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WHERE WE ARE NOW

IT says a great deal about human beings to insist that nothing useful or informing about the human condition can be found out without primary attention to what men *think* is the human condition. Of course, we are all in the same lifeboat together, in matters of this sort. To say anything about the human condition is to reveal what some man or men think about it. And it is generally agreed, today, that men are as likely to be wrong as right in what they think.

But there is this to consider: At one time it was supposed that "progress" consisted in passing from incorrect to correct thoughts about the human condition. The idea was that the Truth will somehow eventually be discovered, or otherwise come upon—that it is all "back there," behind the veil—and that when it is finally revealed, then all the dreadful mistakes men have made through history will be brushed aside. This view dies hard, but it is weakening. It is a way of saying that the Answer is somehow settled before we get down to working on the problem, and we are beginning to believe that this idea is false, or at least grossly misleading. At any rate it has produced very bad psychological and historical effects.

Now it is true that this kind of "finding out the truth" has application in a large number of human pursuits. You discover the formula, test it, prove it, and then everybody gets to use it. But for the truth about man, this approach does not work well at all, despite the fact that it produces truths which are capable of being stated with finality. We like this kind of truth because, after writing it down, you can go on to other things. But it is beginning to appear that there aren't any truths of this sort about man—no important ones, that is. Man, you could say, is man only when he is in the act of discovery, being *himself*. You don't get any final definitions of man himself because he can only be recognized as the eternal definer. Every definition you make of him in limiting terms is like a still picture obtained from a single frame borrowed from a movie. You have a still, but the movie will continue—is even now going on. No matter how many stills you collect, you can't get enough of them to encompass human reality. Getting a lot of them only makes the deception more impressive, and therefore more dangerous. And yet you need the stills. You have to know how much people are going to need to eat next week. There is an enormous range of human behavior that must be anticipated if people are to survive at all. And then, when you know so much about what men do, need, want, and may be expected to do in the future, it becomes a great temptation to make final definitions about the human condition. Knowledge, after all, is what men are after. So, on the basis of a large collection of stills, including some very ingenious angle shots, we make systems of social order and control. But the systems eventually break down, or they reveal themselves to the perceptive members of society as mechanisms of systematic betrayal.

In the past, breakdowns and disillusionments made men turn against their gods, their kings, and even their fathers and mothers. The present crisis is of another order. Now we are turning against ourselves. For the past three hundred years or so—in theory, at least—we have been our own authorities. We can't blame religion or temporal rulers for our failure. It is our own ideas—our "man-made" definitions—which are at fault. Seeing this makes for almost complete discouragement. First *they* were wrong, and now *we* are wrong: what's left! A paragraph from Gregory Armstrong, quoted in Frontiers two weeks ago (Oct. 14), puts the state of mind clearly:

> As we all seem to realize without giving the climate of our modern society its proper name, we exist in the throes of a kind of nihilism. Our whole society waits without any genuine expectation, in this time of science and the cold war when everything conspires to convince the people of their insignificance, for some deliverance from its uncertain condition. They wait for something which can assume the role of the religions of the past, for something which can orient them in the modern world and for something which can make the fact of their humanity meaningful once more.

As a text for development, Mr. Armstrong's statement is unrelievedly grim. Yet it is not exaggerated or inaccurate. And while we may forage around for bright sayings and some encouraging evidence to relieve the gloom, we do not really help ourselves in this way. It is more important to take the full measure of contemporary disillusionment and the resulting paralysis. We need therapy in depth, not pep talks.

It seems certain that a return to the insights of classical Humanism will not be enough to ground a new kind of hope. Humanistic insights participate in the wisdom of self-reliant individuals, but they do not help us much in understanding the vast changes of historical transition. Humanism, moreover, operates most effectively when it is framed by an over-arching metaphysic—a kind of philosophic consensus which enables its practitioners to feel "at home" in the world. Our problem is precisely that we don't have any over-arching metaphysic, and its political substitutes are daily proving to be anti-human. We need more theory than we are able to believe, and more external support than our independence of mind can tolerate.

So let us make some postulates, whether we can "believe" them or not. Let us say that human history has to be understood as having *stages.* No one has ever looked at the past without reaching some such conclusion. And since our central problem has to do with understanding the human condition, let us say that the stages are stages in self-definition.

Let us say, further, that the past stages can be divided by one great watershed in prevailing opinion. On one side lie all the theories of man which come from "others"—that is, from gods, spiritual teachers, or the preternaturally wise; and on the other side lie the theories we have made up ourselves, more or less unaided.

Now, what are the advantages and the difficulties of these views? Of the human condition in the first group of stages, you could say that men here practiced the admirable virtue of trusting their teachers. The wise, they said, will not betray us. Our mothers love us; our fathers want us to become strong. And so they followed the directions given them. All nature, they said, is in hierarchy; we also.

Well, to make a long story short, a point was reached where men began to find it difficult to tell the difference between the wise men and the deceitful men. They found, also, that trusting to the wise had made them lazy. Perhaps the wise saw this, also, and had already left the scene. In any event, the wise and the good were replaced by the astute and the powerful. Then, by a conjunction which was probably no coincidence, the hunger in men for *independent* knowledge became strong at about the same time that the astute and the powerful became corrupt. So, the umbilicus of hierarchy in the human condition was cut. If you heard something from someone else, no matter how good it sounded, you were supposed to put it out of your mind. "Don't think, find out," was the motto. We had to start from scratch. And we said with some intuitive assurance that there was nothing wrong with that. There is a sense in which you always have to start from scratch.

Looking back on the past, it becomes natural to ask: Were those wise men *really* wise? Why didn't they warn us about what was to come? Why didn't they tell us that just "believing" them would not take us very far into the future?

Maybe they did. Maybe they sat with us as a *savant* sits with a group of exuberant

adolescents—in utter frustration! Perhaps we should say that if they were really wise, we didn't understand them. Perhaps they tried to convey to us, as Buddha did on one or two occasions: *Don't* take me literally! and as Socrates urged his listeners who wanted to be told exactly what to do. Krishna also promised Arjuna that he would reach a plateau of "high indifference" to all doctrinal religion, but couldn't tell him how to get there. One must suppose that the way—if one exists—lies with the secret of self-definition, the secret that not even the wisest can give away. (No doubt the wisest won't even try.)

So, if you let go all the hearsay from the ancient wise, if you forget all the great doctrines and the autobiographies of other men's souls, there is just this left from the distant past—that in every man there hides a secret spring of truth. Now and then it trickles, and then it dries up for a while. But when it flows, man makes a new definition of himself, and of the human condition, and the new definitions make history. As Jerome Bruner put it:

> It is patent that the view one takes of man affects profoundly one's standard of what is humanly possible. And it is by the measure of such a standard that we establish our laws, set our aspirations for learning, and judge the fitness of men's acts. It is no surprise, then, that those who govern must perforce be jealous guardians of man's ideas about man, for the structure of government rests upon an uneasy consensus about human nature and human wants. (*On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand*.)

The point to be made, here, is that modern man seems now to be reaching a second great watershed in relation to "man's ideas about man." In the first set of stages, the ideas about man were obtained from outside sources—from beings of special or extraordinary status, people from whom "divine" knowledge could be expected to come. Then, in the second set of stages, men determined to make definitions of themselves based upon their own experience through, as we say, "science."

In the present, looking forward to a third set of stages, we are experiencing an exhaustion of the familiar sources of ideas about man. We still distrust the words of the "wise," and we also find our own ideas pitifully inadequate. In short, we are entering an epoch of extreme nakedness, so far as viable ideas about the self are concerned. For an articulate spokesman of this condition, we quote from Eugene Ionesco, who discusses "The Writer and His Problems" in *Encounter* for September:

> . . . I must confess personally that neither theology nor philosophy have enabled me to understand why I exist. Nor have they convinced me that we are obliged to make anything of our existence or that we should, or can, give it a meaning. I feel that I do not altogether belong to this world. I do not know to whom the world ought to belong, and yet I should not hand over the world, of myself, to anyone. If I feel ever so slightly at home here, this is because, merely by existing, I have got into the habit of being here. My impression is, rather, that I belong elsewhere. If I knew where, everything would be much better, but I do not see how the question can be answered. The fact that one is filled with an incomprehensible yearning would seem to be a sign that there is an elsewhere. This elsewhere may, so to speak, be a "here" that I am unable to discover; or perhaps what I am looking for is not here. Some people have given an answer, or thought they could, and supplied a solution. I am pleased for their sakes and offer them my congratulations. For my own part, I merely note that I—the "I" which is so difficult to define—am here, and that I write in order to express, to communicate, my astonishment and my yearning. At least that point is definite. As I walk through the streets of Paris or travel across the world, I take my astonishment and my yearning with me. It seems to me that I have no points of reference; at other times, I imagine I have. But they appear unstable and shifting and eventually vanish again.

Now what is the first impression of Ionesco, as a result of reading this? It is that he is a man of strength. His lack of certainty has not reduced him, but increased him, as a man. He says the things that all men feel, but he is not *afraid of* these feelings. They form the substance of meaning for him.

So, to be stripped naked is not necessarily a bad thing. You could argue that education ought to have for its purpose the preparation of human

beings for the ordeal of going naked. Not aimlessness, but nakedness—for nakedness makes a man question himself. It makes him listen to the beat of his own consciousness; it brings him within the hearing of "other drums."

But many men, perhaps most, it will be argued, cannot *stand* to be left naked and alone. This is true enough, and the urging of it is an old and familiar argument. The Grand Inquisitor had the words letter-perfect. It is the central dogma of the Managerial Society.

But the contentions of the managers turn, not upon issues of philosophical truth, but upon problems of administration. They are not learners and would-be knowers, but organizers and manipulators. Or you could say that they are educators who have *gone wrong*. They want to run a tight ship, a smooth operation. They claim to be enemies of disorder and pain; what they do not understand is the difference between the objective disorder of freedom and the subjective confusion of ignorance. What they refuse to consider is the distinction between the unnecessary and avoidable suffering of men whose lives are twisted and compressed by political "necessity," and the inevitable pain of human growth—the agony of learning to be free. You cannot do away with these latter ordeals without doing away with man.

One of the central questions of our time is how to take away from the administrators and give back to the educators those elements of human longing and wonder which must be nurtured and encouraged, not confined and controlled. Yet this question cannot even arise in a one-dimensional society.

The experience of psychological nakedness, given voice by Ionesco, is the coming thing. In time, it will drive the administrators to desperate and even insane measures. More than anything else, they fear the insistence of the human heart to be heard in its own terms. For them the voice of the heart leads only to a terrible *terra incognita*—it is *their* "dark side of the moon."

This brings us to a book which seems to us to have great importance for understanding the psychological struggles of the present. You could say of this book that it is a detailed examination of the climb to the top of the second watershed—to the place where men begin to find a kind of spiritual satisfaction in being naked and alone. The book *is Literature and Philosophy Between Two World Wars,* by Harry Slochower (Citadel Press, $2.45). There is a sense in which Dr. Slochower shows the competence of the new psychologists to take over the tasks of the Classical Humanists. This is where the *life* is, now, in the attempt to understand man.

Dr. Slochower is successful in providing the reader with a feeling of cultural consensus in the present thinking about man. It is made up mostly of desperate cries, of wild flights from all pasts, of hints of secrets behind denials, and of private tunings of the Promethean agony. The book begins with a study of Nietzsche, who sets the key, and proceeds to review the troubled spirits of literature and art in the first half of the twentieth century. In a way, the book is discouraging, yet not because of the sufferings of the writers who are heard, but because the author has read and apparently understood so many more books than the reader. But this doesn't matter much—not really. There is no escaping the torrential conclusion—the old ideas about man are all being swept away by the breakdown of both ancient and modern certainties.

But, someone may ask, what sort of "consensus" is this? What can you *do* with it? Exactly nothing, of course. We are not ready to do anything with it. We don't know how to do anything with it, because it will not serve any of the familiar ways of doing. It is essentially a passionate rejection of the old ways of "doing." And yet it has a mysterious strength.

But if these findings are mostly in the terms of negation, how can we generalize on men's ideas about themselves except as expressions of revulsion and confusion? This is the question that

makes the need to read Slochower's book, in order to become sensitive to the essences and to feel the texture of the feeling and thinking of the artists and writers of the past fifty years. For out of experiencing these things comes the capacity to generalize, as Dr. Slochower does, in this way:

> In the high moments of our classical literature we have what is known as a "recognition" moment. It is the moment in which a character comes to understand the meaning of his dilemma and his true relation toward his fellowmen and his world. From it follows what Aristotle called "catharsis." It is what the medieval man later termed "salvation," and what we moderns know as "integration."
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> We are today drawing nearer to this recognition stage. We are approaching it the hard way, through an unparalleled period of dissidence. Yet the very thorough nature of our struggle is a promise that the coming victory will be equally thorough. Contemporary art and thought are groping in the direction of a dialectic humanism which would preserve the qualitative achievements of the past and offer the conditions for "its last citizen" to transpose them into the future.
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> At the moment the goal is still distant. The art which corresponds to it should be a smiling art. But no "human comedy" is being written today. Thomas Mann can "play" on the story of Joseph by maintaining the pathos of distance between the situation of his hero and the wrath of our days. Malraux and Sholokoff are even sterner as they peer down the precipice into the gehenna of the war-markets. Culture today suffers from the wounds dealt by warped historical compulsions. Yet amidst it all, it suggests the new age which is in the making. It is an age in which the laughter of Democritus, born from knowledge of human limitation, is rendered light in the further knowledge that this limitation can take on dignified form by the elimination of those historical materials which have barred men from self-determination. The goal is the interplay between individual genius and public organization—a symphony of voices where each singer carries his individual tune and where each tune merges into the total melody.

Is it possible, one may ask, that "uniformities" can be discovered in the works of these modern artists, such that a new view of man can be brought to viable birth? The question is important, since it leads to the realization that "uniformities" are not what we need. The undertone, the secret resonance, the hardly perceptible "beat note" of all these expressions is addressed, not to any formal "image" of man, but to the undefinable, wondering *essence,* which is understood only when there is no attempt to give it limiting form or externally recognizable identity. This *lack* of definition is indeed the genius of modern man, in all his nakedness and vulnerability.

There is transcendental space for growth in this conception. Essentially, it is the idea of the self as resisting all finite definition—or man as the being who has no home in any conceptual mold. It is this incommensurable factor which draws the presence of eternity into all great works of art, all classics of literature, and which speaks in wordless communication to the human heart. The communication is wordless, we say, and yet it has a mode. Through the bars of circumstance, the defeats of mortality, the decay of institutions and the failures of enterprise, it moves as an atmosphere of spiritual freedom, announcing its transcendence in the teeth of what seems ultimate disaster.

And men hear it, know its accents and rhythms, for they have felt the self-same throbbing in themselves. So the communication both is and is not a "consensus." For while men cannot call it an "Eternal Verity," nor make politics and theology of its implications, yet it is forever enabling them to strike glancing blows and to recreate nuances of the truth which they see in one another's eyes. In time it will become the substance of culture, the living matrix of new forms of social relations, in which the manners of inner freedom will become the rules of life.

REVIEW
MIRROR OF AFRICA

THE AFRICAN IMAGE, by Ezekiel Mphahlele (Faber and Faber, London, 1962), is a book which gives the reader confidence that at last he is seeing Africa through the eyes of a man who writes without bias. You do not, of course, get rid of bias by careful correction of your sights. You get rid of it by having something to say at a level where bias cannot enter. In the first few pages Mr. Mphahlele establishes himself as this sort of writer. A study of emerging African culture, his book examines the play between African political aspirations and the art of contemporary African novelists and poets; it looks at novels about black men by white men (and women) and at novels about multiracial situations by black men; without becoming a source of bitterness or racial antagonism, it gives the reader insight into what Africans have endured at the hands of the whites for more than a hundred years. In short, *African Image* has the distance and objectivity of a work of art, and it also has the identification and intensity of the work of an artist. No one with a serious interest in the human beings who happen to have been born in Africa can afford to be without this book.

Mr. Mphahlele is an African writer and professor (probably of literature) who has lectured at the University College, Ibadan, Nigeria, and is now in Kenya. He is an exile from South Africa, where he taught until, in 1957, he was banned from the schools because he had criticized the South African "Bantu education" policy. He wrote the book, he explains in his Preface, as much to clear his own mind as "to try to evaluate the sense and nonsense that is often said and thought about whites and blacks, top dogs and underdogs and underdogs about each other and about themselves." It was after reading quotations (in MANAS for Aug. 5) from his article in *Foreign Affairs* for July that we got the book from the library and read it with pleasure and some excitement.

In one of his early chapters, titled "Going My Way?", Mr. Mphahlele frames his investigation with a few brief statistics:

> We should not talk as if someone touched down on some place in Africa and around him communities popped out from under the ground to begin a new life on the surface of our globe. Let me take the extreme case of Africans in South Africa. There are 4,000,000 Africans in the urban areas, 3,000,000 working on white peoples' farms, and 3,000,000 in the rural reserves. The first two lots consist of people who have lost all tribal affiliations in terms of chieftaincy, and their old moral codes have been battered about. And yet there remains something solidly African in them that has a distinct reference to the past. It has to do with the manner of self-expression through music, dance, song and patterns of behavior. In all this, there has been a compromise between our past and the present. Listen to the music that has been composed by the post-missionary musicians who have infused European forms with an African idiom and African rhythms. In the simplest forms of self-expression, like jive, there are subtle rhythms which distinguish the European from the African.

Explaining why Africans do not take naturally to the idea of "vacations," he says:

> People, and not places, give them real pleasure. They want a *social* climate where they can *make* music and fun and not just *listen* to music and *look* at a performance.
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> For our traditional idea of culture is not a performance for the few who can get into formal dress and afford a ticket to watch it. Culture is part of the very process of living, in which a whole community takes part. The Sotho proverb, "Nothing belongs to you except that which you have eaten," cuts across all the competitive economics of the West. Men and women organized themselves into groups to build one man's house or hoe or harvest his field, and then he joined them to work on somebody else's. The lazy man was outlawed: a man never died of hunger, even when he was too ill or crippled to work.

In an interesting note on an *Encounter* article by the South African, Dan Jacobson, the author speaks of the difficulties of the white writer:

> The English novel in Africa has been grappling with the immediate problem of race-relations to the exclusion of any reference to a universal context

except in the case of Olive Schreiner's and William Plomer's works. English poetry has just not been able to settle down and reconcile the conflicts that give birth to it. It is essentially still a verse in exile.

The most significant part of Mr. Jacobson's thesis is that which deals with the African writer's present dilemma and the literary material his handicaps and disabilities afford him. The problem splits itself somewhere. The white writer is at the mercy of the white politician in Africa. His race must simply face up to complete social and economic integration with non-whites in order to create a non-racial society. This way our literature will form part of a common stream of culture in which two or more streams of consciousness influence one another. As long as there are racial barriers our literature will continue to be sectional. In multi-racial communities like South Africa, the Rhodesias, and Kenya, the question of local involvement for both black and white hinges on the willingness or otherwise to create mixed societies. The reason why in the world of fiction, Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, and William Faulkner are the greatest interpreters of cultures and character outside their own color groups is that they had no artificial racial barriers to contend with, such as we find entrenched in the legislatures of Africa.

Mr. Mphahlele's perceptive criticism of white writers about Africa gives the reader instance after instance of the blindness and limitations imposed upon artists by these barriers. He also shows how the African writer will have to outgrow colonial influences:

Not so long ago I had occasion to speak to William Conton, the Sierra Leonean author of *The African,* and some Ghanaian artists at a conference on African culture in Ibadan. They thought I was minimizing the problem of reorientation for the African who finds himself soaked in European tradition and back among his people. Maybe because I haven't had an overseas education.

Mr. Conton's novel, *The African,* is a beautifully written and highly polished book and it shows a keen sensitivity. It is also a good example of how political slogans, if made a principle of art, can destroy the impact a work of art might have had. He is all the time advertising the African way of life to the foreign reader, with an air of discovery. His hero does say he is rediscovering the African in himself. The purity and innocence of Africa . . . naked feet . . . a girl soaping her body and laughing in the rain. The damnable old *cliché* that we have come to associate with the colonial or European who comes to Africa with that back-to-the-womb expression on his face. A number of experiences Mr. Conton's hero goes through in order to rediscover his Africa, to "project the African Personality," are contrived, and this is the stance that spoils the author's good writing. Must the educated from abroad come back to re-colonize us? Must he walk about with his mouth open, startled by the beauty of African women, by the black man's "heightened sensitivity"? It's all so embarrassing.

Move over, Mr. Baldwin—*way* over.

It is embarrassing in another way to a reviewer to be so little able to do anything about this book except quote from it. But how else can you convey the impact of passages like the following:

The number of African artists and writers who have not been discovered because they are locked up in their ghettoes in multi-racial communities, and who cannot speak to a world audience because of brutal white rule and racial prejudice, is much too large compared with the few who go abroad—too large for us to worry excessively about the latter. We are going to confuse the majority group with such slogans as the "African Personality." The problem of the African who wants to readjust himself to a country he has long left is not inherently an African dilemma. Everywhere else in the world there are artists who are battling to readjust themselves—as exiles or former exiles, and in several other roles.

We are not going to help our artist by rattling tin-cans of the African Personality about his ears. The dial of response inside him will quiver in the way the dial of a balance does when you throw a weighty object on it instead of placing it gently. And while it quivers like that it does not register anything at all. That's how slogans act on an artist. In the final analysis, the battle must be resolved inside himself as a result of his own effort. Every artist in the world, African or not, must go through the agony of purging his art of imitations and false notes before he strikes an individual medium. Leave the artist to this process of evolution; let him sweat it out and be emancipated by his own art. He is after all the sensitive of his community and the cultural impacts about him must, if he has the make-up of an artist, teach him to express the longings, failings and successes of his people. He will also know that if he

> wants to list the good qualities of the African, a monograph is the place for that.

An idea that won't go away: We wish that some American or British publisher would decide that it is time to publish an anthology of the work of African writers and persuade Mr. Mphahlele to select the contents and do introductory and concluding essays for such a book. He may have an African voice, but he speaks for "every artist in the world."

COMMENTARY
OUT OF THE CHRYSALIS

TWENTY years ago, the behavioral scientists gave much attention to the earliest years of life, laying great stress on the importance of the conditioning influence of parental care during even the first weeks of the child's infancy. It was as though, seeking for the origins of characterological traits, the child psychologists found what seemed to them evidence that these tendencies were formed almost at birth, and since no acceptable theory could go back of this event, there remained only the experience of the comparatively brief period of infancy to account for them. Excessively "modern" parents tended to worry a great deal about the harm they might do to their children during this most critical period of their lives. The "twig," they feared, could be irreparably bent in the wrong direction by a single careless mistake.

Such preoccupations are in dramatic contrast to the present interest in "death." Doctoral theses, books, and articles focusing on how human beings confront the last great change of their lives are now appearing in considerable quantity, as though there were a concerted attempt to break out of the confinements of life at the other end—by finding some kind of transcendent meaning at the moment of termination.

One may wonder whether, in these somewhat polar investigations, we are witnessing the incapacity of the human intelligence to live comfortably and resignedly in the terms of a life which has no imaginable antecedents and no conceivable future after death.

It seems quite possible that, just as rational man could not accommodate to the strait-jacket of medieval theology, and wrestled with its assumptions throughout the long period of scholastic thought—refining them, reinterpreting them, and finally abandoning them with the birth of modern science—so, today, is intuitive man wrestling with the limiting assumptions of physicalist theory, and pursuing a similar course of wearing them away by continued exercises and assaults of the mind.

Poets and dreamers have little patience with such laborious processes. They wonder why science plods along, attempting to suggest from elaborate "data" what men of free-ranging imagination have been convinced of all their lives. Can't you *see,* they urge, that all these facts, now gaining such studied attention, have been there all along, and that they are no more than the shadows cast by the opening and closing movements of a soul that is immortal?

Well, the poets and dreamers may be right. They surely deserve a hearing. But some credit is also due to the men who try to build a more modest version of such insights into the foundations of new cultural assumptions. It begins to appear that if these reformed Aristotelians have their way, we may one day find ourselves living in a culture where poets and dreamers are respected and listened to, instead of being met with either condescension or scorn.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
RELIGION AND EDUCATION

FOR citizens of the United States there is no more improbable approach to a discussion of religion than an examination of the formal view of the subject adopted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We have certainly been strongly conditioned to believe that Russians "hate" religion. Marx's insistence that religious belief is the "opiate of the people" has been magnified into the notion that Russians fear as well as hate any concept of a "spiritual" life.

Article 123 of the Soviet Constitution, however, establishes the privileges allowable to men of religious belief—after defining certain "indefeasible" rights of all citizens. While this Constitution speaks of the power of the State to "guarantee" rights to individuals, and therefore leaves no room for the insistence of Buddha and Christ that Man is *more* than the State, still the ideas in this article none the less make something of an approach to Jeffersonian philosophy:

> Equality of rights of citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an indefeasible law.

With this background, one can approach with greater sympathy the Soviet approximation of the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution. Article 123 of the Soviet Constitution continues:

> Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, any establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law.

The next Article mentions religion specifically, and seems familiar to any reader of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution:

> In order to ensure to citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the state, and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens.

This is not to say that the relationship between the individual and the governing body involves a full respect for *individual* conscience in respect to belief and opinion. In practice, the Russian government allows precious little significant deviation in individual opinion, yet the tradition of thought which upholds the right to private preference in religious belief is never entirely obliterated, and to find evidence of this in so "foreign" a document is impressive and thought-provoking—even if the implicit emphasis is upon religious groups, rather than on individuals.

Yet a religious creed, on this view, is an adjunct to the man—a personal possession to which he has been granted a "right," as distinguished from the idea of individual conscience as inviolate. In early American constitutional thought on this subject, we find reason and religion brought into ideal synthesis. In other words, if religion has nothing to do with a man's reason, but is rather like an esthetic preference, it is not to be expected that the determination of a man to follow his convictions will lead him into a *contretemps* with the state. But if the deepest of all beliefs is a belief joined with determination to exercise reason to the fullest, it may be said that a man and his religion by this means become "one," and that his right to independent or deviant opinion is recognized as showing that the noblest work of man is to discover his own deepest convictions and to act upon them.

Some interesting passages indicative of this view appear in a book by Robert M. Healey, titled *Jefferson on Religion in Public Education* (Yale University Press, 1962). Mr. Healey notes that Jefferson believed that men must be expected to have different religions just as they have different physiognomies. But then, beyond this consideration, is the fact of discoverable truth and

falsehood in the area of religion, as everywhere else. Mr. Healey writes:

> In his battle for religious freedom Jefferson develops the position that freedom of thought is a *sine qua non* for the development of true religion. He put this succinctly in *Notes on Virginia:* "Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error. Give a loose to them, they will support the true religion by bringing every false one to their tribunal to the test of their investigation." And this of course, is simply a rewording of the contention in the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom that "truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate."

Mr. Healey points out the conflict implicit in the Jeffersonian position, but also shows its philosophic necessity:

> These conflicting positions—that reason was too weak and uncertain not to lead to different results, and that truth would prevail under the conditions of free discussion and debate—were not simply an attempt to have the argument both ways nor an inconsistency into which Jefferson slipped when his intellectual guard was down. He conscientiously believed that despite men's different opinions, there were certain things upon which they could be expected to agree, even in the field of religion, and that, "What all agree in, is probably right. What no two agree in, most probably wrong." This was an acceptable criterion in the Enlightenment for determining right and wrong, and Jefferson used it often to settle his doubts. As we have seen, for example, he based his own belief in God rather strongly on the argument from *consensus gentium.* In other words, he did not feel that the field of religion was entirely a welter of conflicting opinions without any standards by which to separate truth from error. "All" did agree on some things. Since what "all" agreed on was probably right, the proper approach was to make this the basis of religious belief, rather than the points at which men differed. It was part of the climate of Jefferson's age to believe that true religion was actually the common residuum of all historic religions. In contemporary terms we might say that Jefferson believed there was a "common core" of religious belief, a group of tenets on which all sects could be expected to agree. Obviously this common core did not include creed or dogma, but it did most certainly embrace the field of morality and also the rational or philosophic proofs of the existence of God.

Sectarians, whether Christian or Communist, are much the same in psychological orientation. Many Christians share with orthodox Communists the belief that religion is not and cannot be a rational matter. But a plain implication of the First article of the American Bill of Rights is that man ought use his *mind* in the field of religion, just as he ought use his mind to become a responsible citizen—one who educates himself for public service. A man's religion, like his education, should be allowed and encouraged to grow, through discussion and cross-fertilization.

This is the idea which is beginning to grow among liberal Christians and others in this country. That it cannot yet grow apace in Russia is not due to Soviet refusal to allow religious worship, but Soviet emphasis on a centuries-long delusion throughout Christendom—that religion has to do with the beliefs of groups rather than with the convictions of men.

FRONTIERS

"Counseling the Dying"

THE central theme of this unusual volume, to which practicing psychologists as well as ministers have contributed, is that it is possible to control the *nature* of one's own death. (*Counseling the Dying* is published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1964; $4.50.) Here, in contemporary language, is the Socratic philosophy—an affirmation that death is not so much a "fact" as a psychological experience, varying in quality according to the attitudes and perceptions of the one who dies.

The authors establish a reference-point for their later affirmations by way of some significant remarks by Jerome D. Frank, a psychiatrist who feels it has been incontrovertibly established that even bodily conditions can sometimes be markedly altered by an inner faith. If this be so, then those destructive tendencies of the psyche which often appear with the approach of death can be radically transformed. In *Persuasion and Healing,* Dr. Frank summarizes his psychiatric "metaphysics":

> There is good possibility that the emotional state of trust or faith in itself can sometimes rapidly produce far-reaching and permanent changes in attitude and bodily states, though the occurrence of these phenomena cannot be predicted or controlled. The major evidence for this lies in the realm of religious conversions and so-called miracle cures. . . . There can be little doubt that such an experience can in rare instances activate reparative forces which are powerful enough to heal grossly damaged tissues. . . . Since it is the state of hope, belief or faith which produces the beneficial effects rather than its object, one would expect to find the same phenomena in a nonreligious framework, and this is in fact the case.

True "faith-healing," in other words, may be taken as scientific testimony that not only is mental transcendence of one's physical condition possible, but that physical changes—which will in turn help the mind—can also take place. This, to be sure, is the application of psycho-centric forces to the body without the familiar forms of volition. But is it not also conceivable that emotional preoccupations which limit the functioning of the human being may be removed or altered by the kind of volition we call "philosophy"?

There is, according to the authors of *Counseling the Dying,* a "true selfhood." This condition is reached only when one has passed beyond the usual concerns with status—those images of self which reflect the opinions of others rather than an encounter with one's own deepest needs. Discovering the latter involves finding a larger meaning or purpose, one which reduces to comparative insignificance immediate temporal successes or failures. So a dying man or woman may attain a "discovery of self" never before possible.

Dying may be seen as one of the experiences of living, and unless both living and dying are regarded as facets of being human, men are bound to live in fear. The approach of death may do more than herald a termination; it may present the conditions under which an actual "initiation" may take place, perhaps by way of a series of steps towards "self-actualization" or individuation. The authors summarize:

> Therapists who work with patients in catastrophic situations may find to their surprise that there are real rewards in the work that were not at first surmised or expected. There is a dealing with ".... the dimension of seriousness and profundity of feeling (or perhaps the tragic sense of life)." Little effort or time is spent on the superficial, the petty vanities, the superstructure of life. Although strong relationships coupled with realistic dependency are the rule, transference reactions which must be worked through are rare. Usually patient and therapist can come quickly to the basic problems of the human situation.

No one, of course, will ever discover a "system" which can be relied upon to reduce physical illness by "mental" therapy, nor will a foreshortened world-view give way to enlightenment by the "application" of philosophy. The ultimate determinant of the value of the experience of death is the individual himself, yet he may be *assisted* to reach an inner transformation "in time"—before the opportunity slips by. One passage in particular illustrates the

inner drama with which the authors of *Counseling the Dying* are concerned:

> The achieving of this grasp on true selfhood may be aided by helping the patient turn from his overwhelming concern with the opinions of others to concern with the needs of the self. Jung says that often this change takes place in what he calls a second adolescence, somewhere between the years of thirty-five and forty-five. Here the patient discovers the fact that he is a person in his own right. Those who have made this discovery either do not need this type of psychotherapy or move rapidly in it. They are already with life and for it and a part of it. Those who need help in the catastrophic situation are those large numbers of individuals who have not made this important discovery. To them the opinions of others, the "shoulds" of life as Karen Horney uses the term, still come first. It is this neglect of the inner development that seems related to the weakness of the will to live. When they are able to turn their efforts inward, to discover the self they can love, then the will to live seems to increase.
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> Sometimes the attempt fails. The flame of the life force flickers too dimly. The best efforts of the therapist cannot bring the flicker to a warm glow. A patient with advanced metastitic breast cancer recounted a dream which portrays in dramatic fashion the effort and the failure to be reached. She said: "Something happened in my office. In order to get away from it, I went outside the window and stood on a ledge there. It was very high and I intended to jump. Then someone reached out a hand from inside my office window. I turned to take the hand to go back inside, but it was too late. I tried as hard as I could, I stretched out my arm, but I couldn't quite reach the hand. I almost touched it and then fell off the ledge. As I was falling, I woke up."

It is inevitable that such a book should contribute to the revaluations of religion which are accompanying the progress of "the third force" in psychology. The last chapter of *Counseling the Dying* intimates that the physicalist view of human health is wholly inadequate. It is suggested that the medical man must admit dimensions of being which reach beyond the chemical and organic factors which relate to health, disease, and terminal illness. The physician who senses the probability of death in a particular instance does not know, and must learn that he does not know, a large variety of things which may alter the passage towards death, making it significant instead of frightening and depressing. Doctors, the authors suggest, should adopt a respectful and humble attitude and say: "From the point of view of our medical knowledge there appears to be no promise of hope that we can give, but we know there are more powers in this world than our minds dream of. Life is the great miracle, and we can keep on discovering life. The medical picture is only a part of the total picture. The rest may be hidden deep within you, for ultimately your faith is the source of your wholeness." This book ends:

> The scientist with a limiting frame of reference projects a limited faith. What is needed is a larger view of man, a larger frame of reference for examining his nature, a larger faith for an enlarged life. When the Scripture speaks of the wages of sin being death, it may well mean that a limited view of life is sinful and that the larger view gives the faith that sustains life so adequately that death and dying become incidental to the larger meaning. When such a view is attained, science, medicine, philosophy, and religion may stand together in awe before the wonder, mystery, and power of life. This stance may well release a new understanding of the creative energy of being. To limit this creative energy is tragic; to set it free is to enhance the wonder of life itself. The Scripture reminds us that except as we become as little children we cannot enter the inner kingdom. It may well be that the sense of unbounded wonder, so much a part of the little child, and so quickly destroyed in the processes of education and acculturation, needs to be restored as part of the preparation for the living that sets the limits to the act of dying.
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> In the face of death we must realize that none of us have any final answers as to its meaning. Those who claim such answers deceive themselves and those who turn to them. But we do have a common interest in the experience that all ultimately share. When we can face it with honesty, keep open the channels of real communication, surround it with loving concern of a real community that cares to the end, and enrich our understanding by an honest and unmasked dialogue among all concerned, the way may be open toward a new era in the care for the dying as well as our care for the living.