mediums." This suggests a side comment. Why this distrust of what the honest medium (Garrett, Piper, *et al.*) "sees" or understands regarding the nature of "spirits" or the *modus operandi* of various phenomena? I think it would be prudent to remember that we are sometimes like persons blind from early childhood, arguing with a sighted person over the nature of the color blue.

But more basic and more fundamental is the implied assumption that most other researchers in the field besides Dr. Rhine and other philosophers besides Dr. Ducasse are or were more prejudiced and

of stature not worthy of mention. Also, there is an assumption that psychic research is ahead of where it was fifty years ago, or that all scientists are more objective now than they were then.

Enough of polemics. The very barrenness of the Rhine experiments, compared with the great variety of phenomena observed by a Harry Price or classified by a F. W. H. Myers, suggests, together with the experiments in the Carrington study {research concerning the possible "independence" of Mrs. Garrett, who was spoken of in our review article, and "Uvani," her "spirit guide"}, that for the time being it might be more fruitful to regard a good deal of phenomena as being caused by "pseudo-personalities"—that is, mental phenomena which have the appearance of being produced by separate entities (Patience Worth would be a classic example). That these are surviving personalities might be proved by making exhaustive tests of one or two hundred elderly Spiritualists (or other interested parties) and then later on contacting the pseudo-personalities claiming to be some of these individuals through two or three mediums who do not know one another and did not know the individuals in question. Perhaps this would prove to be one of the "breakthroughs" which are needed.

One final question: Does Dr. Ducasse's concept suggest that pseudo-personalities cannot tell us anything about the nature of our larger life—that such can be discerned clearly only by the unpsychic mind and personality of the objective philosopher? I'll take a psychic one like Socrates, or even an amateur like Mrs. Garrett, and even Andrew Jackson Davis has his points.

There is so much material of interest here, and so many questions raised, that it will be difficult to do anything like justice to this communication. Its problems fall into two broad divisions—matters of fact and matters of belief or interpretation. For clarity's sake, these divisions should be treated as separate areas of inquiry.

This is not to hint that matters of belief in connection with so-called "Spiritual" or psychic phenomena are to be disposed of lightly. The region of belief is certainly as important as the region of fact, since people act on beliefs, not upon facts. (You have to believe in the facts before you can act upon them, so belief is not negligible.)

"spiritual" beliefs is over-populated with visionaries, superficial thinkers, and even evidence to support the common opinion. What we should like to suggest is that you find little connected with matters which do not touch the human heart. So, if you are going to avoid mystery-mongering, you are going to avoid just about the most important questions a human being respectable, or strictly non-controversial subjects, but if you do you are likely to find yourself

Give us, every time, a man with beliefs. The more carefully selected the beliefs, the better, but and hearts.

We do not intend to say, here, that a "belief" Spiritualism. Far from it. What we mean to suggest is that the problems which Spiritualism or obscurities or even extravagant nonsense which sometimes attend them. A man needs to think Even if he decides that he can know nothing about such questions, he needs to reach this conclusion baked denier as well as a half-baked believer. The only real offense is in being half-baked. Only the takes effort to be an intelligent believer, just as it takes effort to be an intelligent agnostic. The fact conclusions is no more than evidence of the uncertainties which surround us all. And the have another look at the evidence—the old evidence as well as the new.

questions about Spiritualism or psychic

manifestations: (We prefer the word "psychic," as what is meant by "phenomena" or "manifestations." A "spirit" which manifests is not subjective or ideal. The expression, "spiritual phenomena," is a contradiction in terms. Even adjective, at least, than "spiritual.")

It is practically impossible to separate the religion. Only in our own age of "objective science" do we find an attempt to describe things We regard such descriptions, when they seem successful, as a great achievement. The ancients What is the use of telling about something, they might have said, unless you can say what it

business saying what you think a thing means unless you can "prove" it. There is obvious virtue

let us stipulate that the strenuous attempt of science to avoid explanation is not a dislike of *per se*, but a dislike of premature or

context of Western intellectual history, takes the position: "We have been fooled and fooled and

not be fooled any longer. We shall agree—and this is called the scientific method—not to say that

doubt that it must be so, and that it cannot be otherwise." And the resistance of science to

naturally enough, in those areas where people seem to have been most unconscionably deceived.

and concerning most matters on which religion has had something to say.

of psychic research with noticeable reluctance. Not until 1869 did anything like a scientific body

interest itself in the doings of the Spiritualists. The occasion, then, was the formation of an investigating committee by the London Dialectical Society. The committee looked into the supposed "supernatural origin" of certain psychic manifestations (following upon the outbreak of phenomenal occurrences which began with the "Rochester Rappings" in 1848) and arrived at conclusions so startling that it split the conservative Dialectical Society into warring camps and launched heated controversies in the London newspapers.

Every distinguished individual of the latter nineteenth century, no matter how great his reputation, who dared to find elements of "reality" behind the confused utterances of mediums or who reported on "physical" phenomena without denouncing them as "fraudulent" or "illusory," met with either bitter attack or condescending sneers from his more conventional colleagues. Yet these hardy investigators—men like Alfred Russel Wallace and William Crookes, to name the most famous of them—were impressed by what they discovered. The reader who wants to encounter something of the impact of their experiences needs to go to their works and to read their own words—as for example, Crookes' *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (London, J. Burns, 1874)—as well as the learned but bloodless "doctoral theses" of young men who decide to "research" this somewhat neglected field. He might also have a look at William Howitt's *History of the Supernatural* (London: Longmans, Green, 1863), and H. P. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* (Bouton, 1877), to enter into the original atmosphere of this burgeoning movement—a movement which, in time, branched out into many and diverse paths and whose influence is still far from exhausted in the modern world.

In the United States, Horace Greeley exonerated the Fox sisters, famous mediums responsible for the "Rochester Rappings," from suspicion of fraud, and years later, William James,

after twenty-five years of attention to psychic manifestations, vouched for the genuineness of the phenomena. Many eminent men acknowledged the reality of the wonders performed by mediums, and some of them became Spiritualists, but today, in the perspective of more than a century of claims and counter-claims, reports, investigations, it is possible to say that in most cases the best witnesses seem to be those who reached no conclusion at all about the origin or meaning of the phenomena, but simply admitted that they take place.

The "communications," on the whole, have not been notably enlightening. Prof. C. E. M. Joad, the British philosopher, after a cycle of investigation of seance phenomena, mournfully reported that "if ghosts have souls, they certainly have no brains!" Patience Worth, mentioned by our correspondent, produced some lusty Elizabethan verse, but it would have gained no special attention, save for its strange origin. A sampling of the Spiritualist journals, both present and past, provides little stimulus to pursue the inspiration of its contributors to the source. Apparently, the "spirits" can be as commonplace in their utterances as people who are alive, and why go to all that trouble to hear some humdrum conversation?

Nor do the "spirits" agree upon their condition in the after-life. Some preach reincarnation, others attack it. The mediums do not seem especially elevated by their intercourse with the departed, and the alleged "philosophers" of Spiritualism, when their writings merit attention, are usually found to be actually *opposed* to mediumship, as ordinarily practiced. Andrew Jackson Davis, whom our correspondent mentions, was an extraordinary man whose autobiography, *The Magic Stuff*, is a curiosity of both medicine and psychic literature, explicitly rejected the idea of "spirit controls."

Our correspondent uses the expression, "pseudo-personalities." Interestingly enough, a writer in the *Proceedings* of the London Society

of Psychical Research some years ago offered an explanation for the fragmentary and often meaningless character of séance communications by drawing on the theory of Plotinus that odd bits of the deceased personality—mere residues of the once embodied psyche—survive for a time in the psychic atmosphere of the earth and may come into subjective contact with the abnormally suggestible nature of the medium. "Pseudo-personality" seems as good a term as any to apply to such psychic "remains."

As for the question of whether Spiritualist communiqués offer more than "objective" philosophers concerning "the nature of our larger life"—we have yet to encounter evidence of the enlightenment implied by the question. What human wisdom on this subject we have come to respect has been the expression of embodied rather than unembodied minds. Socrates may have had his *Daemon*, but Plato wrote the Dialogues and he says nothing to suggest that Socrates' inner "god" was anything like a "pseudo-personality."

In comparison with the "local color" of a Spiritualist report, the work of Dr. Rhine may seem barren, but the Duke experiments and the careful examination of their implications which accompanies them are at least widening the intellectual horizons of our time and opening minds to philosophical possibilities which had been ignored for generations. As to whether or not there has been "progress" in psychic research during the past years, this, we submit, depends upon how you define progress. No miracles have been produced to sway the multitudes to uniform belief. What explanations have been offered have not come so much from the data of experiment as from philosophical theories (such as that of Plotinus) which seem to fit the facts. When something happens—say, a "phenomenon"—we want to know what effect it will have on human beings; or rather, what effect its proposed explanation will have on human beings. Will it make them more independent, or turn them into

satellites of some external power? A truly "spiritual" experience should make a man stronger, more independent of both the living and the dead. The "independence" we speak of is an aspect of intellectual and moral integrity, which makes a man capable of learning from others without loss of individual decision and choice.