

JOHNNY'S ROCKET

I NEVER could make up my mind whether Alonzo told that story for the children or for the grownups. The children enjoyed it, of course; I kind of enjoyed it myself, although mostly because I kept wondering what Alonzo was getting at: and the grownups—well, I wouldn't say they *enjoyed* it, but the story certainly held their attention.

It was at the Fincherys' house, a few days before Christmas. I had always liked Finch and I had a feeling it would do him good to meet Alonzo. Alonzo and I had a stopover in Finch's town and so I engineered it for us to have dinner with him. Alonzo knew I had an angle, but he didn't seem to mind. He'd go along with almost anything, if he had the time and no good reason not to. So we ate at the Fincherys' and they put us up for the night.

It was little Abel Finchery who asked Alonzo to tell a story. Children naturally like Alonzo, although they don't climb all over him the way they do with some people. They just like to be with him, and sort of watch him. Abel is about six, a wide-eyed little lad with a shy smile and a direct way about him with grownups. He walked up to Alonzo and said, "Will you tell me a story?" Nobody could have said no.

So Alonzo sat down and began a story. The other three children came over and sat around him, while Finch and his wife stayed with me, over on the sofa where we could hear and watch.

"This is a story," Alonzo said, "about a boy named Johnny and his rocket." Alonzo looked at Abel and said, "I guess Johnny was about your age, or maybe a little bit older. I can't tell you too much about the rocket. It was a nice kind of rocket—maybe you could call it a tame rocket because it didn't make any noise—nothing like the ones they set off on the Fourth of July. It was a trained rocket, too, because it would go anywhere Johnny wanted it to go, and it had a place where he could sit on it, something like a hobbyhorse, and some handles for him to hold on to.

"Now Johnny, like other boys and girls, had heard of Santa Claus, and toward Christmas time would wonder a lot about him. At this Christmas time I'm telling about, Johnny could just read the words, 'Santa Claus,' in the big store advertisements in the papers, although the pictures of him were a lot plainer and easier to understand than the printed words. Johnny would turn the pages of the paper, every night after supper, looking at the pictures and wishing he could get to see Santa Claus closer up, and not just in a picture. He kept asking. 'Where is Santa Claus?' Johnny's mother and father thought this was a pretty easy question to answer. 'Well,' they said, 'Santa Claus can be found most any place at Christmas time.' Johnny's father thought a moment and then he said: 'Santa Claus started out as just an idea, but so many people thought about the idea and talked about it and told their children about it that the idea grew up to be a rolypoly little man with a long white beard and rosy cheeks, and then, pretty soon, his reindeer came along, too, pulling a sleigh, with presents in it for *everybody*'."

Alonzo stopped a moment and looked around. "You know," he said, "People talk about *believing* in Santa Claus; I don't think it's quite like that. You don't believe in Santa Claus, or not believe in him. Instead, you just have a good feeling about him, and it isn't fair to try to make him altogether real or altogether imaginary. Anyhow, this question didn't worry Johnny. He knew, all right, that Santa Claus wasn't the same as a *person*. Johnny didn't want him to be a person who would get all dirty coming down the chimney and drive away the *idea* of Santa Claus that Johnny had. For Johnny, the idea was more fun than a real person, and in one way it was more real, too, than a person.

"So, when Johnny asked about where he could find Santa Claus, he didn't mean what it sounded as though he meant. He just wanted to get a little more friendly with the idea of Santa Claus. He hoped his mother and father would understand that. He

pointed to the name of the store on one of the pages of the paper. 'What does that say?' he asked. His father told him about the stores downtown, and then, of course, Johnny asked about the other Santas in all the other advertisements.

"Johnny's father wasn't quite sure what to say about so many Santas. 'Well,' he said, 'I guess Santa moves around quite a lot. Maybe he goes from one store to another. Santa knows some pretty good tricks, you know. Maybe he can be at more than one place at the same time.'

"Johnny's mother smiled at Johnny's father. I guess she thought that was a fine explanation to give to Johnny. Johnny seemed to think it was all right, too. Anyway, he didn't ask any more questions but just went on looking at the papers.

"A little later he went out into the hall and went toward the closet where he kept his rocket. His mother and father didn't understand the rocket very well, and they began to look worried. 'What are you going to do, Johnny?' his mother asked. 'Well,' said Johnny, 'I thought I'd take a little ride.'

" 'Oh Johnny!' his mother said, 'I wish you wouldn't!' " Alonzo stood up and looked at Finch and his wife and me. "You know," he said, "I guess I better explain about Johnny's rocket. Johnny brought it home in his express wagon when he was four years old. It was the day they thought he was lost. They were just getting ready to call the police. It was almost dark and Johnny's mother cried a little, she was so worried. Then Johnny came down the block pulling his wagon, and sticking out the back was this rocket, all blue and gold, with a bright, shiny tip. It looked quite heavy but Johnny was able to lift it and bring it into the house. The hard part to understand about this rocket was that it wasn't just a play rocket. Johnny took rides on it. He would take it out into the back yard, always at the time of day when everything is gray and fuzzy, just before night comes, and he would grab hold of the handles and then he would just disappear. Sometimes he would be gone for nearly a half an hour. The first time he took a ride his mother was frantic. She didn't tell anybody but Johnny's father because she didn't know

how to explain it, and by that time, of course, Johnny had come back.

"Johnny couldn't explain much about it to them because he didn't see that there was anything to explain. It was his rocket, he had it, and he took rides on it, that was all. 'But Johnny,' his father said, 'how does it *work*?' Johnny just looked up at him and said, 'Like a rocket.'

"'But Johnny,' his father said. 'What makes it *go*?' 'Same thing that makes *me* go,' said Johnny. 'I think about going for a ride, then I get on the rocket and think about where I want to go, and then I go.'

"Johnny's father and mother talked about the rocket between themselves and Johnny's father said something about seeing a doctor, but Johnny's mother said no, she didn't think that was the thing to do. Then, one night when Johnny was visiting his cousin, Johnny's father went out in the back yard with the rocket and stayed by himself for a while. Johnny's mother saw him go out with it, and she laughed and said, 'Going to try to get up out of the smog for a while?' Johnny's father didn't say anything back. He just went out the door.

"After a while he came back. His clothes were dirty and his hair was all mussed up. 'You know,' he said, 'that darn thing nearly worked. It scared the life out of me.' 'What happened?' Johnny's mother asked. 'Well,' he said, 'I did what Johnny said. I sat on the little saddle and held on to the handles, and I tried to think of going some place. I thought it was pretty silly—a grown man sitting on top of a little thing only four feet long!—and then I thought about that place up at the lake, where you look out through the trees and see the island, and beyond it the point, shimmering in the dusk, and then the thing kicked like a shotgun and I fell off from about two feet above the ground. Got myself some bruises when I fell. I'll never try that again !'

"'We'll have to stop Johnny from using it, too,' his mother said.

"But this was one thing Johnny wasn't such a good boy about. He wouldn't stop taking rides on the rocket, and although he didn't take so many of them because it worried his mother and father so

much, he wouldn't make any promises about the future. So they just let it go and hoped for the best. You see, they thought if they hid the rocket or had the trash man take it away, Johnny might come home some day with a little jet plane in his wagon, and then they really wouldn't know what to do!

"So," Alonzo went on, "at this Christmas time when Johnny was asking about Santa Claus, his mother and father didn't do anything to stop him from taking a ride on his rocket. As he went toward the closet in the hall, they saw him put a little piece of paper in his pocket, and they wondered what it was, but they didn't call out after him. They just looked at each other. Johnny's mother picked up the newspapers and put them in the kitchen.

"Johnny had several stops to make that night. It was the first time he took a ride to places where people were. He had a list of the big stores—places like Macy's, Gimbel's, Bullock's and Robinson's—and he went to one after the other. In his head was a great big idea of Santa Claus. The first store he came to had Santa up on the fourth floor, in the toy department. After he landed he stood in the aisle, about twenty feet away from Santa's big chair, and just looked. A man with a black necktie and a flower in his buttonhole came along and said, 'Where did you get that toy rocket, young man?' Johnny didn't answer him, so the man said, 'Where is your mother?' 'Home,' said Johnny, and moved a little closer to Santa Claus. The man left him alone. The man couldn't see any toy rockets in stock like the one Johnny had, so he decided it was Johnny's, after all, and he went away.

"Johnny went up close to Santa Claus. He could almost touch him. But then, something funny started to happen. The great big idea of Santa Claus in Johnny's head began to hurt. It not only hurt but it got smaller and smaller, and at the same time the rocket, which Johnny was holding in his arms, began to get heavier and heavier.

"Johnny was afraid he was going to have to drop the rocket and looked around to see if he could find some table to lay it on, but then, it started getting lighter. The more he looked away from the Santa Claus on the big chair, the lighter the rocket got. The

idea of Santa, up in his head, stopped hurting, too. Johnny went around the corner from the place where they had the Santa and sat down on a pile of pup tents. He just worked on the Santa idea until he felt all right again, all over, and in his rocket, too."

Alonzo stopped talking for a while. He just sat there staring at the fire in the fireplace. "Didn't he go to any other store?" asked Abel. "Maybe some other store had the real Santa," the boy said. "Maybe," said Alonzo, "but I don't think so."

"Oh, yes," Alonzo said. "Johnny went to all the other stores. But he got awfully careful when he came to the toy department. He would kind of peek at Santa and then wait for his head to start hurting or for the rocket to get heavy. Usually both things happened right away. Once, when a great big Santa with streaks in his suit and a beard you could see wasn't a *real* beard burst out laughing at what a little girl said in his ear, the rocket got the lightest of all and the idea in Johnny's head began nudging him over to where Santa was. Johnny thought maybe Santa would like to go for a rocket ride with him, but then he decided the rocket wasn't quite big enough. Besides, suppose they got way up there and the rocket started to get heavy again! He'd have to let Santa fall off, or maybe the rocket would come down all of a sudden, and they'd both get hurt. So Johnny just smiled at the Santa and took off for home.

"But when he got up in the air he couldn't seem to think much about home. He just sailed around over the housetops and the dark hills, not noticing where he was going, not even noticing the cold, and thinking for all he was worth about Santa Claus.

"Johnny didn't think much at all about presents. Oh, he liked presents all right, and there were things he wanted for Christmas, but when he got to thinking about Santa Claus, he forgot all about such things as presents. He thought of warm, chuckling laughter, of sleigh bells, of sharp pointed hooves going ratatat on something or other up there in the sky, and he thought of bright yellow light shining out of house windows on the snow, and of all the pictures he had ever seen about Santa or about Christmas time. Then he saw a little house on the top of a hill. It was a little house with one great big room. He

knew it was a great big room, even though it was a very little house.

"Well, Johnny aimed his rocket for the little house, because he knew that that was where he had been wanting to go, all along. Inside, there wasn't much of anything in the room. It wasn't exactly empty, but there wasn't anything in it you'd want to tell about. Johnny knew what it was—it was a thinking room. So he sat down and began to think. The idea about Santa in his head began to feel better and better. Pretty soon it filled up the whole room. You couldn't really *see* the Santa all over the room, but he was there. Johnny stayed for a while, just understanding and meeting Santa, and then he thought about his mother and father and about how maybe they were worrying about him. So pretty soon he was home in the hall and putting the rocket away.

" 'That was a quick one,' said Johnny's father, looking pretty relieved. Johnny cried out, 'Oh Daddy—,' and then he stopped. What would he say? Then he knew he didn't really have to say anything at all. 'Did you get to see Santa?' his father asked. 'No,' said Johnny, 'Santa wasn't at any of the stores. They were just double-pretend Santas, and I didn't like them very well—all except one who seemed pretty nice.' Johnny was thinking about the one who laughed with the little girl. 'I don't think stores are a good place to find Santa Claus,' said Johnny. 'They get you all mixed up and they made my rocket get heavy.'

"Johnny's father asked anxiously, 'You didn't fall off, did you?'

" 'Oh, no,' said Johnny. 'It wasn't like that. I just don't think stores know anything about Santa Claus.'

" 'Mmmm,' said Johnny's father. "Maybe he had a job in a store." Alonzo explained that he didn't know what Johnny's father did, but if he worked in a store it would explain why he kept kind of still for a while. And I was glad that Finch never got mixed up with a lot of Christmas "business." You don't get into that when you run a garage.

I was kind of glad, too, that the children didn't ask a lot of questions about Santa Claus. They were

more interested in the rocket and Abel wanted to know something about the thinking room that Johnny had found on the top of the hill. Alonzo didn't say much more. Alonzo always knew when to stop. He had a way of talking and telling about things that made you realize that if he couldn't have a little fun, himself, telling a story, he would just quit and do something else. He seemed to figure that if it wasn't a good story for him, it wouldn't be good for anybody else. He isn't what you could call a "preacher," although his stories always have a lot of point to them.

When we left the next morning, Abel couldn't keep away from Alonzo. I mean he followed us down the walk and leaned on the door of the car until we had the motor going. As I said, Abel was a wide-eyed little boy. He didn't cry or anything. He didn't ask us to come back some time. I guess he was just thinking about something, the way boys or girls will, without wanting anything special. I guess they just get filled up with an idea. I think Abel had a fine Christmas that year. Maybe Finch did, too.

REVIEW

"WE CANNOT BORROW GOD"

SINCE Heinrich Zimmer's death in 1943, both philosophers and psychologists have deepened their appreciation of Dr. Zimmer's contributions to philosophic synthesis. A leading Indologist of the century, he taught oriental philosophy and religion at Heidelberg, Oxford and Columbia. Bollingen's *Philosophies of India* is the Zimmer book from which our title for this review was borrowed, a work now available in a Meridian edition at \$1.95 (687 pages).

Philosophies of India was edited by Joseph Campbell, and in this case the task of editing included piecing together some of Dr. Zimmer's papers after his death, in order to complete the closing chapters. None can doubt that Mr. Campbell was uniquely fitted for this task, since his own explorations of the psychological meaning of symbol and ritual parallel Dr. Zimmer's investigations.

Dr. Zimmer is a scholar who is careful not to overrate the values of scholarship, especially as conceived in the West. In his introductory chapter he points out that, while Western scholarship tends to decry metaphysics, there will always be the lonely student who seeks something more than a technical grasp of his subject. Further:

Something beyond critical reasoning is what he requires; something that someone of adequate mind should have realized intuitively as a Truth (with a capital T) about man's existence and the nature of the cosmos; something to enter the breast and pierce the heart with what Baudelaire called "the steely barb of the infinite," . . . What he requires is a philosophy that will confront and resolve the task once performed by religion; and this is a need from which no number of college courses on the validity of inference can emancipate him.

It is the experience of these "moments of truth" which Zimmer, like Campbell, obviously seeks.

Zimmer supplies his own best introduction:

We of the Occident are about to arrive at a crossroads that was reached by the thinkers of India some seven hundred years before Christ. This is the real reason why we become both vexed and stimulated, uneasy yet interested, when confronted with the concepts and images of Oriental wisdom. This crossing is one to which the people of all civilizations come in the typical course of the development of their capacity and requirement for religious experience, and India's teachings force us to realize what its problems are. But we cannot take over the Indian solutions. We must enter the new period our own way and solve its questions for ourselves, because though truth, the radiance of reality, is universally one and the same, it is mirrored variously according to the mediums in which it is reflected. Truth appears differently in different lands and ages according to the living materials out of which its symbols are hewn.

Concepts and words are symbols, just as visions, rituals, and images are; so too are the manners and customs of daily life. Through all of these a transcendent reality is mirrored. They are so many metaphors reflecting and implying something which, though thus variously expressed, is ineffable, though thus rendered multiform, remains inscrutable. Symbols hold the mind to truth but are not themselves the truth, hence it is delusory to borrow them. Each civilization, every age, must bring forth its own.

We shall therefore have to follow the difficult way of our own experiences, produce our own reactions, and assimilate our sufferings and realizations. Only then will the truth that we bring to manifestation be as much our own flesh and blood as is the child its mother's. . . . The ineffable seed must be conceived, gestated, and brought forth from our own substance, fed by our blood, if it is to be the true child through which its mother is reborn: and the Father, the divine Transcendent Principle, will then also be reborn—delivered, that is to say, from the state of non-manifestation, non-action, apparent nonexistence. We cannot borrow God. We must effect His new incarnation from within ourselves. Divinity must descend, somehow, into the matter of our own existence and participate in this peculiar life-process. According to the mythologies of India, this is a miracle that will undoubtedly come to pass.

Prefacing his intricate but never dull treatment of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, *The Bhagavad-Gita*, Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism, Dr. Zimmer discusses what seems to

him the superior psychological insight of Indian thought. But unlike some of the contributors to the journal, *Philosophy East and West*, Zimmer is not content to contrast East and West by a method which compares the strength of one tradition with the weakness of the other. It is his claim that Indian philosophy does everything that was done by the *philosophes*, but continues beyond the realm of intellectuality to the task of applying the psychological insights which have been acquired:

Indian, like Occidental, philosophy imparts information concerning the measurable structure and powers of the psyche, analyzes man's intellectual faculties and the operations of his mind, evaluates various theories of human understanding, establishes the methods and laws of logic, classifies the senses and studies the processes by which experiences are apprehended and assimilated, interpreted and comprehended. Hindu philosophers, like those of the West, pronounce on ethical values and moral standards. They study also the visible traits of phenomenal existence, criticizing the data of external experience and drawing deductions with respect to the supporting principles. India, that is to say, has had, and still has, its own disciplines of psychology, ethics, physics, and metaphysical theory. But the primary concern—in striking contrast to the interests of the modern philosophers of the West—has always been, not information, but transformation: a radical changing of man's nature and, therewith, a renovation of his understanding both of the outer world and of his own existence; a transformation as complete as possible, such as will amount when successful to a total conversion or rebirth.

The attitudes toward each other of the Hindu teacher and the pupil bowing at his feet are determined by the exigencies of this supreme task of transformation. Their problem is to effect a kind of alchemical transmutation of the soul. Through the means, not of a merely intellectual understanding, but of a change of heart (a transformation that shall touch the core of his existence), the pupil is to pass out of bondage, beyond the limits of human imperfection and ignorance.

We are not competent to evaluate Dr. Zimmer's judgments of philosophical traditions with which we have but nodding acquaintance, as for instance Vedic teachings, Sankhya psychology,

and the doctrines of the Jains. We do note, however, that he has suggested that a synthesis of the yoga of Patanjali and the theism of the Vedas is to be found in the structure and philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Always, he affirms, Indian philosophy has within it the germs of its own regeneration. The implicit aim is to strive, as the *Gita* counsels, to reach a knowledge which is "beyond all doctrines." This may explain why the Indian tradition affords such a fascinating diversity of emphasis, and also why this diversity has not led to the rivalry and bitter partisanship in religion with which we are acquainted in the West.

As Dr. Zimmer reviews the central doctrines of Karma and reincarnation—appearing in only slightly different guise in the various schools and traditions—we are able to see what he means by "universal ideas." For, whether taken as symbol or as fact, these teachings are a projection of the basic human recognition that many transformations of "self" are needed before any man can hope to reach the stature of which he is capable.

COMMENTARY

A CYCLE OF BEGINNINGS?

THERE is a passage in the reader's letter in this week's *Frontiers* which is philosophically appealing and seems intuitively sound, yet needs further examination. The passage reads:

The universe of science unfolds through observations which can be articulated with relative precision and confirmed, with equal precision, through independent observation by others. The universe of religion unfolds through inner individual experience whose precise communication, from one individual to another, is extremely difficult. This is tragic since the inner experience, to each individual, is far more direct and vital than those specific observations of external fact whose communication is comparatively easy. But, if there is a universe, then the universes unfolded, respectively, by science and religion must, eventually, be the same.

What this reader seems to be saying is that the objective world of science is the phenomenal aspect of the system of reality which is known or approached subjectively by religious awareness or perception.

An assumption of this sort has numerous consequences—or, at any rate, possible consequences. You could say, for example, that the total of experienceable reality is thus the stretch between the subjective and the objective and that the significant order for human beings to understand is made up of the relationships between the inner and the outer aspects of things. You might say that this order is comprehended by the term *moral law*.

But if, as would logically seem to be the case, the subjective side of reality is the region of *cause*, what need is there of what we call "science," or the methodical study of the external world? This question throws us back on the empirical reality of human experience. As our correspondent says, communication of inward experiences is difficult if not in fact impossible. The inward readings of noumenal reality vary from individual to individual. And even if a kind of consensus of moral truth may be discerned in the expressed

conclusions of the spiritually great, the problem of "authority" remains as one of the chief besetting evils of mankind.

You could say that the moral justification and in large measure the historical explanation of the scientific movement is the liberation of mankind from both the fact and the idea of religious or spiritual authority.

Well, since the problem of authority is so difficult to deal with in religion, why not abandon religious inquiry altogether, as a means to truth? Why not turn to that mode of investigation which produces conclusions that are always out in the open—the "public truths" disclosed by science?

This point of view, which has obvious merits, has been the substantial justification for claiming that science has either partial or total philosophical authority over the findings of religion—religion, here, meaning the inward or intuitive access to the content of reality. This view has been pressed with considerable success for something like fifty or seventy-five years, and only now is coming into question. Why should it come into question?

Let us take an illustration. In the United States, today, the most important issue among a large number of scientists is whether or not the Government should continue to test nuclear weapons. What are the facts involved in this question? Not all the facts are known, of course; but this is not extraordinary; probably there is nothing within the region of our experience concerning which *all* the facts are known. The situation may be put this way: certain facts are established, known, and admitted by all scientists. The issue arises over the interpretation of the facts—in a measure the scientific interpretation is debated, but mainly the controversy centers on questions of moral interpretation.

Without getting into technical questions, it may be said that scientists agree that the radiation by-products of fission explosions are harmful to human beings. They may argue about *how*

harmful they are, and to what extent the harm may be tolerated as a "calculated" ("uncalculated" would probably be more accurate) risk, but the fact of the harm, however measured, is beyond debate. This, however, is not the major issue. The argument of consequence springs from the claim, on the one hand, that it is moral to risk some harm to human beings through radiation effects in order to make the United States better prepared to conduct a successful war or defense against a military aggressor. The other position—to which, incidentally, by far the great majority of scientists appear to subscribe—is that it is morally wrong and indefensible to incur these risks for the purposes described.

What sort of questions have we here? Obviously, they are not scientific questions. They are questions concerning the worth of the human individual, the rights and responsibilities of man in connection with the welfare of one another, the lesser-of-two-evils problem, the question of national security versus humanitarian regard for the peoples of other nations, and all the other questions which result from such inquiries.

To meet these questions you have to have a conception of the good of man in non-material as well as material terms. Since science deals with the material universe, it can hardly supply an account of the good in non-material terms.

So, again empirically, we are thrown back on ourselves. The intuitive or religious mode of inquiry has a crucial role in a problem of this sort. What is a human being? What are the highest ends of a human being? How are they fulfilled?

These are the essential philosophical problems of man. They are also his essential practical problems, in this epoch of history. That, in our time, the philosophical and the practical should have become one may make the present a time of new beginnings in human affairs.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY: II

To continue the review of the collection of opinions on contemporary educational problems in the *Saturday Review's* "Accent on Education" issue (Sept. 13): Among the foreign exchange students who were invited to discuss peculiarly American dilemmas was Djamal Yala, a twenty-seven-year old Algerian who now studies at Rutgers. Unlike many students in foreign universities, Djamal feels, a young American in the university is "cut off from the outside world." He continues:

The college student has little chance to live the day-to-day struggle of his people and to share their hopes and disappointments. Likewise the outside world does not appear to call upon the student for help. As a result, the student does not seek political power; he has little confidence in his personal contribution to present problems, and society seems to ignore his potential contribution. Yet the American student is faced with discovering and giving practical meaning to new values in his society, a society in which "conformism" is a synonym for "tolerance"; "apathy" for "self-restraint"; and "swamp conviction" for "good citizenship." While it is democratic to tolerate diversity, the American student could more actively support those who are persecuted for their divergence from group values, ideas or patterns. While they may accept self-restraint as one of the requirements of life in a community they could meet the challenges of society with a sense of constant progress, instead of following the stream.

The *Saturday Review's* "Accent on Education" issue provides abundant indications that the teachers who bother to think at all realize that group conformity of opinion is in no way desirable. And yet America has always been peculiarly susceptible to mass thinking. Charles Frankel, writing on "The Trouble With 'Togetherness'" (*New York Times*, April 27), puts the matter well:

The story of American education is a tale of an earnest search for togetherness—for ways of adjusting

the parent to the teacher, the teacher to the child, the child to the group and the group to—well, to the maxim that it is good to be a group. I recently heard the consummate expression of this ideal from the mouth of a school administrator expressing his doubts about the acceleration of bright children. "One of the things a child must learn in school," he said thoughtfully, "is how to bear fools gladly." When one thinks of the ingenious new steps that might still be taken in American schools to better fulfill this ideal, the imagination is staggered.

More than a century ago Alexis de Tocqueville noticed the peculiar aptitude of Americans for forming associations. "As soon as several of the inhabitants of the United States have taken up an opinion or a feeling which they wish to promote in the world," he observed, "they look out for mutual assistance; and as soon as they have found one another out they combine."

Togetherness carries this old habit to a new height of refinement. It makes it unnecessary for a man to have "an opinion or a feeling . . . to promote in the world" in order to wish to form an association. Indeed, if a man has any social conscience at all, he will try to keep his pet ideas and deep feelings under control, for everyone knows what these can do to the harmony of a group.

The rejection of contemporary society by those youths who occasioned so much discussion as "the beat generation" may have something to do with their realization that very little true individualism exists among adults. We encounter the cultural symbols of individualism at every hand, yet, when security is sought in identification with one's productive function in society, or by alignment with groups of influential persons, all social and political attitudes will be governed more by expediency than by honest opinion. As Robert Assagioli puts it in a pamphlet, *Dynamic Psychology and Psycho-synthesis* (a reprint of an article first appearing in the *Hibbert Journal*), "the 'man in the street' and even many well-educated and intelligent people do not take the trouble to observe themselves and to discriminate; they drift on the surface of the 'mind-stream' and identify themselves with its successive waves, with the changing contents of their consciousness." According to Dr. Assagioli, the basic problem of

our time is the discovery of the Self—"not the self submerged in the ceaseless flow of psychological contents," but a true or continuously conscious "Higher Self." Dr. Assagioli continues:

What has to be achieved is to expand the personal consciousness into that of the Self; to reach up, following the thread to unite the lower with the higher Self. But this, which is so easily expressed in words, is in reality a tremendous undertaking. It constitutes a magnificent endeavor, but certainly a long and arduous one, and not everybody is ready for it. But between the starting point in the lowlands of our ordinary consciousness and the shining peak of Self-realization there are many intermediate phases, many plateaus at various altitudes on which a man may rest or even make his temporary abode, if his lack of strength precludes or his will does not choose a further ascent.

Viewing the predicament of the disenchanting and alienated young person of today in the light of Djamal Yala's remarks, one is apt to feel some sympathy. If you think you are entirely controlled by social mechanisms so large that they seem beyond influence, you just don't want to "keep in touch with the world." You want to get "outside" somewhere—way out. Pat Grabowski reports the view of a "Beatnik" in the *Daily Northwestern* for Nov. 7:

"A lot of us were street corner kids, the rest are college grads, psychotic jerks who write books. Some guys try to keep in touch with the world. They go to psychiatrists, tend bar or now and then vote for Ike. See those people over there," he said, pointing to a small group of colorfully clad people.

"They're who we call the novitiates. They're probably discussing philosophy now. Most of them feel they want to change our social structure.

"When they find they can't change it they'll try something else, and finally when they've passed the point of despair they'll be the way I am, no longer controlled by society."

Help for the future, according to one *Saturday Review* writer, will come from teachers who, having long belonged to some particular school of educational thought, have "broken through" to comprehend what educators of opposing outlook are talking about. Robert Lewis

Shayon, who writes the lead article, is himself a good example of this awakening, and, in reporting one of his interviews he provides another:

I found philosophers willing to take education seriously, and educators eager to test their midsummer-night's web of gossamer terms ("interest," "experience," "motivation," etc.) against the sharp challenges of disciplined thinking and semantics. At the humblest grade levels in a Palo Alto school, I found a top-flight university mathematician experimenting with the teaching of geometry in the first grade. He was uncompromising in his vocabulary, he insisted on the children being "precise." He didn't give a damn for pupil-oriented teaching theory, and he was drawing no conclusions for another year. The children, before my eyes, nevertheless were telling him how to construct triangles; and the professor sweating out their blank stares and profound silences, was getting a salutary taste of communicating at a fundamental level.

Here we find a "high-level intellect" type, usually impatient with the results of "watered down" teaching in the secondary schools, who decides to fight through to communication with children directly, according to his own ideas. Because this mathematician has strong opinions as to method and discipline, and because so many youngsters today are difficult to teach, both he and his pilot-group class will learn something from one another. On the other hand, those who are so thoroughly immersed in the practical problem of getting a child to pay enough attention in class to learn a few things will do well to remember that "a few things" are no protection against the feeling of aimlessness and emptiness now being celebrated by the literary apostles of the Beat Generation.

We need an increase of cross-fertilization between educators and parents of differing group persuasions. The *Saturday Review's* "Accent on Education" number should be a valuable aid to anyone willing to step beyond his habitual grooves of opinion.

FRONTIERS Science and the Individual

WE have for discussion the following letter from a reader:

Editors: The combination of three statements in your lead article of Nov. 19 ("Trouble with Definitions") is a personal challenge to me. The statements are these:

1. People—or the spokesmen for people—do not really care about man at all.
2. (Quoted from Jung) "We ought not to underestimate the psychological effect of the statistical world picture."
3. Scientific rationalism is an intellectual attitude which has evolved in studied neglect of the subjective side of human life.

In my interpretation, these three statements are the gist of the editorial. Your tentative conclusion is the need for a "philosophy of selection," presumably inclusive of scientific rationalism as well as of "an approach to the world of inner reality—the world of value, aspiration, and ideal conceptions—with the same spirit of adventure that the scientists of the past embodied in their encounter with the physical world."

A drive prompted by my own inner reality, manifest since my childhood, has made it my purpose to be concerned with the statistical world picture. I believe that my work actually contributes in no small measure to the picture we have of world population trends. If the psychological effect is deleterious, I am implicated in the guilt shared by the scientific rationalists of our age. Only too ready to admit this guilt, I nevertheless feel that the motivation in my work is something much broader and deeper than that "intellectual attitude which has evolved in studied neglect of the subjective side of human life."

Scientific rationalism need not always be so narrow. True science, at any time, is constricted by the limited tools at its disposal. With the acquisition of more tools, science, ideally, may become more nearly coextensive with the "selective philosophy" referred to. Eventually, it may even cover the same ground as religion, though, of course, from a different perspective. The universe of science unfolds through observations which can be articulated with relative precision and confirmed, with equal precision, through independent observation by others. The universe of religion unfolds through inner individual

experience whose precise communication, from one individual to another, is extremely difficult. This is tragic since the inner experience, to each individual, is far more direct and vital than those specific observations of external fact whose communication is comparatively easy. But, if there is a universe, then the universes unfolded, respectively, by science and by religion must, eventually, be the same.

Science, specialized, tends to confine itself to particular and relatively narrow—though never quite self-contained—fields for which the available scientific tools are relatively adequate. Because of these limitations of procedure, and perhaps also because of the individual scientists' *amour-propre*, a dangerous impression is gained, as though the scientific dispensation recommends such narrow confinement of all our attentions. Not only the wider public, but scientists themselves have fallen prey to this snare.

Granted this, demography merely stands at opposite poles with those sciences in which the human individual is dissected into his constituents: biochemistry; genetics; the dissolution of the soul into its several strata of the conscious and the subconscious. But it is as important to know how each individual stands within the large statistical aggregate, as to know the substrata from which the individual emerges.

Between the extreme poles, there is a wide field of social-scientific endeavor which, because of hitherto limited tools, has been signally unenlightening. This field, so far, has been tilled mostly with a hoe, at a time when the physical sciences have tilled their fields with irrigation, tractors, and cross-fertilization. Perhaps the poorly tilled social field is the most important of all.

Limited scientific tools, and mistaken analogies taken from the impressive progress of physics, have constricted the social sciences mostly to "behaviorism." But not only behavior constitutes the interaction of man and society.

Progress in the physical sciences became substantial when it was possible to substitute for numerous "forces" believed to be operative, the postulate of an abstract and generalized "force." The latter is an unexplained metaphysical entity, and has lately undergone various modifications.

I believe that an equivalent metaphysical substratum for the social sciences is long overdue, but is ready to emerge. We feel, and we observe, that a variety of "values" are operative in social phenomena.

It may take courage, but it is worth trying to conceive of an abstract and generalized "value" as that postulate which permits relative unification of the social field. That the structure and dynamics of generalized "value" may be amenable to scientific manipulation, and that they are likely to differ most radically from the structure and dynamics of generalized "force," seems to be foreshadowed in the works of R. Mukerjee.

Neither "force" nor "value" is likely to constitute the ultimate in reality, though, possibly, they are two alternative manifestations of the ultimate recognizable by humans.

When "value," and not merely this value or that value, becomes amenable to scientific operations—and I believe that some day it will, though by scientific tools differing in many ways from those currently in use—a bridge will be built between scientific rationalism and the wider and forever widening "selective philosophy" which haunts us and sustains us in our endeavors.

While we are unacquainted with the works of Mukerjee, referred to above, and are thus unable to understand what is meant by an "abstract and generalized value" that would unify the social sciences, the general tone of this letter is greatly reassuring. It bespeaks an attitude and temper among contemporary scientists which is very different from the typical attitudes of thirty years ago.

By pleasant coincidence, we read at almost the same time as this letter the November number of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist*, which has in it a symposium on science and education. The several articles concerned with this subject provide the same general impression of the attitude of scientists, today. Take for example the paper by Bentley Glass, "Liberal Education in a Scientific Age." Dr. Glass is a member of the department of biology at Johns Hopkins University and was one of the geneticists on the committee of the National Academy of Sciences which reported on "The Biological Effects of Atomic Radiation." His paper in the November *Bulletin* is a lucid discussion of the role of science in education. A paragraph from the conclusion will illustrate his general view:

. . . science has limitations as well as powers. It tells us much, but hardly everything. It can deal with matter and energy, space and form and time. It scarcely measures values, it is thwarted by intangibles. Science reveals truths, but perhaps never the whole of truth. Its grandest conceptual schemes and theories may fail and have to be replaced. It is objective, not subjective, and the inner life of man is, and must always remain, subjective. Science is the product of the human mind, but what the mind is we do not know.

Science, so conceived, can be a vastly fruitful enterprise for philosophy. Elsewhere Dr. Bentley shows how scientific knowledge may amplify other regions of human experience:

Beauty and meaning—ecstasy and apprehension of truth—may always as in the past be grasped intuitively. More and more, however, as science occupies a larger place in human life and as it transforms the conditions of our existence, the area of beauty and meaning which scientific understanding reveals becomes magnified relative to the intuitive. One example may make this apparent. It requires no scientific understanding to take delight in the green of woods and meadows and the rustle of leaves in spring. But the deeper insight into the significance of green leaves which the scientific understanding of leaf structure, photosynthesis, and the ecological interdependence of living things can generate in the mind detracts not at all from intuitive appreciation while it adds immeasurably to it.

It is obvious from the foregoing, as from our correspondent's letter, that science—at least as represented by such spokesmen—can no longer be charged with "studied neglect of the subjective side of human life." This is not to suggest that MANAS has been tilting at windmills, or knocking over straw men, in its contentions concerning the general development of scientific thought. Past neglect of the subjective side of life is widely admitted by scientific thinkers. But now we have equally manifest efforts to balance the ledger and to find some way of relating the two sides of human experience—the subjective and the objective.

On this basis, it is fair to predict that the next twenty-five years should bring a fascinating period of intellectual adventure, during which originality

of thought and daring in hypothesis are likely to become characteristics of serious scientific expression.

Where does the issue come into focus? On the nature of the human individual. When Jung speaks of the psychological effect of the statistical world picture, he refers to the reduction of the individual to an "anonymous unit." From this reduction comes the tendency to "deal" with people as parts instead of wholes, and all the vast irresponsibility of the collectivist point of view. There is surely nothing wrong or "evil" in statistical knowledge, as such. The trouble lies in allowing it to fill the void of our ignorance of the role and destiny of individual man. It is a trouble which began long before the development of modern statistics and its application to the field of demography.

We hesitate to add to Hegel's already unnatural burdens and responsibilities, but it must be admitted that the great German metaphysician presented the world with a philosophy of history which ignored the individual human being almost entirely. He was not, as a careful Hegel scholar, John McTaggart, pointed out, *interested* in individuals—which became a matter of great convenience to the Marxists who borrowed his method. McTaggart's philosophy, outlined at length in *Some Dogmas of Religion* and in *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, might prove a useful starting-point for repairing this neglect.