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THESEUS IN THE LABYRINTH

AMONG the most provocative thinkers of today, as MANAS has frequently noted, are the humanistic psychologists, concerned with a view of man as fully growing and self-fulfilling—in A. H. Maslow's words, "one whose inner nature expresses itself freely, rather than being warped, suppressed or denied." In *Toward a Psychology of Being,* Dr. Maslow points out that "the hero image" is notably lacking in our culture:

> Every age but ours has had its model, its ideal. All of these have been given up by our culture: the saint, the hero, the gentleman, the knight, the mystic. About all we have left is the well-adjusted man without problems, a very pale and doubtful substitute.

Russell Baker's New York *Times* column "Observer" (July 3) parodies the proclivity for taking the struggle out of life:

> How far is American know-how from producing a disposable man?
>
> Closer perhaps than it seems. Sears, Roebuck and Co., is already marketing a stingless bee, for people who want to keep bees without really being bothered. The stingless bee, of course, was inevitable, just as the disposable man is. It is merely the latest in a long line of technological breakthroughs that have brought us into the Nothing Generation, or, as social psychologists might call it, The Non Age.
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> The purpose of The Non Age is to make it possible for the Nothing Generation to get through a complete non-life without any of the untidy bothers of living, like bee stings. Hence, the non-bee.
>
> Other adjuncts of the good non-life include the fuzzless peach, the seedless grape, and odorless booze (vodka). All serve the same basic function as the stingless bee. They relieve man of the need to come to grips with nature.

So, of course, this is also the age of the non-hero, a time when the dynamic of the myths of the past is missing. We have ideological "myths" in plenty, but none which tends to move the heart or inform the mind of the individual. Yet greatness has been very much a part of the story of human aspiration. Henry Murray undertook to define the psychological function of myth in "Myth and Myth-Making," an introduction to a symposium on mythology published in *Daedalus* for the Spring of 1959. Dr. Murray wrote:

> A myth is a *potent imagent.* Among its various potencies or properties the following should probably be included. (*a*) The sensible mythic representation is *peculiarly attractive* in one way or another (vivid, impressive, spectacular, beautiful, enchanting, marvelous, mysterious), leaves a durable and recurrent imprint in many minds, and is often reproduced in different narrated, enacted, or portrayed versions (*cynosural function*). (*b*) It *evokes empathy* (corresponding feeling) or recipathy (reciprocal feeling) and binds positive affection (admiration, awe, adoration, fellow feeling, love, compassion) over a considerable period of time *(affective function).* (*c*) It *guides conduct* by portraying one or more basic human needs, their goal, the actions they propel, literal and symbolic, et cetera, et cetera.

Several who participated in the symposium expressed the opinion that "rational men" do not, or should not, require myths today, but this view seems to ignore the fact that what we might call *classic* myth (as distinguished from ideological myth) is very close to the center of man's capacity for striving, and represents that striving in symbolic form. The late Edith Hamilton brought to many of her readers a feeling for the positive aspects of mythology. Loving the Greeks, she recognized that the myths were not simply improbable stories, but representations of the complicated forces within man's psychological being and of his need to seek a fulfilling destiny. In *Mythology* Mrs. Hamilton wrote:

> The world of Greek mythology was not a place of terror for the human spirit. Of course the mythical monster is present in any number of shapes,
>
> Gorgons and hydras and chimaeras dire,

> but they are there only to give the hero his need of glory. What could a hero do in a world without them? They are always overcome by him. The great hero of mythology might be an allegory of Greece herself. He fought the monsters and freed the earth from them just as Greece freed the earth from the monstrous idea of the unhuman supreme over the human.

Theseus, favorite among Greek mythological heroes, is nowhere better revealed as an image of Everyman in travail than during his stay in the fright-inspiring labyrinth, awaiting encounter with the Minotaur—whose victims usually wander in circles, with no knowledge of how to escape. So do all men and women feel, time and again. But Ariadne secretly gives to Theseus a thread to unwind as he penetrates the maze, so that he may find his way out if he slays the Minotaur. This thread, together with his fearlessness and prowess, leads to a successful end of the hero's task.

For modern man, it makes no difference whether we consider the Minotaur to represent paralyzing distortions of his anxiety-ridden psyche, or the similar distortions of the social structure. In both cases the frustration diminishes what a man might be. The tendency, of course, is to localize the monster either in the psyche or in society. But it dwells in both locales, and the symbols of regeneration apply equally to both aspects of the problem.

Every man, as individual, encounters his own particular Minotaur, and he also must face the labyrinthine fate of his time. If the men of today, as Theseus, are to find daylight, to count and be of account, an Ariadne's thread is clearly needed for the passage. The demonic presence of the Minotaur in ourselves must be located, and we must also find our way through the labyrinth of society. The imprisoning demon must be fought; and then, the liberating climb must be undertaken.

When it comes to an analysis of our economic and political situation, we realize that most of us do indeed belong to "the lonely crowd." Routinization and mechanization of the process of living are endemic in our culture, and the most searching insights into the nature of modern society are apt to imply anarchistic revolt. Some of the most incisive writing about the modern labyrinth is by Dwight Macdonald, whose magazine *Politics,* during World War II and for a few years after, focused a brilliant if harsh light on the social scene. In one of his own articles in *Politics,* "The Responsibility of Peoples" (which later became the first section of his book *The Root Is Man*), we encounter painfully vivid descriptions and examples of the paralytic distortions in mass attitudes—corresponding to the paralytic distortions which must be transcended by the patient in therapy who, in order to become well, is obliged to make a "jump"—perform an "act of commitment" with some new sense of individual integrity. The greatest of all political delusions, Macdonald suggests, is the idea that responsibility may be assigned to nations or classes—a Marxist assumption which non-Marxists often end by adopting, along with the "scientific-determinist" assumption, also Marxist, that the individual cannot be "responsible" for himself, since his personal moral sense and motivations are determined by the societal grouping to which he belongs. Most of our intellectuals and political thinkers have for years given either tacit or explicit acceptance to these beliefs. From this and other causes, we have finally created a society in which individuals really *are* not responsible—not, at any rate, to the extent they might have been in a less mechanized social order. Macdonald summarizes this trend:

> More and more, things happen TO people. Modern society has become so tightly organized, so rationalized and routinized that it has the character of a mechanism which grinds on without human consciousness or control. The individual, be he "leader" or mass-man, is reduced to powerlessness vis-à-vis the mechanism.

When a man acts merely as a dependent unit in a mass—when he is no longer aware of any broad moral responsibility for what he does—it is useless to proclaim that there can be just punishment for an erring "nation" or "class."

Submerged in a national group, all of whose members suffer from cultural self-righteousness, the individual can hardly be conscious of any wrong-doing not classified as such by the community, however obvious and glaring the offense may be to others. The Germans of the time of the Nazis, the Russians under Stalin, and ourselves in certain relationships, have here a great deal in common, differing only in specific situation and in degree.

The common ground is the attitude of irresponsibility itself, into which it becomes easy to drift. In some cases the compulsive motions of the socio-political mechanism make a complete mockery of "free" choice by the individual, while in other circumstances choices may actually be made, although with great difficulty. As an instance of the former, Macdonald cites the wartime case of two Tibetans who were pressed into military service by the Russians. Later they were captured by the Nazis and transferred to the Western front to defend "the Fatherland," and were there captured, in turn, by the British. It was finally discovered that the two prisoners (or were they "allies"?), being Tibetans, spoke neither Russian, German, nor English, and had not the slightest idea whom they were fighting for, or whom they were fighting against, or why.

If no traditional groups or political fronts represent "the cause of the common man," he can be represented only by those scattered individuals who reject the party lines of all the mass societies. It follows that the deviator from political norms becomes a person of great consequence, not because he "influences" the course of events in the usual way, but because he represents *one* way in which the reference-points of human choice can actually be altered.

We are able, therefore, to consider man, individual man, as truly "responsible" from the moment that he becomes a radical—one, that is, who has decided that, for him, neither the accepted canons nor the compulsions of behavior provided by society are acceptable as bases for his action.

The way out of the labyrinth, in other words, has to be discovered by the individual for himself: the *root* is man. But how difficult a task! Neither the last war, nor any prospective war, is to be classified as tragic, but simply as nihilistic. The war novelist cannot now dramatize in the classic sense, because the more accurately he represents the reality of modern war, the more surely he removes individual man as hero or tragic figure, turning him into a not-hero. But the situation of war does dramatize the self-obliterating nature of the time in which we live.

Every hero in classic myth is presented with a choice between submission to an external fate and seeking a self-initiated destiny. To survive as an individual, he must be "reborn" either by an act of commitment which thrusts him out of his paralyzing environment or by slaying the enemy in his own psyche—but these two tasks must often be accomplished at the same time. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex,* Oedipus is not a hero, but a man transfixed by his encounter with fate. Orestes, however—to be thought of as another facet of the same man—is awakened sufficiently to his own powers as an individual to transform fate into an intelligible destiny. In an article for the *Psychoanalytical Review,* Herbert Fingarette writes:

> In the art and drama of ancient Greece, the story of Orestes ranked at least equal in significance to that of Oedipus. . . . Oedipus was fated to do as he did. Orestes is a man who does not have a fate, but a *destiny.* The difference is vital.

Heroic myth and religious inspiration merge in showing ways to escape bondage and find new life. But where is the modern equivalent of the voice of the oracle speaking to Orestes, or of the slender Ariadne's thread provided Theseus to find his way through dark passages? Is it possible to discover the saving political doctrine, the one true metaphysic, the irreproachable philosophy? Apparently, the thread that leads out of the

labyrinth has something to do with all three, though little to do with formal religion or with any kind of certainty.

There is no way to avoid, here, a continual jumping back and forth from metaphysics to psychology, and from philosophy to the turmoil of contemporary existence. The "autonomous" man is not produced, but rather manifests periodically, or cyclically. And no one, least of all the man himself, can tell when moments of transcendent insight will come. Maslow's "peak-experiences" are entirely unpredictable in terms of any study of man we yet know. Yet there is a sense in which the "self" of one man is also the Self of All. This may be a way of repeating the thought of one of the ancient *Upanishads:*

> Smaller than small, greater than great, this Self is hidden in the heart of man. Though seated, it travels far, though at rest, it goes everywhere.

To perceive that one is indeed in the labyrinth, with only faint glimmers of light at rare intervals, is to perceive a great deal. Then we may "see" that we must forego what we have long thought to be our only power of sight in order to gain another kind of awareness. Drama and fiction are often "real" in this sense—the sense put so well by Maxwell Anderson in *Off Broadway.* Anderson feels that all plays of any value are "mystery plays." They evoke the shadowy images of another kind of reality—æsthetic, ethical, tragic. They generate the presence of other dimensions of human existence and thereby raise the great metaphysical questions regarding human destiny.

How do these reflections, so varied in mood and diversified in form, relate to the "hero" of Greek myth? Actually, they are twentieth-century modes of describing the same human predicament that is dramatized by the Greek myths of Oedipus and Orestes—the tragedy of a man pursued by Nemesis until he discovers a destiny. The Greeks knew that each person is in partial bondage—the predicament not only of being Greek but of being human. Unlike modern man, the Greeks did not expect life to provide unalloyed "happiness"; they anticipated interminable tests of physical endurance, of psychological strength, of moral understanding. But this expectation led neither to pessimism nor to despair; for they realized that *every* human experience provides ingredients which may be transmuted by acts of self-transformation—that each agonizing ordeal may, with the help of some sort of Ariadne's thread, result in further initiation. In short, that the whole "meaning of life" should be understood as a progressive series of awakenings.

REVIEW

TOWARD A NEW ECONOMICS

THE modest beginnings of new forms of economic enterprise—attempts which are neither "socialist" nor "capitalist," yet endeavor to embody certain of the ideals of both these ideological systems—are not attracting the attention they deserve, despite the fact that some of them have been in existence for almost fifty years. The chief reason, no doubt, for this neglect has been the preoccupation of the highly industrialized nations with war, fear of war, and preparation for war. War makes no contribution to social intelligence. It does not lead to the spread of ideas of common responsibility and altruistic endeavor. On the contrary war produces a general paralysis of the moral feelings; it vulgarizes the social life and exhibits before all the most debased aspects of human nature, so that, in time, people become convinced that they and all others can be aroused to common action only by the harsh stimuli of anger and fear.

Even effective criticism of such a society seems in time to be limited to the strident horror and the shocking self-recognition brought by a film like *Dr. Strangelove,* which does not instruct so much as stun us into realizing what we have become. We have eyes and ears for the ruthless diagnosis, but not for the gentle and tender antidotes to our disease, which are found in almost forgotten processes of mutual trust and cooperation.

Yet these processes have advocates and exemplars, even in our time. A booklet by a German economist, Folkert Wilken, *New Forms of Ownership in Industry,* published in India by the Sarva Seva Sangh, at Rajghat, Varanasi ($1.00), shows that the lessons of the present continue to be learned by thoughtful men, however few in number. Readers who have been interested in the French Communities of Work, in the Gandhian idea of Trusteeship, in the new political thinking of Jayaprakash Narayan, and in the economic conceptions of Walter Weisskopf and E. F. Schumacher, will want to own this book. (In England, it may be obtained from Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N. 1.)

Prof. Wilken's goal is a form of individual or "private" economic enterprise which will satisfy the claims of both social responsibility and human freedom. He recognizes that businesses whose undertakings combine these qualities will have to be an expression of what must now appear as exceptional maturity on the part of both labor and manage meet. Yet the obvious shortcomings of both Capitalism and Socialism-Communism give him courage to pursue this goal. His judgment of Capitalism is this: "It has, to this day and age, been unable to discover a suitable set of arrangements for performing the things that individual egotism cannot perform." Spelling this out, he says:

> Western economic life has clung stubbornly to the Darwinian notion that the forces of individualism have their own internal checks and balances which are sufficient unaided to yield valid laws for a society based on the division of labor. To this day and age, no satisfactory social arrangements have emerged on this philosophical foundation. The cardinal error of classical English political economists was their propagation of this optimistic belief—that rational pursuit of individual interest would produce a rational social result, with competition between individuals as an adequate preventive of mutual exploitation.
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> There *are* economic fields in which this assumption can be vindicated. It is basic in consumption—so long as there is no extreme scarcity. In production it is justified to an extent in that it does conduce to maximum material satisfaction from a given amount of labor and material. In the process of distribution, it holds good while competitive movements of price are in fact serving to equate supply and demand. The forces of egotism, however, fail in three ways:
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> (1) In the way in which they incorporate human labor into the economic process.
>
> (2) In adjusting to human needs the kind of goods and services produced.

> (3) In making the capital available at the points where it is economically and socially most desirable that it is employed.
>
> It is to repair this third failure that we are most concerned here.

Prof. Wilken's book is designed to show how two remedies may accomplish this repair. One measure is what he calls the "neutralization" of the arbitrary power of surplus capital ("profits") acquired by private enterprises. He would have a special institution created to govern the use of this capital, to direct it into socially useful channels. In support of this plan he makes the following argument:

> To allow individuals and groups—power-drunk and still in the grip of antiquated lusts—to sustain and expand their old-fashioned demands for unlimited personal controls of this and that part of the wheels of industry, to assert outmoded claims to the continuing flow of tribute to industrial conquerors, is no device of progress: it is a work of frustration and ultimate destruction.
>
> It shifts the focal point away from the production of goods to the capital transactions of share-holders bent on augmenting capital values. Vast sums of money are bound up in the financial circulation of stock-exchange transactions and fictitious capital movements which are all a drag on the economic process.
>
> But are not the profits incentives that go with equity financing indispensable if industry is to be supplied with adequate amounts of capital? At present, yes! but only because of the absence of rational forms of ownership of investment funds or free capital.
>
> In Germany there are many signs of critical insight into all this. There is a realization that, in the words of an article in *Die Aussprache,* journal of independent business proprietors, by Bernard Hulsmanns, "the great and crucial question of whether man or the enterprise should be accorded precedence, has been decided in favor of the enterprise. . . . Naked and untrammelled matter has obtained dominance. . . . The human person must be restored to the center of our interest."

Some readers may feel, with Prof. P. N. Mathur, who contributes the Introduction to this work, that control of surplus or investment capital by an independent Administration will put the economic life of the society too much in the hands of a bureau made up of "experts" who are supposed to decide upon the "common social and economic good." He finds this a major weakness of the plan. However, in Prof. Wilken's idea, an entrepreneur would have the right to propose a "socially desirable" expansion in his own enterprise and seek the consent of the administrative body. Public utilities now submit to similar controls in matters of rates, etc. Prof. Wilken continues:

> Thus, without unduly restricting freedom in the financing of the economy, the Administrative Associations would curb the excesses of private interests, and their drives for power. Their trusteeship, to be exercised in collaboration with the producers of capital, would be secured by law. Capital would be passed through a cleansing sieve of social rationality—not the State, with all the political pressures to which it is subject, but an independent organ having the best expert knowledge at its disposal.

The main difficulty, here, is the possibility that a man of some genius could be prevented, under this plan, from making the money with which to accomplish some larger project in which he happens to believe, and which—experts to the contrary—might turn out to have untold benefits for all. The "cleansing sieve" could easily become a bureaucratic brake on the progress which arises from individual ingenuity and daring. But fortunately, the program envisioned would rely on growing general understanding of the need for such controls. There would be no "confiscation" of profits by the State. Actually, the idea would give the Gandhian conception of Trusteeship a form of legal sanction, but to be arrived at by common consent.

The other branch of Prof. Wilken's proposal involves a measure of ownership of private companies by the people who work for them:

> The industrial strife that has shaken the world for more than a hundred years, and the workers' opposition to the economic order in which they have to work, cannot be checked by changes that fall short

> of common ownership of the means of production in a firm by all the members of the enterprise on a quota basis. This requires a settlement embodied in a legal instrument between employers or managers and the staff. We need a sustained campaign to release the forces of mutual help, which, as Kropotkin showed, are latent in every human soul, and to direct them against the forces of selfishness based on self-centered struggle for survival.

Prof. Wilken contrasts this proposal with Communism, arguing that in Communist lands the claim that the workers own the instruments of production is fictitious: they do not own the productive facilities, the State owns them, and therefore controls employment.

The value of this book is not so much in its specific proposals as in its candid analysis of the status quo and its focus on human values. Of particular interest is the material in the appendix—devoted to a brief history of Scott Bader and Co., Ltd., in England, an enterprise which in many respects parallels the ideas of Prof. Wilken. In business as chemical manufacturers since 1920, the owners of this company have created a second corporation—The Scott Bader Commonwealth, Ltd.—to make use of and distribute the profits. In addition, the Foreword, by Jayaprakash Narayan, takes note of various forms of trustee economy that have existed in the past, referring to two books by George Goyder, *The Future of Private Enterprise* and *The Responsible Company,* as texts dealing with this subject.

COMMENTARY
FIN DE SIÈCLE

THERE is a sense in which Sartre is the man who has put an end to the nineteenth century. He will not live in the nineteenth-century world of materialism, science, and "progress," nor will he let go of the skepticism and anti-metaphysical bias of the nineteenth century. He takes what remains—which is really not much—and turns it into a heroism which has no support except from the intrinsic quality of being a man.

Dr. Mayer does not exaggerate the worth of Jean-Paul Sartre, and we need not begrudge Sartre his restless inclination to radical politics. After all, with his beliefs, he would be a man without heart if he were not drawn into some arena of concrete action.

The comparison of Sartre's idea of the self with the doctrine of southern Buddhism seems apt. In Theravada Buddhism, there is no continuous thread-soul, no enduring ego to give focus to the *skandhas* which form the "empirical" self. Yet the Hinayana doctrine is not the only Buddhist view. (For a useful discussion of the question, readers might refer to Edmond Holmes' *The Creed of Buddha,* a non-theological examination of Buddhist teachings which includes a lengthy discussion of the question of whether or not Buddha taught a permanent individuality in man which survives death; and also an examination of the issue on its merits—which Buddha would probably have preferred.)

But again, it is natural enough that Sartre should take this view. Skepticism was one of the great virtues of the nineteenth century—and Sartre's use of it is consistent. He will let no easy escape through theological tunnels soften the alienating reality of human existence. He is the perfect image of William James's tough-minded man, when it comes to religious belief as a form of weakness. That there may be beliefs—or metaphysical hypotheses—which test a man even more than skepticism is something that does not occur to him. Why should it? Such beliefs are probably not known to him; they certainly have not been common in the world where Sartre came to maturity—a world, as Dr. Mayer observes, pervaded by war.

Another nineteenth-century idea is that man is best understood in terms of abnormality and excess. It is certain that we have had few if any psychological terms that did not derive from pathology, until at least the midpoint of the twentieth century. Moreover, the value of the abnormal lies in its dramatic isolation of psychological traits. The sick man dissociates his psychic components and exhibits them one by one, so that doctors can *analyze* them. These are the phenomena of break-up, and break-down.

It is only in this last half of the twentieth century that we have begun to think of and study human beings, not only in terms of their parts, their psychological components, but as wholes. And only now are we beginning to take note of the fact that men have qualities as wholes which none of their parts reveal. Sartre had no cultural resources of this sort during his formative years. Who could be expected to repeat such things in an environment of "exile, captivity, and especially death?"

This begins to sound as though we are saying that Sartre, poor man, was born into not merely a broken home, but a broken *world.* What we mean to suggest, however, is that the wholeness of thought and of the human spirit he created out of the materials life gave him to work with is an achievement little short of miraculous. He shows how a man of mind can take the heritage of the nineteenth century—and all its evil political fruit in the twentieth—and make something enduring out of it.

In a way, Sartre stands as a lesson to those who have the habit of taking an inventory of a man's "correct" ideas and making a judgment of him on this basis. Actually, the difficulty of knowing which are the correct ideas comes as much from what men are able to do with even bad

or illogical ideas, as from problems of philosophical analysis.

For example, to be atheist and materialist in the eighteenth century was usually to be an uncompromising altruist and devotee of human freedom. Both d'Holbach and LaMettrie had this role. They were contestants against bigotry, and against religious wars. But to be atheist and materialist, today, is to try to fight the battles of the eighteenth century in the twentieth.

Yet even here the generalization may break down in particular cases. It is necessary to see what a man does with his atheism and his materialism. What are the *values* which operate for him behind those labels? One remembers the simple-minded mechanism which Clarence Darrow insisted was all the "philosophy" he needed, but look at the riches he piled up to await him in whatever heaven a materialist goes to when he dies.

We are not suggesting that ideas and philosophical conceptions have no importance, but that their operative meaning in a man's life is what we must recognize, when we are attempting to measure the man.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
SCHOOLDAYS

GEORGE CUOMO'S gaudy pocket book, *Jack Be Nimble* (MacFadden), is hardly an encomium on campus life, either fraternal or academic. The working-his-way-through hero is an intelligent young hedonist, smart enough to tutor the football players, get the girls, and be friends with the university president and a professor. But he is a cynic who thinks that the main thing to be learned at the University is what a tawdry, stupid world we live in.

Actually, "Jack" is less annoyed by the practical professionalism of football heroes and the tread of musclemen on the campus than he is by the average student. He gives some argument to his English professor, who really hates football and all it stands for. The professor suggests that the president should "throw out everybody on the football team with an IQ under seventy, which should take care of most of them." Jack questions this:

> "There are some bright guys on the squad," I said.
>
> "Sure, like that Phi Bete they had about a hundred years ago and haven't stopped talking about yet. They should've put him in a bottle. You know, Jack, maybe you ought to just move into Ape Hall along with the rest of them. You're practically one of the boys anyhow."
>
> "Except I pay my own rent."
>
> "True. And you don't walk around with one of those folded-over spiral notebooks stuck in your hip pocket. That's the way to spot an athlete, you know—the notebook in his hip pocket, and the stub pencil he writes in it with. Some of them use the same book all four years, for English, history, economics, biology, the theory of play, everything, all in a few scribbled pages of a spiral notebook, written with a stub pencil. Do you know what I say to myself every time I see one of those mastodons ambling around campus? I say there but for the grace of Benny Johnson goes a couple of thousand books for the library, there goes a lab full of microscopes, there goes a fine young physics instructor. And then when I look at the stadium I just turn sick. I can't count that high. I can't conceive of stupidity on that kind of scale."

But what about the students who are not paid athletes? Are they apt to be any closer to some serious thinking? Jack is wearily disillusioned at the opening of the school year:

> It was pretty unbearable going across campus. They were all over. For every upperclassman there seemed to be twenty freshmen, the boys in red beanies, the girls in mix-matched socks, one red, one white, and with red ribbons in their hair. Every year they look younger, and this year they looked about thirteen. I couldn't even bring myself to examine the girls very closely. Above the left side of the entrance to the Union, next to the huge and gloriously ugly bas-relief in sandstone showing the state's history and greatness, with heroic figures of plowing farmers and smoking trains, with herds of cattle and city buildings, a big WELCOME! sign hung permanently. Every few days they'd change the sign over the right half: FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA, GIRLS STATE, INDUSTRY AND PROGRESS ASSOCIATION, CONGRESS OF CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE USAGE; and now they had up the funniest and saddest sign of all in great red capitals: FRESHMEN.
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> Welcome, indeed . . . Welcome to the great halls and crowded empty classrooms, little boys, little girls. Welcome to our pleasant green-grassed Nirvana where everyone knows what Soc 2 is and worries about Hum 14, but no one knows the name of the Secretary of State or ever heard of Pakistan. Welcome especially, you who come determined not to learn anything, anything at all, to get through four years absolutely unchanged, just the way you came, who consider any attempt upon anyone's part to teach you anything as an insult, a dirty punch below-the-belt, for all of the thousands who come here to vegetate in our little intellectual hothouse, you alone carry the inevitable germ of success within you. You come as paragons, as whole and perfect examples of what our great country can best produce the most of, sans wit, grace, charm humor, brains, sans even curiosity, sans even the ability to fail in your ambition.

Well, this is a pretty strong broadside against the contemporary campus, but the author has clear support in what was recently quoted in "Children"' from Samuel B. Gould. This crusading head of

New York's educational television station, WNDT, said:

> Materialistic motivation would not be so bad if it did not so completely dominate the educational scene through high school and the undergraduate college years. . . . With such an emphasis, the process of preparing coming generations so that they will think and move constructively toward a warless world becomes difficult, if not impossible.
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> We have always kept our youth in a state of adolescence far too long for their own good. . . . We keep them in a sort of advanced nursery where they are expected to play games of make-believe and perpetrate social activities that border on the childish and insane.

To this discouraging view of the contemporary campus, we might as well add the voice of Robert T. Potter' of the University of Michigan, who says in a recent *Dissent:*

> In 1956 the University of Michigan entered into a partnership with the Flint Board of Education to establish a distribution outlet in Flint. The purpose of this cultural service station—the Flint College of the University of Michigan—is to provide undergraduate instruction for juniors and seniors (chiefly graduates of Flint Junior College) leading to a BA from the University.
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> It's not wholly facetious to describe Flint as a cultural service station. The architecture imitates the baked enamel paneling and aluminum trim of service-station-modern. The unending traffic of commuters in and out of the floodlighted driveways and parking areas, the students who park for an hour and are gone, the vocational up-grading which so many seek—all contribute heavily to this impression.
>
> Programs promising a specific vocation at journey's end are the "price leaders" that pull students into the cultural service station. Then with the parking lot full, the instructors wheedle, tease, amuse and invite the students into a liberal education.

Criticism of this sort is often the only means by which the educational idealism of an instructor can find expression. All too often he spends a substantial portion of his time struggling against the apathy engendered in students by the easy-ride psychology of the affluent society. Lewis Coser, in the same issue of *Dissent,* comments on the diminishing academic freedom of students. "Perhaps," he says, "one of the major reasons why there are not more academic freedom cases at the moment is very simply that there aren't very many radicals around." And why are there so few radicals—either teachers or students? The university atmosphere, Mr. Coser explains, is neither attractive to nor productive of the type. Here is his picture of the "knowledge industry" at work:

> Just as in the business community the tycoon has by and large been replaced by the managerial glad-harder, so within the academy new administrators armed with human-relations skills have taken over. I do not wish to imply that these men are in principle against academic freedom. On the contrary, you can watch them practically every week making impassioned speeches in its defense at fund-raising dinners. The matter is much more subtle than that. Being committed to a bureaucratic outlook on life, an outlook in which the removal of organizational friction is seen as a primary task, they quite naturally distrust "trouble-makers" who might upset the desired routines. It is not that they love academic freedom less but that they love efficient operation more.

FRONTIERS

Sartre and the Dilemmas of Man

THE philosophy of Sartre is an outgrowth of war. He was only nine years old when the first world war broke out, but it left its stamp on his philosophy. Reflecting upon it, he remarked one time that the first world war indicated the shallowness of middle class beliefs; especially the view that progress is inevitable and that material advancement would solve the problems of man.

During world war II, Sartre was a member of the underground. Many times he risked his life to defy the German oppressors. In *The Republic of Silence* he wrote: ". . . exile, captivity, and especially death (which we usually shrink from facing at all in happier days) became the habitual objects of our concern. We learned that they were neither inevitable accidents, nor even constant and inevitable dangers, but that they must be considered as our lot itself, our destiny, the profound source of our reality as men."

Like Camus, Sartre protested against France's actions in Algeria. This defiance won him the bitter hostility of the rightist forces in France which even threatened his life. But his voice could not be subdued; with the same vigor with which he denounced German atrocities he denounced the French actions in Algeria and demonstrated how they were incompatible with the tenets of humanitarianism.

In his basic ideas Sartre owed a great debt to Pascal. Like Pascal, he made a distinction between the method of science which quantifies, which is unconcerned with human desires, which can advance best by removing itself from subjective wants, and the need of the human heart which demands fulfillment and which has a knowledge which surpasses the abstractions of science. Like Pascal, he was caught by the mood of despair. To become aware meant that man was constantly threatened by extinction. Man existed at one time and in one place; the universe was alien. Unlike Pascal, in the world of Sartre there was no supreme force which would modify man's loneliness.

Nietzsche gave to Sartre his preoccupation with the problem of values. The task of philosophy, according to Sartre, was not merely to describe the universe, rather it was to change man and his institutions. Like Nietzsche, he lived close to the earth. In his analysis of man this implied an emphasis upon actuality. Sartre did not describe so-called normal human beings, rather he was concerned with homosexuals and lesbians, with such emotions as nausea, for he believed that the abnormal states of being were a better measure of man than his striving for respectability.

Man, to Sartre as to Nietzsche, could not be defined by his rational capacities. He was a struggling animal, constantly at war with himself and with others. Man moreover, according to Sartre, was attempting to dominate others either by using overt means like war or by using indirect methods such as religion which aided in maintaining the status quo and in perpetuating the illusions of the masses.

Sartre agreed with Nietzsche's atheism. Philosophers who believed that there was a first cause were only tender-minded. Indeed, Sartre pointed out, if there were a God man's freedom and morality would be inhibited, for God's will would determine life and moral standards would be prescribed. Man, in short, would just be a puppet. But since there is no God, man has total responsibility for his actions and when he fails he can blame no one else.

The technical part of Sartre's view of man was mainly derived from Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Heidegger had indicated that Being is prior to man's existence and hence he refused to classify himself as an existentialist. The relationship of Being to man, Heidegger stated, is paradoxical, for "Being has endowed the nature of man, in order that he may take over in his relationship to Being the guardianship of Being." To Sartre, being has two aspects; one is being-in-itself which characterizes the inorganic world. Thus a rock is

always in the same condition, it does not undergo qualitative changes; it is not in a reciprocal relationship with its environment. On the other hand, man represents being-for-itself. This implies that man is never static; he is constantly in a state of becoming. Sartre describes the self almost in Buddhistic terms. There is no permanent self; there is no abiding identity. Every moment man changes and defines himself through his actions.

Man's condition, Sartre indicated, is involved in a deep paradox. Man has the possibility to transcend himself not in a metaphysical sense but in an ethical and æsthetic way. Man can sacrifice, he can take part in a heroic cause, he can create as a poet or as an artist. This striving for transcendence also reveals the fundamental desolation and anguish of man. As his perspective widens, he realizes that the moment is unique and once it is gone it cannot be recovered. Man has only one chance, for there is no immortality. What he makes of the present, the way he lives under the aspect of death, defines his destiny.

Sartre often remarked that "being is haunted by nothingness." By this statement he meant that man's existence is only a frail superstructure. At any moment man may perish. His life by its very nature is bound to be incomplete. In a subjective sense, nothingness implies that man so often escapes from life. Convention, respectability, the striving for social acceptance—all imply an unwillingness on the part of man to live deeply and to defy the formlessness of nothingness.

The great danger, Sartre often pointed out, is that man wants to return to a rock-like existence. Instead of accepting turmoil and torment, he wants to become an object. In short, he desires to abdicate his essential humanity. In his description of anti-Semitism Sartre showed how it is possible for man to be dehumanized. Thus the anti-Semite at first is only superficially removed from humanity; in the end he is debased completely; he has found a second nature which conspires against any type of love and sensitivity.

In philosophical terms Sartre shows how being-for-itself, with its vicissitudes, its potentialities and actualities, its dynamic changes which have no goal and which cannot be defined or classified, yearns to become something solid and unshakable as represented by being-in-itself. The good then is that which recognizes the tentativeness and the turmoil of human existence; the evil is that which makes man a seeker for security, for absolute ideas, and absolute formulas.

The universe of Sartre is austere. There is no providence which can direct us. Man fills the place of God and gives importance to events. Man creates and changes the aspects of experience. But man is limited by his fate and he cannot escape from the dictates of space and time. His mortality is the inescapable fact which determines his being.

As for heaven and hell, Sartre indicates in *No Exit,* these are not future states. We create our own hell on earth. We do this when we live for the public image, when we waste the preciousness of the moment, when we deliberately escape from our individuality, when we become serfs to an institution or someone else. In *No Exit* a lesbian, a nymphomaniac and a coward are condemned to live together for all time. Their tortures are not external; indeed, the devil is pictured in polite terms; the tortures are internal and self-imposed and revealed in terrifying clarity.

To Sartre, evil is not a quality which can be taken lightly. The lesson of Hitlerism, he stated, was that dictatorship could occur at any time. Humanity should never forget that it was possible to kill and burn millions of human beings. To Sartre, Auschwitz with its gas chambers, was a symbol of modern man who so often was caught by the gospel of sadism and who so often abdicated his humanity.

Evil could not be ended, Sartre emphasized, merely by intellectual means. Knowledge alone would not banish Hitlerism; reason alone was not an antidote to tyranny, nor was man's suffering a prelude to perfection. In fact, Sartre felt that it

was immoral to look upon this as the best of all possible worlds; such a belief would be a supreme form of sarcasm. Thus the concentration camp victims were not killed so that virtue ultimately could triumph. Their sufferings, which could not be explained away, were real and stark. Sartre was certain that mankind would not learn a lesson. There would be more concentration camps and more torture chambers; cruelty would not decrease but would become even more universal. With irony he observed how French soldiers who were tortured by the Nazis became the torturers of the Algerians and improved the methods of sadism which the Gestapo had used.

Still, Sartre points to the need of freedom. Freedom defines the very nature of man who can negate totalitarianism in any form. He can refuse the determinism of science; he can demonstrate that he is not a slave of his environment; he can and must refuse the certainties of religion; he can escape, as Mathieu does in *Age of Reason,* from the domination of his family. Even in the torture chamber he can defy his oppressors. In this defiance lies his greatness and his dignity.

Liberty and mortality are the dominant themes of Sartre's philosophy. He shows in *The Republic of Silence* how real freedom is intensified when oppression looms. During the occupation the conquerors censored all reading material. Their treatment of the French population was extremely cruel; often scores of innocent bystanders were executed to intimidate the underground. The most vicious methods were used to make prisoners reveal the names of those who were conspiring against Hitlerism. In this atmosphere, Sartre points out, freedom meant "a declaration of principles." It implied not an abstraction, it was not a mere philosophical statement, it meant a way of action which defined the totality of man's being.

To the underground, death was not a vague possibility: it was a constant threat. And death was not a gentle release watched over by solicitous doctors, but a violent ending watched over by the Gestapo who looked upon their victims with sadistic detachment and regarded them as veritable animals to be led to the slaughterhouse. Death thus increased the solitariness of the patriot. He would die without the comfort of his comrades; he would not even know whether his cause would be triumphant. Yet in dying he would express his freedom and his mortality would be an expression of his transcendence.

Sartre, like Nietzsche, is the voice of the chaos of our time. His description of man's immorality is a prelude to a more reflective moral system. Not that he should be accepted without reservation, for especially his adherence to Marxist causes can be criticized. In this sense, Albert Camus had a more penetrating view of history for he refused to accept either the dogmatism of the right or the fanaticism of the left. Still, Sartre remains one of the most penetrating voices of modern thought. By picturing modern man in his nakedness, Sartre at the same time indicates the road to a more meaningful future and to a more humane and rational society.

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