

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY: AGAIN

NO phrase better characterizes the ferment of questioning about human problems, today, than this one. It suggests dozens of wondering inquiries, and at the same time a dearth of conclusions. Unfortunately, most of the discussions are at the academic level. They proceed in the pages of the journals of learned and professional groups; or, at best, when such questions reach the widely circulated magazines, writers proceed cautiously, controlling and filtering the issues to produce a few simple themes which the readers of mass media may be expected to cope with or understand. Publishers who represent the established institutions of the day have an instinct for protecting their readers from too much "uncertainty." There is some pragmatic justification for this, but, judging from the public prints; the publishers hardly understand what it is, except from the viewpoint of conservative self-interest. This justification is well put by Hannah Arendt in her essay in *Nomos* (reviewed in *MANAS* for Sept. 23), in which she says: ". . . for some time now, we have been living in a world where progressive loss of authority is accompanied by an equal threat to freedom."

But this is not the primary issue; the failure of the press to be an organ of authentic public inquiry and education is a derivative problem; the more intelligent and responsible the publishers, the more they share in the uncertainties of the age, so what can they do but take refuge in the inadequate but at least available securities of the *status quo*?

Let us look, therefore, at the primary question. We might begin by examining the state of mind of the writer who attempts to contribute to general human betterment at the social level. Whom is he addressing? "The people"? Whether he speaks to a limited public of specialists or a much larger audience, he either starts out or ends up by identifying himself with some species of

"we"—meaning the people who accept responsibility for acting in behalf of the common good. He proposes that "we" ought to do certain things, take certain steps, or change certain relationships which now exist. He may be naïvely confident that once the truth he intends to reveal is exposed and understood, supporters will flock to his banner and help him to put his proposals into effect; or he may write with melancholy sophistication, knowing from experience how slight his influence is likely to be; but in either case he writes for the individuals who form his hypothetical "we," hoping that they will be moved by what he says. What else can he do? This is the rational approach to human betterment. "We" know no other. That is, whatever the aids and stimuli of moral inspiration in appealing to people at large, we know that persuasion has to satisfy the equation of rationality if there is to be any humanly good result. As Alfred Reynolds wrote in *Pilate's Question*,. . .

men and women are neither birds nor cattle. In every one of them dwells the potential power of the mind to respond to thought. Regrettably, this thought can be promulgated only by means of words. Words, if meant and lived, can penetrate the thickest skull.

Let us not have any tiresome argument about this. None of the resources of human excellence is excluded by this meaning of rationality. The proposition is that fruitful human behavior must in some deep and consequential sense be *understood* behavior. It does not mean that human behavior is without a super-rational ground, but that to be grasped as good, in intentions and results, it must also have some kind of rational ground.

We should now ask the question: How are we to explain the ineffectual character of the rational appeal for social betterment?

Three generalized replies may be made. First: The appeal does not speak with sufficient depth

and strength to the people. Second: The appeal, while sound and clear, falls on the ears of people who, rightly or wrongly, are preoccupied with other interests. Third: Rationality, while our only means of communication, suffers from its own nature and limits: Rationality abstracts from the total situation and therefore, while affording one perspective on the possibilities of human good, of necessity neglects others. There is a sense, therefore, in which it anon saves and anon damns.

These, we think, are truisms. They are certainly dull enough to be truisms. Leaving them for another approach, we turn to a statement by Gandhi. He said in *Harijan* for Feb.1, 1942:

No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man. Just as a man will not grow horns or a tail, so he will not exist as a man if he has no mind of his own. In reality, even those who do not believe in the liberty of the individual believe in their own. . . . If the individual ceases to count, what is left of society?

We use this quotation because it provides a starting-point for discussion of the individual—the one who is both the conceiver and the object of rational appeals. This individual—who wants freedom, as Gandhi says; and who doesn't want it, as Erich Fromm says—this individual is a kind of microcosm of the social whole. He is pursuing a complex psychological existence, combining in himself a number of levels of feeling about what is good; and each of these levels has its own projection of rationality—ideas about the means to fulfillment. The demands of these levels compete for attention. The man who gives them order and hierarchy is some kind of philosopher; he has wholeness or unity, and we speak of him as being "mature."

Culture, you could say, is the social projection of these various levels in terms of the communications of the mind and as expressed in the various forms of literature and the arts. The role of the individual in relation to his culture varies greatly; he may be a contributor to and a creator of the common culture, or he may subsist upon very little more than its residues. The point

is, these individuals who vary so much, who together make up the totality of the human community, are *living* microcosms of motivation and behavior. Each one is pursuing a private psychological life; each one is taking in and giving out; each one's being is a continuing organic process of mind and feelings. When a man articulates thoughts in a rational form, he abstracts from that process to say what he wants to say; and in perhaps much the same way, he listens to what he wants to hear, for listening is a kind of silent "talking back."

Now rational communication, on this basis, is obviously a hit-or-miss proposition. All kinds of unknown factors play a part when an idea happens to "catch on." The situation is open-ended—and actually *alive*. You could say that this is the reason why computer techniques will not work to identify a great book or a great work of art, although they will no doubt become extremely useful in anticipating the mechanistically determined phases of human experience and human need.

Well, if freedom is the prime good, and if rational communication, to be effective, must somehow relate to a number of hidden processes of human interest and understanding, what can we do to improve our communications aimed at social betterment? The ideal of rational communication was well expressed by Victor Hugo: "There is one thing that is stronger than all the armies in the world; and that is an idea whose time has come." That is what we need: the capacity to recognize and give voice to an idea "whose time has come."

If this is to be our ideal, then there is no way under heaven of escaping the need to think of man's social life as a great organic evolution. For what Hugo is saying is that there is a *rhythm* in history—that there is rational sequence in the development of men's minds in relation to the social order under which they live. He is saying that there is an inner logic unfolding in the common life—a dialectic, even a "natural law,"

which may be obscure, but not necessarily unknowable.

We shall not take the time here to consider the objections, based upon recent historical experience, that may be raised against this conception of social development. If we retain Gandhi's insistence on individual freedom as the one indispensable attribute of the good society, these objections do not apply, whatever the paradoxes that will have to be resolved as a result.

Are we, then, in the position of having to settle the ultimate secrets of the universe, or of human destiny, in order to produce a viable theory of the good society?

To claim this would be to betray Hugo's meaning. We hardly have the capacity, now, to comprehend "ultimate secrets." In fact, it was the traffic in "ultimate secrets" which turned Western rationality against religion. The most we can hope for is the discovery of the "secret" which belongs, in the order of things, to our own time, or to our immediate future. This turns us back to the human individual. It raises the question of whether or not it is possible to make any generalizations about him, in his present stance, circumstances, problems, longings, ills, and frustrations. Can we have a key idea about the "next development in man" without dogmatizing about the human essence and final destiny?

It would be profitless to discuss this question without acknowledging the fact that all such questions—questions combining historical with human problems—have to be answered in terms of the initial movements of small minorities. There is a sense in which the present is also the past, spread out around the world, and with a vertical distribution, also, within a single culture, by reason of the great differences among individuals. The keynotes of cultures and civilizations are set by the few. This is a social fact, however we may resist the "aristocratic" implications it has for people who have but recently made great strides in realizing the social ideal of Equality.

In consideration of this dilemma, let us have a try at stating one idea whose "time has come" in our own epoch. The idea is that violence no longer has a rational role in human life. The means of violence available to us have broken the rational barrier; the attempt to describe and plan the use of these means in the language of rationality is a massive self-deception. Exposure of this deception is an idea whose time has come.

The idea has corollaries. One is that the control of some men by others, through the constraint of force, can have no rational justification. When this idea has come to saturate our culture, there will be no objection to recognizing the reality of a moral aristocracy within human society, since the best men will now be identified by reason of their rejection of force and intimidating coercion as rational means of social control. The age has outgrown these means; the present society struggles against a dead weight of atavism in trying to retain them.

The apparent problem of the power vacuums that would everywhere be created by the adoption of these ideas loses its threat when it is realized that, as proposals, they are put in the form of intellectual abstractions. As assimilated thoughts and feelings about the good, taken to heart by individuals, the ideas would in all likelihood fill the vacuums with the substance of new, non-acquisitive, non-aggressive activities.

Who will believe this? Nobody, of course, who has never attempted to make a microcosmic application of such ideas in his own life. And here, no doubt, is an example of the major cause of the weakness in our rational communications about social betterment. They are abstractions which do not touch the reality of personal existence. They are ideas *in vacuo* so far as the individual ends of man are concerned. They lack *social maturity*. They are arguments from desperate necessity, or arguments from a reaction to evils, or arguments from the desirability of better practical arrangements. They have no positive relation to the flow of life in human

beings. The ills of man are socially as well as individually psychosomatic. Yet there is no admission or recognition of this in our rational communications about the good society, so that they cannot possibly gain an intuitive response from the people.

More needs to be said along these lines. How, for example, is the ordinary man to obtain a sense of reality for the closely argued and exceedingly neat syllogisms of social doctrine—or disarmament doctrine—when he feels so much disorder in his own intellectual existence? This, you could say, is the Age of Psychotherapy. It is a time, at any rate, of the beginnings of subjective honesty. We struggle to make, not a cogent, rational analysis of our individual universe, but a halting, stumbling, truthful admission to ourselves of where we stand, what we want, and how we have been engaging in clever battles of escape and self-defeat. The more we honestly know about ourselves, the less meaning the pretentious language of public affairs can have for us. There are no neutral grays in the vocabulary of politics. It is all black and white, right and wrong. There are just the liberals and the know-nothings, or there are the sound men and the irresponsible fanatics. Even the *good* rational abstractions have too much clean surety for whole-hearted identification with them. Only the abstracted, intellectualized departments of a man's mind can join with the clean, principled, liberal vision which we so much admire, but do so little about.

Well, what should we attempt? Mix things up a bit? Get Samuel Beckett to write a Third Party Platform?

Not exactly, but we might get Arthur E. Morgan and Carl Rogers to collaborate in producing a Plain Man's Guide to Social Responsibility. (See Morgan as quoted in *Frontiers* for Sept. 2, and Rogers in the editorial for Sept. 16.) We can't do without the abstractions of communication, but we can take to heart the insights that give balance and symmetry to what we think and say about public affairs.

Our big abstractions are too big. The thinking gets too complicated. But if, to the complicated thinking of our most complicated minds, we add a little of the honest uncertainty that intelligent men must feel, and which they hide only by rationalist convention, the ordinary man might recognize something of his own world in public utterances and begin, however haltingly and shyly, to act like a responsible citizen instead of a mere object of history.

To be persuasive, rational abstractions have to run on some track over a familiar terrain. They have to correspond to men's lives in some vital fashion. We say that the Terrible Abstractions of today's intellectual analysis *ought* to move human beings to action, but the fact is they *don't*. What do we do then? Mourn the apathy of common folk? Denounce the newspapers and the time-devouring popular arts?

Apparently, we have to build new track in undiscovered country. We have to come to terms with human beings as they are, instead of insisting that they learn an enormously difficult language.

To make a further hypothesis, what has happened is this:

The world, by becoming too big, too complicated, too impressively progressive, has gone out of bounds as familiar, objective reality. The conventions of knowledge about the world have exploded into atoms, and the atoms dissolved into incomprehensible equations. The truths of religion have become brittle from crystallization and crumbled to dust. The truths of the eighteenth century have been trapped in the hardening concrete of our technological foundations. We are like babies who have been deserted by our parents and teachers. We don't *know* this world. We have no security in it. Meanwhile, we are growing into the childhood of a new system of reality—a world in which human beings are looking intensively at themselves, in a kind of empirical self-discovery. This new world has a language alienated from the old abstractions. It is a world of baby-talk, psychologically

speaking. Its "social" implications are not developed. It has the sole virtue of being a world in which a human feels at last he has a grip on himself and is beginning to act like himself. It is a world in which men define themselves in terms of themselves, and once they do this, they cannot go back to the old definitions. For this is the primary meaning of freedom.

This is the condition of life in the second half of the twentieth century. People who want to move other people in behalf of the common good will have to learn to speak to this condition.

There is no use castigating the tired, defeated adults. We have to speak to the children who are trying to grow up inside the tired adults.

The human project is different, now. We are through with the quest for power. We've *got* the power, and we find it absolutely useless for human purposes. It is very useful for things, but nothing but a threat to men. And we are still trying to apply it to men. It won't work. What we hear about the use of power for the good of man is only an echo from the past, and it can affect only the mechanized, power-fed and power-used parts of human beings. But while it affects them, it uses them up, and they are deaf to other voices.

In the shambles of our present failures, we feel the shadowy presence of old, discarded social theories and wonder about them. With apprehension rather than temptation, we ask ourselves whether the ancient formula of authoritarian rule by a "chosen few" might have embodied some hard political reality we have been neglecting. We remind ourselves of the unpleasant revelations of the psychological testers and indulge depressing reflections on the vulnerability and the vulgarity of the mass psyche as revealed by the contents of the mass media. We begin to admit the operation of covert paternalism in so many of the decisive relationships of human beings and catalog the endless uses of Machiavellian principles in the modern practice of Public Relations in both industry and politics.

Despondently we acknowledge the abyss which separates the eighteenth-century dreams of human freedom, progress, and peace from the social realities of the twentieth century. What has been wrong with our calculations?

Are the existential stoics of the present—those logical Calvinists of Unbelief—closer to the truth about man than were the revolutionary visionaries of two hundred years ago, with their high faith in constitutions, free thought, and universal education?

We still have our intellectual formulations of the good society. The principles of social value still live in our hearts, but our normative ideas about progress have broken down. We no longer feel that we know what we can expect of people, and we often suspect the worst. What were we, what *are* we, of which—or of whom—the historical present has been the logical and inevitable fruit? These are the terrible and often subversive questions which men ask themselves. They are not answered well enough either by humanitarian enthusiasm alone or by the acute diagnoses of the sociological historians.

How shall we gain the heart to

... take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them?

For here, surely, is the root of the problem of modern man.

The dream itself can never die. There is a coursing essence in the arteries of human hope that continually flows into desperate citadels of resolve. It animates the Impossibilists of militant pacifism, keeps up the courage of the Anarchists, and is the sustaining power in the vision of artists and poets. Actually, there can be no world of authentic human life without this dimension of striving after the Impossible. It is the infrequency of this kind of striving, the almost total lack of a cultural intuition of the need to hunger after the Ineffable, that has flattened out our civilization (producing, as Herbert Marcuse points out, "one-dimensional man"). For there to be a normative

scale of human progress, its highest point has to be hidden in some kind of metaphysical distance. In antiquity, the highest norms were set by fabulous heroes—Rama, Arjuna, Hercules, Theseus, Siegfried, Galahad. They were all "superhuman," but their magnificent stature became by introversion the seed of an indomitable spirit in men. The secret of human greatness always lies in a ground of belief in superhuman greatness. The human world exists only in virtue of its transcending archetype. When we lose the vision of the archetype, the "natural" world turns alien to human nature, for now there is no more the heroic pursuit of the Impossible to sustain, through the track left by heroes, the merely possible. And then men, as Paul Valery says, cease from "the effort which makes live in us that which does not exist."

When the will to obtain the Impossible dies—when the pure Platonic Ideas fade and are lost to the imagination—the law of human culture does not break down or cease from operation. Instead men create ugly substitutes, going from the sublime to the infernal. They insist, in another sense, upon thinking the "unthinkable," and upon maintaining the pretense that they still have a scale of striving which reaches beyond knowable reality. Yet now the heights are heights no longer, but depths; and the end is not transcendence but dissolution.

We have, then, a choice between a trans-rational mooring for our rationality, and the old anchorages on the subhuman floor of "physical reality." Either way we shall have breaks and discontinuities in intellectual analysis, since abstraction can proceed only by isolation of some portion of the whole of experience. Hence the obscure sayings of the mystics, the paradoxes of the philosophers, and the single-minded follies of all the impractical dreamers of the past. There can be no final resolution of truth on earth, nor in any heaven we can conceive of, for the matter of that. Yet the Good Society, should it ever become possible, will depend upon the men who have

glimpsed it in part of themselves which is not really "on earth," and whose social intelligence is a casual by-product of a life lived at higher intensities.

REVIEW

ONWARD THE CINEMA!

THERE are occasions when the Serious Undertakings of this Department, or of its contributors, require the relief of some casual comment on such trivia as sports events and motion pictures. For instance, after a recent accidental viewing of something called *Two Loves*, featuring Shirley MacLaine and Jack Hawkins in a New Zealand setting, it seemed worthwhile to voice the opinion that this is an utterly charming motion picture. Miss MacLaine's portrayal of a transplanted New England school teacher in the midst of Maori children reveals abilities we had no idea this young actress possessed. But it appears that if you are going to talk about movies today, you should be quite an expert and know a number of things which we, certainly, do not know. Lawrence Alloway's discussion of the contemporary cinema in *Encounter* for February, titled "Critics in the Dark," is a frightening account of what is expected of the practitioners of movie-reviewing. Apparently, the experts have to become more expert each year:

There is a new problem facing critics who are now starting to approach pop movies seriously, which arises from their dependence on the idea of individual authorship. Detailed analysis of the work of pop directors who work within the commercial framework has certainly revealed some recurring factors which are, correctly, translatable into a personal style. However, such nuanced discrimination risks being more like the esoteric expertise of specialists than like the humanist's tribute to individuality. Science fiction, for instance, has a body of expert opinion which is authoritative within the field, but unknown and unusable outside it. Detective stories have connoisseurs who, like Anthony Boucher, can praise Michael Innes for his Henry Jamesian subtlety. Now that is fine, inside the field; the other specialists get the point, and it makes sense if decoded properly. Girlie magazine fanatics can tell one model from another and compare one costume, or lack of it, with another. The risk for film criticism is that the canon of individual authorship, applied to an expendable art form, will simply lead to the insulation of criticism within a kind of hobbies-corner specialism. Then the

criticism of pop films might become technical and esoteric, like the cult of Hi Fi, or like surfing in the United States.

In point of fact, what is needed is a criticism of movies as a pop art which can have a critical currency beyond that of footnotes and preposterous learning.

So, being encouraged by the last sentence, perhaps we can recommend *Two Loves* and nominate it along with *Dr. Strangelove* for our Academy Award of 1964. These two themes could hardly be more dissimilar, but they would make an excellent double bill, comparing individual sanity with collective insanity.

Seven Days in May also deserves recognition for its further contributions to the theme of *Dr. Strangelove*. The great danger of military men and of atomic weapons experts is clearly not that they are bad men, but that they think like military men and atomic weapons experts. The heroes in *Seven Days* (Kirk Douglas and Frederic March) assume human stature when they discover an integrity which allows them to risk their names and careers. Douglas is willing to give up his military career if that is the price he has to pay for being a man, and March, as President of the United States, employs a shady political means to achieve a "good" political end. This story, by the way, ends happily, but this means that it will not be remembered as will *Dr. Strangelove*.

Jonathan Miller's discussion of three movies in the *New York Review* for Feb. 20 brings up another dimension of modern movie-making, indicating why too much technique can end up with soulless confusion. We have not been to see Stanley Kramer's *Mad Mad Mad Mad World of Comedy*, and, after Mr. Miller's comments, are hardly likely to go. Even as second-hand criticism, Miller's points strike responsive chords and are useful cultural commentary, regardless of their applicability to the Kramer opus:

Mad World of Comedy by Stanley Kramer is a raucous wrap-around Cinerama farce which somehow goes seriously out of kilter and zooms off into a mirthless crescendo of injury and violent punishment. It was clearly modeled on the Sennett formula but the

simple chase plot gathers unto itself a disproportionate momentum which carries the film to an inconceivably crushing climax. Part of this can be explained by Cinerama, which is so bloody enormous that almost any violence that takes place on its surface has the force of an overwhelming personal concussion. By contrast, the accidents that went on in the movies of Harold Lloyd and Mack Sennett were pleasantly distant. The idiotic staccato of the old cameras made everything seem reassuringly artificial. But in addition to that everything was choreographed with some tact. Collisions were delicately timed, syncopated even, so that each one had the entertaining *form* of impact but without the actual shock. On Cinerama every crash seems absolutely deadly, and painful as hell.

But all this only partly explains the exhausting brutality of *Mad Mad Mad Mad World*. The film is internally violent. It is intrinsically and deliberately vicious. All the characters are mean, cruel, and greedy. They lie, steal, cheat, smash, and wreck with single-minded depravity for which they are punished in the end by a series of excruciating physical torments. The violence of the crimes and the severity of the punishment are completely out of scale for comedy and so the movie fails in this respect. Nevertheless, it is more than just a comedy gone wrong. It has a positive vileness which is almost a virtue. It is as if what started out as a comic extravaganza broke down under its own weight; and then, instead of falling to bits, got taken over, lock, stock, and barrel, by something else which then drove the dilapidated mechanism at a ferocious pace in the opposite direction. In fact it's an interesting example of the evacuated shell of a bad comedy being seized by seriousness and turned over to the service of a deadly Puritan theme. All that remains of the comedy is subordinated to the prevailing sternness and the comedians themselves dwindle to the scale of those tormented clownish figures in a Hell by Hieronymus Bosch.

So, no more movies for a while! For a pleasant change, we accepted an invitation to see James Baldwin's *Amen Corner* at the Coronet theater in Hollywood. Mr. Baldwin, we understand, wrote this play as a kind of "exercise" in Paris in 1952, but whatever that means, our report is that this play incarnates extraordinary perceptions in the simplest plot in the simplest setting, making it a universal vehicle of human

understanding which combines humor and pathos in an unobtrusively constructive way.

COMMENTARY

IT WOULD PROFIT A MAN

WHAT can men of good will, resources, and responsibility do, today, to better the human situation? How can they use their time and their money to help the human race along?

The idea, the forlorn hope, the desperate recommendation of the Triple Revolutionists is that if the freedom our technological society is backing into is to be of any benefit, we must begin to use it for the only end freedom can serve without being lost in the process—to make ourselves wiser, better men.

Today, the pathetic thing about the "successful" men in our society is that they often *want* to be good and wise men, but the resolve comes upon them too late in life. They too easily become the gulls of charlatans, the tools of sectarians, the bankers of hate merchants. That, or they undertake projects which are so "safe" they are bound to be ineffectual.

If such men want to change this course in their lives to something worth while, they can begin to make themselves instruments of the American Dream. They can help to start *schools*. They can begin to spread the idea, once again, that *education*, as an endless process, is the best possible embodiment of human longings for the good life.

They can begin to replace the goals set by Madison Avenue with the goal that characterizes all honest educational undertakings—Understanding. They can tell themselves and others that this is what men ought to look forward to, and make the basis of their day-to-day hopes.

Let's forget the little chicken farm with the white picket fence. Let's put aside the place near the water and the boat for the youngsters, as the be-all and end-all of "self-realization." The idea of Man Thinking is a better dream.

Of course, this idea is filled with Big Generalities. Of course, there will be a lot of false

starts, and some nonsense, too. These things don't matter much. There are false starts and nonsense in everything men do.

It is also true that self-improvement is a basic longing in all human beings; this idea is built into the very foundations of the American Tradition. It rises in the young, with only the slightest encouragement, and often with no encouragement at all.

Enthusiasm for education has the capacity to make a glory out of uncertainty, a challenge out of honestly admitted ignorance, and it gives the excitement of new discoveries to all ordinary tasks.

Suppose the project fails? Well, many projects fail. The life of the average commercial undertaking is about three years. But what should a man be *willing* to fail at? You can't win them all. Education is a unique undertaking. The educator, alas, can never guarantee the quality of his product, and this makes education a hazardous thing to attempt. But even in failure it is gloriously worth while.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

RELIGION AND THE REPUBLIC

THE month of July at the Center of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara was given over to continuing discussion of the philosophical, political, and personal implications of the First Amendment. Points of departure for explorations of thought were provided by Scott Buchanan's firstdraft paper, "The Public Thinking." Participants included Robert Hutchins, W. H. Ferry, Alexander Meiklejohn, Harry Ashmore, and Linus Pauling. We are here particularly interested in a point made by Mr. Buchanan, to the effect that "freedom of religion" may head the list of fundamental rights guaranteed by the First Amendment for other than accidental reasons. Mr. Buchanan said:

The immunity and protection for religion that is assured in the First Amendment has lost much of its meaning, or perhaps never discovered its meaning, because religious sectarianism has allowed its internal quarrels to eclipse the high transcendent aims and its civic functions. Religion has followed its familiar propensity to allow its practices to sink to the level of religiosity; it has often redoubled its efforts as it has lost sight of its ends. When religion is healthy, its philosophical and theological explorations shed light on both individual and common deliberation. Faith seeking understanding stretches the private and public mind. In healthy religions dogmas are questions that draw all minds into the search. The by-product is the enriching of deliberation, and religion teaches that there is no end to the possible enrichment. Congress shall make no law touching an establishment of religion or the free exercise thereof because the sources of the citizen's enlightenment must not be cut off. If the decadence of the religion continues, and dogmas continue to become devices for closing minds, there may come a day when this part of the First Amendment will have to be rewritten to enable the revival of religion or some substitute for it that will keep the top of the deliberative mind open.

This is a point which argues well for the contention that the best way to discuss religion—in or out of the schools—is in its relationship to the U.S. Constitution. This view grows out of an

interpretation of the Founding Fathers' philosophy, holding that the majority agrees to protect freedom of individual opinion because every man is *meant* to be self-governed. "Meant," in turn, is a way of saying that men do not fulfill themselves as groups but only as individuals. This suggests that the framers of the Constitution were well aware of the meaning behind such current terms as "autonomy" and "self-actualization." The guarantees of political liberty are ideally designed to give assurance that "one can do what one ought to will." In other words, when the individual knows that he is *more* than the state, as well as a part of it, he contributes his utmost to the development of an enlightened electorate.

The jockeying for position among representatives of various religious sects is far afield from advancing the interests of this basic concern. Neither religion nor the Bill of Rights should be taken to extol the virtue of the sort of "free enterprise" which proceeds apart from that which men "ought to will" for the common good. Private property, it is true, was once a conception of great psychological importance, a progression from hierarchical control in the Middle Ages, and there was tremendous impetus in believing that each one should be able to earn and to own for himself, to be responsible for his own property, etc. But to think that the amassing of property was in itself virtuous was to identify Protestant Christianity with a most peculiar ethic—an ethic which the Socialists and Communists have always been able to attack successfully. A truly Christian approach, if one pays attention to the reported sayings of Jesus, is much more concerned with the individual attainment of spiritual "autonomy" than with material guarantees of political rights. And it is not necessary to be an experienced biblical scholar or to enter into theological argument to focus attention upon those portions of the New Testament which emphasize Christ's teaching of the necessity of spiritual autonomy. "Self-actualization," for Jesus, meant transcendent perceptiveness; no man could live fully on earth unless he had also entered "the kingdom of

heaven." Christ's insistence on this might easily be read as the psychological prelude to his denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees of the temple and to the crucifixion. For to say that the growth of soul and the attainment of status are two entirely different things, and that the latter is unimportant, is to challenge the *status quo* at its psychological center. Conformity to standards set by the uneasy compromises of status in the societal power structure engenders hostility to any view in which the individual conscience is the highest basis for conviction and decision. And it is at this crucial point that—quite properly, according to Edith Hamilton's fervent belief—the doctrine and example of Socrates and the doctrine and example of Jesus of Nazareth become one.

This view is stated with great clarity by Nietzsche:

The "kingdom of Heaven" is a state of heart, and not something which exists "beyond this earth" or comes to you "after death." The whole idea of natural death is lacking in the gospels. Death is not a bridge, nor a means of access, it is absent because it belongs to quite a different and merely apparent world, the only use of which is to furnish signs, similes. . . . The "kingdom of God" is not something that is expected; it has no yesterday, nor any day after tomorrow, is not going to come in "a thousand years"—it is an experience of the human heart, it is everywhere, it is nowhere.

To discuss the words attributed to Jesus in the stylized context of theology is virtually to lose sight of Jesus' struggle to liberate the spirit of man from the bondage of status and fear of authority. Authority and literal interpretation of the scriptures are, of course, invariable companions, and to point this out diminishes neither the stature of Jesus of Nazareth nor the symbolic meaning of any significant portions of the Old Testament—both of which are best appreciated when literal belief as well as temporal authority are removed from consideration. No one has made these points more clearly than Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

After noting that "in modern progressive Christianity . . . Christ is primarily a historical personage," Campbell remarks:

Wherever the poetry of myth is interpreted as biography, history, or science, it is killed. The living images become only remote facts of a distant time or sky. Furthermore, it is never difficult to demonstrate that as science and history mythology is absurd. When a civilization begins to reinterpret its mythology in this way, the life goes out of it, temples become museums, and the link between the two perspectives is dissolved. Such a blight has certainly descended on the Bible and on a great part of the Christian cult.

To bring the images back to life one has to seek not interesting applications to modern affairs, but illuminating hints from the inspired past. When these are found vast areas of half-dead iconography disclose again their permanently human meaning.

FRONTIERS On Compassion

THERE is no unanimity about the problem of compassion. Some believe it is an indispensable condition of ethical behavior; others reject it for its effect on our judgment and sense of reality. The two points of view have their outstanding protagonists in Dostoevski and Nietzsche, both deeply compassionate men.

Dostoevski, whose Rakolnikov falls on his knees "before the suffering of the world," taught that only compassion can reveal to us the true nature of our fellow men. He believed that hatred and enmity can be conquered only by compassion which embraces even the Evil One. When the Grand Inquisitor recognizes Christ, he abuses and castigates Him even more severely than the Roman soldiers had done before the Crucifixion. He tears out his own heart and slaps it into the face of Jesus, yet there is no anger or rejection in the Saviour's wordless reply, only pity—pity of the highest order, pity which accepts community with the doer of evil, the criminal and even the persecutor. Jesus' reply to the torrent of abuse is a kiss of compassion on the bloodless aged lips, a kiss "which glows in his heart, but the old man adheres to his idea."

Nietzsche taught that compassion was a dangerous obstacle for the Higher Man trying to attain the pinnacle of his growth. The claim to compassion is a weapon of the weak who succeed in dragging down the strong to their own level of indecision and futility. Although Nietzsche spoke of his Superman as a figure not without sympathy and responsibility for his "subject," it is power that determines the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. It is the ruler's power that helps him to surmount the danger inherent in compassion. Nietzsche called his Superman "Caesar with the soul of Christ." Significantly, not the reverse—Christ with the power of a king. The dominant quality is that of Caesar's!

There is, of course, a basic contradiction in Nietzsche's concept. He believed that man can aim at power and yet retain his integrity. The greater

wisdom of Jesus realized that "ye cannot serve God and Mammon." He knew that those who hold and keep power must do what their position demands and nothing else. Compassion would only prevent them from *using* their subjects and the responsibility of which Nietzsche speaks does not and cannot exist in the sphere where the power-struggle is fought.

Compassion can only exist between equals. Herein lies the futility of any form of pity or charity which is not based on love, or at least on mutual respect. "Mental compassion," although quite praiseworthy, and inevitably present in any sensitive person, is ineffectual and often damaging.

Sitting at our breakfast table and enjoying our meal, we are moved to that kind of compassion by the morning papers reporting the death from starvation of millions in Bengal or China. We are indignant. We read about a hanging in Pentonville, the breeding of calves in broiler houses, execution of political prisoners, fox hunts and similar atrocities—we angrily tell our wives about the shame of it.

Five minutes later these things are forgotten. Modern man's mind can absorb and expel information more rapidly than his body can deal with material nutriment.

"Mental Compassion" makes people join movements, attend meetings, vote for or against parties, contribute to charitable funds, protest and demonstrate, but all these things require no personal commitment. All they demand is a skin-deep allegiance to a cause which, weather and other engagements permitting, has a certain claim on our faith and our efforts.

ALFRED REYNOLDS

London

TRIPLE REVOLUTION

MANAS: It is too easy to dismiss the concern over the effects of automation, as does Ralph Borsodi in Sept. 2 MANAS in his criticism of the Triple Revolution. Because the machine has hitherto not seriously upset the dividends of the nation's stockholders is no sign it never will.

There are two curves in the economy which must be noted. One pictures the *demand* of the nation for production of goods of all kinds, some essential, some not so necessary. This curve must rise with the increase of population, not necessarily, however, at the same rate.

The second curve depicts the productive *capacity* of the nation. Originally, with hand labor, this varied identically with the number of workers. When machines were introduced this curve began to rise more steeply than the population curve. Laborers were freed for other duties—soldiering, for example.

Machines have had a serious effect for less than 200 years. Before the Industrial Revolution the cost of handmade articles was so great that few could afford more than bare necessities. Today the demand curve is levelling off; machine productivity—continually increasing in rate of growth—has caught up with the demand curve, and in fact, greatly exceeded it for some products.

One striking demonstration of this is seen in the effort that is now required to sell many products. We now are charged every year 15 to 20 billion dollars for advertising and somewhat less perhaps for other sales expense, to persuade ourselves to buy a lot of things we don't much need or even want. As for essentials like wheat, no amount of advertising suffices to stuff them down our throats. For these we build warehouses to preserve the superabundance for the rats.

Nor is this all. Many of the things we are thus induced to buy are designed to fall to pieces in a few years. We are taught to dignify this indignity by the title "planned obsolescence"! And in many industries there is bureaucracy, nepotism, and "feather-bedding"—unnecessary hands retained on the payroll we have to meet.

Further, we must employ 7,000,000 people to produce weapons—which threaten to annihilate ourselves and the rest of the human race—with another 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 non-productive hands in the military forces, CIA, Defense Department, etc., and another 10,000,000 engaged in servicing all these. And with all this, we now have

some 10,000,000 without jobs. (The Department of Labor figures admittedly only represent a fraction of the total unemployed.)

Seventy-five years ago we had not heard of planned obsolescence or feather-bedding, there was little advertising; as Mr. Borsodi says, there were few travelling salesmen. Men were still leaving industry to take up homesteads in the far West. There were, perhaps, 30,000 in the "regular" Army, a few in the Navy; neither Air Force nor CIA were in existence, and the Pentagon had not even been designed. Except for regularly recurring "panics," unemployment was no problem. The *demand* curve was high above the *productivity* curve. This made the great difference which Mr. Borsodi and many other economists fail to note.

But there is more. The manufacturers of automation and cybernation machines declare that they have scarcely started to produce; that their machines will replace all but a few production jobs and many service jobs.

In view of all this, is it surprising that the 34 signers of the Triple Revolution suggest that it is high time we begin thinking about our future economy? If cybernation experts are anywhere near right they will before long replace 50 per cent of the present production labor—another 30 or 40 million people. Will such a mass of poverty-stricken be long content with the debasing patchwork of doles which are now intended to keep 10 million from starving?

Nevertheless, there is a bright and happy side to this picture. Just as the Industrial Revolution two centuries ago ushered in a new era, so will now the Triple Revolution. A higher plane of human existence than mere scabbling for a living is in sight, if we have the courage and foresight to discard the old and plan for the new, in a world which we make safe for living.

IRVING F. LAUCKS

Santa Barbara, Calif.