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SCIENCE AND HUMAN FREEDOM

A READER who feels great respect for the work and personal qualities of scientists makes several objections to "The Platonic Credo," which appeared in MANAS for Jan. 22. This article assigned to science the view that man is not free to choose his thoughts and actions—that he is, in short, entirely the product of external causes. Our reader objects. He knows many scientists, he says, and he has not met one who thinks of man in this way.

Quite evidently, we shall have to make a clear distinction between what is called "Science"—a body of facts, theories, and hypotheses, and a method of dealing with them—and the human beings who work in this field. "Science" may be said to have a conventional outlook, involving attitudes and conclusions which no scientist, *as* scientist, is likely to deny. In connection with this outlook, there is also a philosophical position concerning which *some* scientists are explicit and others are silent or uninterested. However, the views of scientists, considered as human beings, on philosophical questions may vary widely, in some cases having no resemblance at all to what we have called the "conventional" scientific point of view. So it is quite possible that a man who knows many scientists may never encounter an enthusiastic advocate of the position described as "scientific" in "The Platonic Credo."

With this introduction, then, we present our reader's letter:

> In "The Platonic Credo," you go all the way in beating that long dead dummy, if you will excuse the redundance, of science and philosophy being purely materialistic, etc., etc.
>
> Perhaps science as such is not the basis of freedom or any human orientation, but I would like to confront you with what appears to me to be a fact—that science is impossible without human freedom, as is any other human achievement.

I am not a scientist, nor, if it takes the same academic preparation, a philosopher. But even if the scientist who ends your argument about freedom with "Oh yeah," is only a symbol, I have not met that symbol. And I have known many of them, including a former president of the Association of American Scientists. All of them that I have known are serious champions of freedom and none of them believes that science alone can save us. How could it? Science and knowledge can be valuable only if properly applied.

But there is no case of philosophy or freedom versus science. Science is not the enemy of either. Just for a few samples, I should like to refer you to the works of Le Comte du Noüy, to Julian Huxley's *Man in the Modern World* and *Evolution in Action,* or to such beautiful and imaginative articles as "The Next 10,000 Years" by J. H. Rush in the *Saturday Review* of Jan. 25. There is also the belief of a professor of mathematics friend of mine, to whom mathematics is an aid to religion. He believes that any wrong in life will carry as its consequence an imperfection, just as any imperfection in an equation will make it wrong.

To these men, science is not only an aid to freedom; it is the greatest product of freedom. Science is our greatest single tool in conditioning our environment and conditioning of our environment is the closest step to freedom of choice, and freedom of choice is freedom. It is the very thing that sets us apart from all matter and all living creatures, as far as we know. The very power of *homo sapiens* over his environment as well as his ability to choose his own action is precisely freedom. . . . It does not at all follow that we will make the proper choice. But the very fact that the choice before us today is possible self-destruction, is possible only because man is free. And how could we find a solution to the crises if we were not free to make the choice?

Thus man may destroy or save himself because he is free and because that freedom gave him science, with which he may destroy himself or condition his environment, up to and including his physical body, to make himself yet freer.

To say that man must not be free so that he will not destroy himself would be taking the side of

Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor. That, as you will not dispute, would mean the negation of life.

I also hope you will not claim that science can exist under conditions without freedom by pointing to the sputniks produced by the Soviets. As long as *homo sapiens* exists, there will always be a degree of freedom. Freedom is always relative as to how many individuals are able to use it, and as to its variable extent among individuals. But if the Grand Inquisitor should theoretically have his way and completely destroy freedom, *homo sapiens* would cease to exist, as surely, or perhaps more surely, than he could wipe himself out through poor choice in applied science.

We are facing a great crisis and we must choose, and we need orientation to make the right choice. Granted that science alone cannot supply that choice, but there is nothing in science that prevents the proper attitude in seeking the right choice. It seems to me that Dr. Morgan, whom you quoted in "The Platonic Credo," is propounding exactly the attitude that makes for the integrity of the scientist or any other individual. Moreover, perhaps science is about to prove, or has already proved by implication, that freedom and the power to choose are the very forces by which man may live. He is that kind of being and he had better wake up to the fact.

We couldn't agree more. In fact, everything this correspondent says, with the exception of what he suggests is the scientific viewpoint, seems to us exactly right.

As to what "science says" about freedom, let us look at the record. First, a general statement from the writings of Alfred North Whitehead, who was certainly a competent observer of scientific thinking:

The conduct of human affairs is entirely dominated by our recognition of foresight, determining purpose, and purpose issuing in conduct. . . . We are, of course, reminded that the neglect of overwhelming evidence (of this dominance of purpose) arises from the fact that it lies outside the scope of the methodology of science. . . . The brilliant success of this method is admitted. But you cannot limit a problem by reason of a method of attack. . . . Many a scientist has patiently designed experiments for the *purpose* of substantiating his belief that animal operations are motivated by no purpose. He has perhaps spent his spare time in writing articles to prove that human beings are as other animals so that "purpose" is a category irrelevant for the explanation of their bodily activities, his own included. Scientists animated by the purpose of proving that they are purposeless constitute an interesting subject for study.

While Dr. Whitehead does not use the expression, "free will," the interdependence of freedom and purpose is quite evident.

To become more specific, here is an extract from a text on sociology:

The old theological assumption of personal control . . . has given way, under the influence of an analysis of neurons, cortexes, and endocrines, to the behavioristic theory of the conditioned response or behavior patterns. . . . a science of personality based on a measurable mechanics of behavior is bound to replace the old magical and mystical spiritism which still survives in the thousand and one cults that delight in calling themselves psychological. (L. L. Bernard, *Fields and Methods of Sociology*, Long & Smith, 1934.)

Enrico Ferri, regarded a generation ago as "first of the living criminal sociologists," is uncompromising in his denial of freedom on a scientific basis. In his *Criminal Sociology* (Little, Brown, 1917), he wrote:

. . . positivistic physio-psychology has completely destroyed the belief in free choice or moral liberty, in which, it demonstrates, we should recognize a pure illusion of subjective psychological observation. . . . The supposition of liberty violates two universal laws which make it absolutely inacceptable. There can be observed in this evolutive cycle of an initial physical movement transforming into a physiological movement and then into a final physical movement a further instance of the transformation of forces, which, thanks principally to Mayer and to Helmholz, is certainly the greatest discovery of the age in natural philosophy. Now, since this law, the correlative of Lavoisier's law on the conservation of energy, cannot be conceded unless we admit that, in the whole series of phenomena, nothing is created, nothing is lost, and that there is always the same quantity of force, which takes different aspects, it follows that the hypothesis of free will is inadmissable; that is, of a volitional faculty which, intermediate between these transformations, would be able to suppress or add something, either by preventing the ulterior manifestations of individual activity or by altering the energy or direction of this

> activity, effecting a real creation or destruction of forces. Another universal law which is the very base of our thought, and which has been scientifically proven, is completely opposed to the hypothesis of a will free to choose between two contrary solutions, namely, the law of natural causality. In virtue of this law, every effect being the necessary proportional and inevitable consequence of the entirety of causes which produce it, of its mediate and immediate precedents, a faculty is inconceivable which could realize an effect different from that which results naturally from its proper causes. These general demonstrations of the impossibility and inconceivability of free will or moral and volitive liberty are aided by the most positive confirmations of fact based upon experience.

Ferri, quite plainly, is no push-over for the metaphysician to argue with. His statement will serve to illustrate what we above referred to as the "conventional" scientific outlook on the matter of "free will." If it be said that Ferri belongs to another era, the thinking of which is now outdated, we have a contemporary psychologist who repeats him almost verbatim. B. F. Skinner, professor of psychology at Harvard University, says in *Science and Human Behavior* (Macmillan, 1953):

> The hypothesis that man is not free is essential to the application of scientific method to the study of human behavior. The free inner man who is held responsible for the behavior of the external biological organism is only a pre-scientific substitute for the kinds of causes which are discovered in the course of a scientific analysis. All these causes lie *outside* the individual. . . . it has always been the unfortunate task of science to dispossess cherished beliefs regarding the place of man in the universe. . .

Prof. Skinner is quite plainly speaking *ex cathedra* for the scientific profession and for the institutional outlook of Science itself. And it is unlikely that a man who sits in the chair of psychology at Harvard University can be successfully accused of representing a "long dead dummy," *i.e.*, the materialist position.

Our account of the scientific position is therefore not so wide of the mark as our correspondent suggests.

The authorities we have cited, we may note, are men whose field of work involves them in the study of *man*, so that they may be regarded as "proper" authorities to quote. It might be more difficult to document the "conventional" materialism of science from the writings of, say, physicists—after all, Arthur Holly Compton, Arthur Eddington, James Jeans, and Albert Einstein cannot be called materialists; they are, in fact, quite the opposite—but can the physicists speak for "Science" on the subject of man? Obviously, they can speak for themselves about man, and what they say may have far more validity and interest than what the psychologists and the sociologists say, but they cannot speak for the science which *studies* man and is supposed to supply us with "facts" about the human being. So you cannot tack a "science says" after quotations from them.

If we had more space, it would be interesting to look at what some of the more philosophical physicists and mathematicians—men like Max Planck (in *Where Is Science Going?),* and Hermann Weyl (in *The Open World)*—have said in trying to retain the moral dignity of human beings in the face of the methodological materialism so clearly stated by Ferri, but these subtle arguments need closer attention than brief quotation can supply. Neither of these thinkers, let it be said, achieved much more than a poetic vindication of human freedom, in contrast to the iron compulsion of what Ferri named the law of natural causality.

Our correspondent speaks of Le Comte Noüy and Julian Huxley as being on the side of freedom. We are reluctant to claim du Noüy for an ally of moral freedom, since his book, *Human Destiny*, whatever its minor excellences, seems a rather careless compromise with theology rather than a genuinely philosophical argument for transcendental human intelligence and moral freedom. As to Julian Huxley, who is a zoologist, we recall nothing of his that speaks directly to the question of human freedom (we have not read the books our correspondent names), but his *Man*

Stands Alone is a stimulating and open-minded volume which sets man off from the animals and acknowledges the possibility of a further evolution of man in the direction of extra-sensory perception.

The tendency and intent of our article, "The Platonic Credo," was to show the need of a positive conception of the human individual, considered as a type, which allows for freedom on a theoretical or metaphysical basis. This is a conception entirely outside the reach of conventional or "acceptable" scientific theory, although it may be quite easily found in the intuitively-held views of many scientists. But an intuitive acknowledgement of freedom, while valuable, and even inspiring, is not enough. We need a serious account of the universe in which those units of moral intelligence called men have a natural place and role—something we have not had since Galileo and other pioneer scientists divided the world of nature into primary and secondary characteristics and made of the observer of nature, who is man, a kind of alienated being who is not a "real" part of nature at all, but some sort of intruding cosmic "accident" whose intelligence must all be explained away in terms of the interrelationships of bits of matter and modes of motion.

We are getting a better account of man from the parapsychologists and from the psychotherapists, but these are laboratory or clinical people and not theoreticians in the grand tradition of Natural Philosophy. The fact of the matter is that the contemporary version of the grand tradition of science has no place for man in it at all. The Platonic Credo makes a place. Until it becomes possible for a Platonist to gain entry to the modern scientific conception of the universe, we shall continue our complaint against "Science"—not against the speculations, intuitions, and individual philosophies of eminent men who practice science, but against the orthodoxies of science, which are transmitted to the young in the textbooks, and too easily turned into doctrines of aimlessness and irresponsibility by those who like to claim a high-sounding authority for doing exactly as they please.

REVIEW

BRITISH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

"CLOAKING THE DAGGER" is the title of a recent BBC broadcast by Angus Maude, conservative MP, sent to us in the form of a reprint in the *Listener* for Jan. 23, by a reader who calls it a "magnificent example" of the programming of Britain's state-operated radio station. We must admit that such revealing analysis of popular euphemisms would be an extreme rarity in American radio (except for Berkeley's KPFA), and are reminded to repeat a view often expressed in these columns—that two or three good British publications are an excellent addition to any thoughtful American's literary diet.

Mr. Maude asks his listeners to reflect upon the extent to which euphemism and professional deceit are the hallmarks of our culture:

> If things look bad, or bleak, or ugly, we do not think too much about them. If we have to mention them we call them by different names, so that they will not sound so discouraging. If we call preparations for war a defence programme and a socking great hydrogen bomb a thermo-nuclear deterrent, it is easier to view them with a certain amount of detachment. If we call economy cuts a rephasing of the investment programme, they appear less likely to hurt us. If we describe a wave of crime by young thugs as an increase in juvenile delinquency, it not only muffles the sound of real people actually being coshed, but puts the whole thing into the abstract realm of sociology, where it can be dealt with by psychiatrists and social workers; then parents can relax by the fireside without worrying about what their sons are up to.
>
> One could go on multiplying examples of political euphemism. For instance, "keeping a matter under constant and careful review" means doing absolutely damn-all about something rather awkward. You urge your opponents to "put Country above Party," which generally means asking them to do what *you* want instead of what *they* believe to be right. But you urge your own side to be "loyal," which means following the party line even when your colleagues think the interests of the country ill served by the policies of their leaders. Your own election promises are a "massive programme of social reform," although those of your opponents are "irresponsible attempts to bribe the electorate." It is astonishing how quickly some politicians get the hang of this double-talk, and how many of them end by believing it themselves.
>
> In general, this political mixture of euphemism and meiosis is pure humbug. To give just one more example, I am getting a little tired of the propaganda use of the term "the Free World," which in its widest sense embraces a considerable number of unmistakable military dictatorships, and in its narrowest describes an alliance of which at least two members are governed in an extremely authoritarian way, to put it mildly.
>
> As I said, all this is humbug. Why, then, are the humbuggers allowed to get away with it? I am afraid the answer is disconcertingly simple. There is so much miscellaneous humbug everywhere else that a little more in politics is hardly noticed. It fits naturally into the general pattern of behaviour. I am not referring simply to the bogus respectability and ghastly false gentility that social satirists have attacked for centuries. There is something newer, and—in my opinion—worse. It is the Cult of Cosiness. It is a widespread conspiracy to ignore unpleasantness, to pretend that things are better than they are and that everything will be all right. It is the refusal to face the need for uncongenial effort, for new ideas and hard choices. The easiest way to dodge the issues is to deny the existence of any unpleasantness that calls for remedy or threatens danger.

What happens in the arena of politics, Mr. Maude indicates, is simply an extension of things we allow to happen to us during the simple routines of daily life. He gives an example involving the purchase of some eggs to show why he is "on the whole" against marketing psychology:

> Not long ago, when my wife was away from home, I had occasion to buy some eggs. They had the word "Standard" neatly printed on them, apparently to denote their size, which was minute. "Why," I asked in my simple way, "not call them small eggs?" "Oh," they said, "if we called them that no one would buy them."
>
> This, I think, is called psychology, and on the whole I am against it. It manifests itself nowadays in many different ways.

In other words, we seem to have entered into a vast conspiracy on behalf of the doctrine that this is the best of all possible worlds—or rather that *our* part of it is the best:

> I suppose we all expect to find exaggeration, euphemism, and even a measure of mild deception in advertising and propaganda. Political propaganda, like the advertising of consumer goods, has developed a language of its own. One side, having found, for example, that "nationalisation" has become something of a dirty word, renames it "socialisation," or "public ownership," in the hope that it will sound better that way. The other side boldly preaches the virtues of "free enterprise" and competition, though the enterprise is not really very free, and the efforts of whole industries are devoted to the restriction of competition.
>
> Does this seem hopelessly exaggerated? I assure you it is a widespread attitude of mind. Does it seem remote from my starting point, which was the tendency to call things by more attractive or high-sounding names than their nature warrants? It springs from exactly the same cause. It arises from a conviction, which competitive politicians and pandering newspapers have done their best to implant in people's minds, that things ought to be getting steadily better and better; that it is the business of governments, and of other people referred to vaguely as "them," to see that they do get better; and that if by any chance they don't get better, it is more comfortable to ignore the failure and pretend it hasn't happened than to recognise the nature of the error. In that way we can exclude the disquieting thought that perhaps the failure is our own, and that in the long run things will get no better than we ourselves are willing to make them by our own efforts.

Alistair Cooke, writing for the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* of Feb. 13, notes that only now is the present American administration admitting that a general business recession is in process. Actually, what the New York *Herald Tribune* now regards as "the number one political issue" has been a primary issue for a long while but, again, our leaders seem to fall into Mr. Maude's trap, hoping that any problem, save that of "the Russians," will simply go away if you can describe it euphemistically. To quote Mr. Cooke:

> Senator Knowland and his party are loath just now to admit that the recession is clearly turning into a depression, as a few months ago they were reluctant to recognise a recession in what was then identified by all good men and true as "a rolling readjustment." But whatever is the fair descriptive term there is no doubt that the economy is moving in a mysterious way and that its direction is down.
>
> The economics editor of the "New York Herald Tribune" was right this morning in saying that "the deepening business recession is fast becoming the country's No. 1 political issue." The "Wall Street Journal," overcoming its traditional reluctance to upset "confidence" by questioning its existence, carried a three-column leader page article today wondering aloud whether "the present recession marks the end at last of the great post-World War II boom."

Another example of British editorial perceptiveness is provided in the *Guardian* for Feb. 20. Again, the issue concerns "appearance," though in this instance the example is rewardingly amusing:

> It is often said there are no class divisions in the United States; but the evidence offered from time to time appears to contradict this democratic boast. Recently at the Newark docks in New Jersey, Harry Seaman, a crane operator, turned up for work wearing a grey flannel suit, with white shirt and tie. Several members of his union complained that the dress was inappropriate for the job. The union supported them, and the sartorial revolutionist, not being prepared to buck the union, resumed his overalls.
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> Most people will agree that the crane driver's dress was in fact, technically speaking, unsuitable; but was that the real reason for his colleagues' objection? Not on your life! It is (if one may use the old, picturesque phrase) all Lombard Street to a china orange that they believed Harry Seaman was trying to step out of his class. In spite of the increasing financial privileges of being a modern manual worker, the step from dungarees to white collar and tie was almost certainly regarded as an attempt to upgrade the man's social status in relation to his co-workers. Class feeling intervened and cut short Mr. Seaman's sartorial stunt.
>
> The moral is that—as Bernard Shaw was so fond of reminding us—the Englishman (and in this case the American) is free to do whatever the law and public opinion will let him. That is what is meant by a free country. (Think, for example, what would happen if a Liverpool docker turned up for work in a bowler, or even a trilby!)

COMMENTARY
PAGAN OR CHRISTIAN?

WHILE C. Wright Mills (see Frontiers) calls himself a "pagan" and addresses himself to the Christian clergy as a man who does not share their faith, letters in subsequent issues of the *Nation* urge that he *is* a Christian. The implication is that anyone who declares so forthrightly for Pacifism and supports his argument by saying that a Christian can adopt no other view, *must* be Christian.

Mr. Mills, however, speaks to this point, and since this question of how one qualifies as a Christian has been previously discussed in these pages, we extract another paragraph from Mr. Mills' *Nation* (March 8) article:

> I hope you do not demand of *me* gospels and answers and doctrines and programs. According to your belief, my kind of man—secular, prideful, agnostic and all the rest of it—is among the damned. I'm on my own; you've got your God. It is up to you to proclaim, to declare justice, to apply your love of man—the sons of God, all of them, you say—meaningfully, each and every day, to the affairs and troubles of men. It is up to you to find answers that are rooted in ultimate moral decision and to say them out so that they are compelling.

In what sense can you call a man like that a "Christian"?

Well, you can call him a Christian if by "Christian" you mean any man whose feelings concerning the brotherhood of man reach an intensity which you think is appropriate for those who declare their faith in the Fatherhood of God. But this amounts to saying that "belief" is of little or no importance in defining what is "Christian."

Very few Christians, of course, will be able to agree with Mr. Mills' rhetorical acceptance of his "damned" condition as an unbeliever. His article makes the idea quite ridiculous, although it is by no means ridiculous to invite thoughtful Christians to speak to this point. It would, in fact, be vastly clarifying to have an unequivocal answer from Christians to Mr. Mills' question:

> . . . you claim to be Christians. And I ask: what does that mean as a biographical and as a public fact?

If Christianity could be redefined in terms of the high ethical example of Jesus Christ, instead of in doctrinal or creedal terms, our society might experience an influx of moral inspiration comparable to that of the Reformation. It would also mean an end to sectarianism, and a general recognition on the part of Christians of the many paths to religious truth throughout the world.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

DISCUSSION OF A GENERATION: VIII

AN appropriate introduction to the writing of J. D. Salinger, as a less faddish interpreter of the younger generation than the hipster authors, is provided by an article in the British monthly *Encounter* for January, by Leslie A. Fiedler, entitled "The Un-Angry Young Men, America's Post-War Generation." Mr. Fiedler explains a good deal when he remarks that "My own high-school age son, reliving for the third or fourth time the attitudes I first remember noticing in the freshmen classes I taught just before World War II, complains sometimes that my generation has robbed him of the possibilities of revolt. He sees clearly enough that for him the revolutionary gesture would be an empty piece of mimicry, incongruous in a world which has found there is no apocalypse and that contemporary society threatens not exclusion and failure but acceptance and success. What he does not yet perceive is the even more crippling fact that, by anticipation, my generation has robbed his of new possibilities even of accommodation, of accommodation as a revolt against revolt. The single new slogan available to his generation is the pitiful plea 'Get off my back!' Yet it is they who should be on ours !"

Mr. Fiedler deplores the lack of dynamism in contemporary American literature, and feels that this generation is without a literary "voice." Yet he feels compelled to make the following exception:

> The new generation in the United States has found no new journal, because it has found no new voice and no new themes. I do not mean that there are no younger writers who are interesting and no books worth reading; I do mean that by and large there is no coherent body of new fiction or poetry which indicates a direction or creates a strikingly new image of the new age. The Angry Young Men of Britain have managed, whatever their shortcomings, to project themselves and their dilemma in such figures as Kingsley Amis's Lucky Jim; for the nearest equivalent our new young must look to J. D. Salinger. The recent *Nation* symposium on the college student agrees that the one novel they feel is truly *theirs* is Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye;* and I myself have seen several imitations of that book in prep-school literary magazines, some quite frankly labelled, "Holden Caulfield in Baltimore," "Holder Caulfield in Philadelphia," etc.

Salinger's leading characters, as one critic has remarked, are fully aware that their problem is not the problem of an unjust society. The problem exists, and is known to exist, within. But Salinger's young people are acutely aware of pretentiousness, and expose it precisely because they make no pretenses, themselves. They do not "see through" anything for the purpose of exalting their own egos, but because they cannot help it. And there is a logic in their ruminations, a continuity of feeling and reason which bridges their more irrational moments. Salinger's characters are minds alive, not minds echoing Allen Ginsberg's claim that "the best thinkers of our time have decided to give up thinking."

We have for quotation two Salinger passages, one with a negative emphasis—a dislike for the way many people and the world situation are put together—the other philosophically and mystically affirmative. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, the story in which Holden Caulfield emerges, we find this seventeen-year-old becoming philosophical during and after a motion picture session:

> The part that got me was, there was a lady sitting next to me that cried all through the goddam picture. The phonier it got, the more she cried. You'd have thought she did it because she was kindhearted as hell, but I was sitting right next to her, and she wasn't. She had this little kid with her that was bored as hell and had to go to the bathroom, but she wouldn't take him. She kept telling him to sit still and behave himself. She was about as kindhearted as a goddam wolf. You take somebody that cries their goddam eyes out over phony stuff in the movies, and nine times out of ten they're mean bastards at heart. I'm not kidding.
>
> After the movie was over, I started walking down to the Wicker Bar, where I was supposed to meet old Carl Luce, and while I walked I sort of

> thought about war and all. Those war movies always do that to me. I don't think I could stand it if I had to go to war. I really couldn't. It wouldn't be too bad if they'd just take you out and shoot you or something, but you have to stay in the *Army* so goddam long. That's the whole trouble. My brother D. B. was in the Army for four goddam years. He was in the war, too—he landed on D-Day and all—but I really think he hated the Army worse than the war. Anyway, I'm sort of glad they've got the atomic bomb invented. If there's ever another war, I'm going to sit right the hell on top of it. I'll volunteer for it, I swear to God I will.

What Holden is really asking for, here, as throughout much of the book, is a world where men are more devoted to reason. He doesn't really want to sit on an atom bomb, but is explaining that this is what people *are* doing all the time without knowing it—that preparedness for war and the explosion of an atom bomb are essentially one and the same thing. In Salinger's *A Perfect Day for Bananafish,* Seymore Glass kills himself, it is true, but he would much rather have not done so. He saw too much, felt too much, to be able to communicate with the world around him, and his true death occurred in the severance of communication.

In Salinger's most unusual short story, "Teddy"—originally published in the *New Yorker*—we have an indication of Salinger's interest in Eastern metaphysics, with particular emphasis on reincarnation. Teddy, ten years old, is a boy who knows pretty much everything because he has consciously carried with him the results of experience gained in former lives on earth. But now, his task of continuing his "spiritual advancement" in the bosom of an average American family is almost impossible. Yet Teddy, representing, perhaps, a higher rung on the ladder of evolving intelligence than Holden Caulfield, is not perturbed by the situation. There isn't very much he can do with his opportunities, but he does what he can, feeling sure that when he has done *all* that he can, his destiny will let him get out of this life and into a more fertile field for the work of the "soul." Two conversations give an indication of the "inward look" Salinger is so adept at portraying. Here, during an ocean voyage, Teddy is being questioned by a professor who is puzzled by the strange feeling that Teddy knows a great deal more than himself:

> "May I ask why you told Professor Peet he should stop teaching after the first of the year?" Nicholson asked, rather bluntly. "I know Bob Peet. That's why I ask."
>
> Teddy tightened his alligator belt. "Only because he's quite spiritual, and he's teaching a lot of stuff right now that isn't very good for him if he wants to make any real spiritual advancement. It stimulates him too much. It's time for him to take everything *out* of his head, instead of putting more stuff *in*. He could get rid of a lot in just this one life if he wanted to. He's very good at meditating." Teddy got up, "I better go now. I don't want to be too late."
>
> Nicholson looked up at him, and sustained the look—detaining him. "What would you do if you could change the educational system?" he asked ambiguously. "Ever think about that at all?"
>
> "I really have to go," Teddy said.
>
> "Just answer that one question," Nicholson said. "Education's my baby, actually—that's what I teach. That's why I ask."
>
> "Well . . . I'm not too sure what I'd do," Teddy said. "I know I'm pretty sure I wouldn't start with the things schools usually start with." He folded his arms, and reflected briefly. "I think I'd first just assemble all the children together and show them how to meditate. I'd try to show them how to find out who they *are*, not just what their names are and things like that . . ."

And here we come to a basic difference between the hipster-writers and Salinger: the Salinger characters believe in meditation, and the hipster-writers believe in frenzy. The professor has another go with Teddy as he tries to interest this little-giant brain in preparing himself for medical research:

> Teddy answered, but without sitting down. "I thought about that once, a couple of years ago," he said. "I've talked to quite a few doctors." He shook his head. "That wouldn't interest me very much. Doctors stay too right on the surface. They're always talking about cells and things."

"Oh? You don't attach any importance to cell structure?"

"Yes, sure, I do. But doctors talk about cells as if they had such unlimited importance all by themselves. As if they didn't really belong to the person that has them." Teddy brushed back his hair from his forehead with one hand. "I grew my own body," he said. "Nobody else did it for me. So if I grew it, I must have known *how* to grow it. Unconsciously, at least. I may have lost the conscious knowledge of how to grow it sometime in the last few hundred thousand years, but the knowledge is still *there,* because—obviously—I've used it. . . . It would take quite a lot of meditation and emptying out to get the whole thing back—I mean the conscious knowledge—but you could do it if you wanted to. If you opened up wide enough."

This is one of Salinger's many "anti-mechanist" passages. He is one interpreter of a generation's attitude who asserts that the essential issue of man is the problem of self-discovery, not social change, and not "kicks." William Wiegand, writing on Salinger for the Winter *Chicago Review,* speaks of Salinger's integrity while suggesting a favorable comparison with F. Scott Fitzgerald:

Salinger, in resisting the dominant trend of determinism in American fiction during the last fifty years, has simply succeeded a little better than Fitzgerald in isolating the hero's response by keeping the "passion" as remote from sexual connotation as possible. Where the object of delight is found in women, these women are often little girls or nuns, and what is admired is sexless in essence, some capacity for charity or candor, sensitivity or simplicity. Fitzgerald's heroes, on the other hand, usually confused glamor with beauty. To this extent, they were far more conditioned by a particular social climate than Salinger's are.

FRONTIERS

Essay on Moral Sensibility

C. WRIGHT MILLS, professor of sociology at Columbia University, author of *White Collar, The Power Elite*, and other books, has contributed to the *Nation* for March 8 an article of extraordinary power. Titled "A Pagan Sermon to the Christian Clergy," this article demands that Christians, and Christian ministers in particular, face the facts and the implications of modern war in the light of their religion. Mr. Mills writes not as a Christian, himself, but as a wondering "pagan." The heart of this sermon addressed to Christians is as follows:

> Your role in the making of peace is less the debating of short-run and immediate policies than the confrontation of the whole attitude toward war and the teaching of new views of it by using them in criticism of current policies and traditions. And in the end, I believe the decisive test of Christianity lies in your witness of the refusal by individuals and by groups to engage in war. Pacifism, I believe, is the test of your Christianity—and of you. At the very least, it ought to be *the* debate within Christendom.

Mr. Mills will no doubt secure a wry agreement from Christians who are already pacifists—"wry" because no pacifist, Christian or otherwise, can help but regret that he has not yet been able to address the world with the universal accents and deep moral tone to which this pagan sociologist has risen.

Mills' article recalls the incomparable appeal of Leon Tolstoy, "Christianity and Patriotism," written in 1892 on the occasion of the military convention between the Russians and the French. Mills can no more tolerate the conventional Christianity of the present than Tolstoy could stand the professional piety of that time. He finds the general Christian acceptance of the "crackpot metaphysics of militarism" a total moral default or insensibility:

> By moral insensibility I refer to the mute acceptance—or even the unawareness—of moral atrocity. I mean the lack of imagination when confronted with moral horror. I mean the turning of this atrocity and this horror into morally approved conventions of feeling. I mean, in short, the incapacity for *moral* reaction to event and character, to high decision and the drift of human circumstances.

In this article, Mr. Mills gets above himself and above us all. He touches the very nerve of the common guilt of Americans:

> The key moral fact about this situation is the virtual absence within ourselves of absolute opposition to [the] assumptions of our ruling elite, to their strategy, and to the policies by which they are carrying it out. And the key public result is the absence of any truly debated alternatives. In some part the absence both of opposition and of alternatives rests upon, or at least is supported by, the fact of moral insensibility. . . . In all the emotional and spiritual realms of life, facts now outrun sensibility, and these facts, emptied of their human meanings, are readily gotten used to. There is no more human shock in official man; there is no more sense of moral issue in his unofficial follower. There is only the unopposed supremacy of technique for impersonal, calculated, wholesale murder. This lack of response I am trying to sum up by the altogether inadequate phrase "moral insensibility," and I am suggesting that the level of moral sensibility, as part of public and private life, has in our time sunk below human sight.

Let us be thankful for C. Wright Mills. But it is just to note the fact that, while sixty-five years ago, there was only one Tolstoy, today there are at least a dozen who, if not of Tolstoyan genius, may fairly be spoken of as voicing similar or related views. Looking back over recent issues of MANAS, we made a list of writers who have recorded something of the Tolstoyan insight and vision in contemporary terms. There are, first of all, the wartime writings of Dwight Macdonald and Simone Weil, printed in Macdonald's magazine *Politics*, 1944-47. Then there was Kenneth Patchen's challenge to the "victors" of the second world war, the occasion being the question of what should be done about Ezra Pound (MANAS, March 19, pp. 7-8). The *Saturday (Literary) Review* for March 2, 1946, printed Lewis Mumford's fiery indictment of the maniacs of atom and nuclear bombing: "Gentlemen: You Are Mad!" Last year there were several more appeals of both depth and drama. The *Saturday*

Review for May 18 published Albert Schweitzer's "Appeal to Conscience." Then the editor of that distinguished journal, Norman Cousins, published two editorial articles of his own, one of which, "Checklist of Enemies" (*SR*, July 27), was reprinted in MANAS (Nov. 27), and the other, "The Casual Approach to Violence" (*SR*, Aug. 31), being extensively quoted in MANAS for last Feb. 26. In Britain last year, Sir Stephen King-Hall printed in his weekly newsletter (reprinted in *Peace News* for May 10) a serious proposal of the nonviolent defense of England. Even an American General, Omar N. Bradley, felt constrained to exclaim at the idiocy of the attempt "to stave off . . . ultimate threat of disaster by devising arms which would be both ultimate and disastrous." General Bradley's speech was printed in full in *I. F. Stone's Weekly* for Nov. 18, 1957. Albert Camus, in *The Rebel*, writes in outrage: "On the day when crime dons the apparel of innocence—through a curious transposition peculiar to our times—it is innocence which is called upon to justify itself. . . . murder is the problem today." Arthur Morgan's "The Possibility of Reconciliation" is a masterpiece of the irenical spirit, yet an indictment of all those who ignore its moral force (reprinted from *Community Service* in MANAS for Nov. 6, 1957 and in *Frontier* for February, 1958). Stringfellow Barr's "Idiot's Orbit: Cold War in a Lunar Age," appeared in the *Nation* for Jan. 25, and then, in the March 8 issue, came this article by Mills.

Mills invites the Christian clergy to stop competing with the entertainment business, to stop making religion "a respectable distraction from the sourness of life," and to stop generalizing moral issues to the point of emptiness:

> If you do not specify and confront real issues, what you say will merely obscure them. If you do not alarm anyone morally, you will yourself remain morally asleep. If you do not *embody* controversy, what you say will inevitably be an acceptance of the drift to the coming hell. And in all this you will continue well the characteristic history of Christianity, for the Christian record *is* rather clear: from the time of Constantine to the time of global radiation, Christians have killed Christians and been blessed for doing so by other Christians.

Mills does not speak to "institutions," but to individuals:

> Why do you not make of yourself the pivot, and of your congregation the forum, of a public that is morally led and that is morally standing up? The Christian ethic cannot be incorporated without compromise; it can live only in a series of individuals who are capable of morally incorporating themselves.

These are days, says Mills, which call for "a little Puritan defiance." Not for years have the men of God been confronted by so searching a challenge:

> Should not those who have access to the peoples of Christendom stand up and denounce with all the righteousness and pity and anger and charity and love and humility their faith may place at their command the political and militarist assumptions now followed by the leaders of the nations of Christendom? Should they not denounce the pseudo-religiosity of men of high office who would steal religious phrases to decorate crackpot politics and immoral lack of policies? Should they not refuse to allow immortality to find support in religion? Should they not refuse to repeat the official, un-Christian slogans of the dull diplomats who do not believe in negotiation, who mouth slogans which are at most ineffective masks for lack of policy?
>
> . . . truly I do not see how you can claim to be Christians and yet not speak out totally and dogmatically against the preparations and testing now under way for World War III. As I read it, Christian doctrine in contact with the realities of today cannot lead to any other position. It cannot condone the murder of millions of people by clean-cut young men flying intricate machinery over Euro-Asia, zeroed in on cities full of human beings—young men who two years before were begging the fathers of your congregations for the use of the family car for a Saturday night date.

How will they answer this man? How can anyone answer this man, except to agree with him, and be ashamed of having waited so long to offer agreement. A handful—a rather large handful—of Christian pacifists, of course, have agreed with C. Wright Mills for a long time; longer, perhaps, than he has agreed with himself. But the Christian

pacifists may find it difficult to accept a "pagan" ally, one whose "secular" inspiration bespeaks extraordinary moral strength. Mills asks their laggard co-religionists:

> Who among you is considering what it means for Christians to kill men and women and children in ever more efficient and impersonal ways? Who among you uses his own religious imagination to envision another kind of basis for policies governing how men should treat with one another? Who among you, claiming even vague contact with what Christians call "The Holy Spirit," is calling upon it to redeem the day because you know the times are evil?
>
> If you are not today concerned with this—the moral condition of those in your spiritual care—then, gentlemen, what is your concern? As a pagan who is waiting for your answer, I merely say: you claim to be Christians. And I ask: what does that mean as a biographical and as a public fact?

It is time that other men of intellect and moral courage speak out as Mills has spoken. It is time, also, that men of decent instincts and a desire to understand the kind of a world they live in should listen to men like Mills. Who else is there worth listening to? How else will there be created a weight of *independent* opinion through which the men who are presently running the world straight toward irretrievable ruin may be made to call a halt?

We had thought to write to the *Nation* to ask permission to reprint the Mills article entire. But the *Nation* will undoubtedly offer reprints of this article to all who want them. They should be distributed by the thousand. They should be plastered on every church in the country, and wherever human beings come together in the name of either God or Man. In these pages, we have sometimes asked what Tom Paine would have to say if he were alive today. Tom Paine, we think, would sound like C. Wright Mills and Lewis Mumford. He would find, as they are trying to find, some way of breaking through the bland insolence of moral insensibility, some way of shocking the people of this and other countries into consciousness of how close to being murderers of innocents they all are.

Last February four men set sail in a boat for Eniwetok—the proving waters of nuclear bombs. Storms drove them back to San Pedro Harbor, but they set sail again on March 23, determined to enter the dangerous waters and remain there, challenging the nuclear testers to set off their bombs if they would. Their vision is the same as Mills'. In a statement explaining their venture, they said:

> . . . as a nation, confused by the complexity of the problem, we stand benumbed, morally desensitized by ten years of propaganda and fear. *How do you reach men when all the horror is in the fact that they feel no horror?*

This is the enormity which has moved Albert Bigelow and William Huntington, both architects in their fifties, to sail the *Golden Rule* (a thirty-foot ketch) to Eniwetok. They are not writers and sociologists. They are simply human beings who *feel horror* and are constrained to act against it. Mills feels the horror and is acting against it in his way. But every man who feels the horror can find *some* way of acting against it. The man who does nothing at all—he is the man who must admit the indictment that Mills makes of conventional religion and conventional religionists in the United States—that their level of moral sensibility has "sunk below human sight."