VOLUME XVII, NO. 52
DECEMBER 23, 1964

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

PEOPLE question themselves so differently in regard to religion—"religion" meaning, here, the foundations of decision in their lives—that any attempt to discuss the subject is likely to exclude areas of vital importance to many; yet simply the idea of *questioning* is a common denominator for nearly everybody, these days. We live in a time when new ideas of meaning (whether they are really new is a part of the general problem) are filling voids left by the institutionalization of both science and religion, and when it is becoming difficult to take for granted matters once thought to be settled by public consent. There is a sense, therefore, in which the emerging self-consciousness about religious questions is common to everyone who tries to think at all; and there is also general participation in the uncertainty which comes from recognizing that thinking about religion is a thing which most of us fear to do entirely alone, yet suspect that there is something wrong or compromised about it when we do not.

What light can—or ought—a man to travel by? There are so many answers to this question that an adequate catalog of them would occupy many volumes. You could make dozens of polar antitheses out of the replies. You could say that a single man's fallible answer cannot possibly be reliable, that for this reason it is necessary to make all truth "objective." And when this has been accomplished, you say, then no man need live in doubt. Seriously pursued, such a program would eventually lead to the scientific elimination of practically all of traditional religion.

But this application of science, other men find, leaves a yawning chasm in the inner life of human beings. Ortega has put this with great clarity:

> The past century, resorting to all but force, tried to restrict the human mind within the limits set to exactness. Its violent effort to turn its back on last problems is called agnosticism. But such endeavor seems neither fair nor sensible. That science is incapable of solving in its own way those fundamental questions is no sufficient reason for slighting them, as did the fox with the high-hung grapes, or for calling them myths and urging us to drop them altogether. How can we live turning a deaf ear to the last dramatic questions? Where does the world come from, and whither is it going? Which is the supreme power of the cosmos, what the essential meaning of life? We cannot breathe confined to a realm of secondary and immediate themes. We need a comprehensive perspective foreground and background, not a maimed scenery, a horizon stripped of the lure of infinite distances. . . . The assurance that we have found no means of answering last questions is no valid excuse for callousness towards them. The more deeply should we feel, down to the roots of our being, their pressure and their sting.

Now Ortega, we may say to ourselves, gave voice to the disenchantment of modern civilization with the Victorian promise of science. He drew on the historical experience of an epoch. Yet such views come not only from historical experience, but from individual experience as well. Socrates, as he explains in the *Phaedo*, felt that too much preoccupation with physical science would blind the eye of soul, at the same time fostering the delusion that inner awareness can be dispensed with. So the doubt of objective certainty, while it may be effectively illustrated in historical terms, is also and primarily an individual response.

The opposite of scientific objectivity—the pole which seeks solutions in subjective terms—has its Waterloo in institutionalization. The inner illumination men long for, unlike the electric lights supplied by technology, cannot be turned on at will. Inevitably, therefore, there is the temptation to arrange another kind of certainty—to capture and put into a book, or a table of divine revelations, the light of those few individuals who seem to have the capacity to generate subjective vision. Now this solution of "organizing" religious truth, men come to feel, has both its legitimate and its illegitimate aspects. For one thing, it seems quite reasonable to argue the necessity for some sort of cultural focus to

help men to find religious truth. But how much authority should the *focus* have? The debate about heresy, across all the centuries of human recollection, has been concerned with the problem of whether the precious record of an original prophet's light should ever be altered or replaced by some subsequent inspiration. Is there but one, true Prophet, or are there many? How can we know? And if we do not know, but only *think* we know, do we endanger the access of our children to the Light?

There have been various ways of resolving this dilemma. The Quakers, for example, are willing to institutionalize the quest, but not the *Light* itself. Some Quaker groups dispense even with ministers, while others do not. The problem of surrogate prophets in the form of priests is an old one. Islam has no priests, but scholars who instruct in the meaning of the Koran. Likewise, the Jews have Rabbis who teach, but no sacerdotal caste which has special custody of the Light. Other religions evolved elaborate systems of selecting the appropriate custodians or interpreters. In Tibet there are said to be signs by which spiritual teachers may be recognized as re-embodiments of some aspect of the Buddha. The traditional religion of India had an hereditary system of the selection of the Brahmins, or caste of spiritual teachers. Catholic "prudence" combines several methods of selection—the "vocation" felt by the individual, the extensive training of the neophyte in clerical institutions, the appointment of priests to positions of higher function in the hierarchy, and finally the election of the Pope by the Cardinals. Protestant Christianity makes various use of democratic procedures in the selection of the guardians of orthodoxy, and has also been host to a long series of minor inspirations within an increasingly loose and undemanding "Christian tradition."

The most plainly identifiable tendency, today, in what is broadly called religious thought, is the gradual return of the responsibility for obtaining the "Light" to the individual. This trend can have only a slow development, since there is the feeling—to borrow from a Greek myth—that the search may be practically hopeless without some kind of Ariadne's Thread. We may have to find our own way, but we may also need some direction from an ancestral tradition.

Meanwhile, a growing number of people announce that they are wholly eclectic, on almost defiant principle. These speak of having worked out, or of seeking, their own "philosophy of life," and of cherishing an independence which comes from not "joining" any denomination or religious movement or belonging to any "school." The problem, here, in many cases, lies in a lack of intensity. The eclectic position usually suffers from the defect which seems to afflict all religious attitudes which gain "universality" by the loss of specific content. Such people, and even groups, tend to look to non-religious disciplines in psychology when overtaken by the extreme problems of human beings, such as crises in emotional life. And too often, such "personal" philosophies afford only a watered-down "poetic" appreciation of the wonder and the mystery which had so large a role in the old religions.

A central difficulty in discussing these distinctions comes from the incapacity of any "classification" of attitudes to convey their actual substance. For example, you could say that the modern Existentialist view combines an almost mystical confrontation by the self—the hoping, suffering, striving human being—with the agnosticism of the rational approach to all serious questions, the result being a way of life which accepts engagement, or rather insists upon it, but rejects all explanation in metaphysical terms on the ground that it is speculative and insubstantial. This view ends, finally, in a kind of heroic pessimism. You say this, but then you turn to a passage in Sartre, or enter into the courage and anguish of Camus, and you realize that classification is a most feeble sort of identification of a human being's convictions. When a man *acts*, by a *tour de force* he makes a whole out of his unresolved thinking. The act, if distinguished, gives his ideas unmistakable grandeur, as though there were behind them some hidden, vitalizing vision. And if you decide to call yourself by a name that has been given to this man, you mean by that name, not the classification, but the truth which lives in the acts his name represents. It is this truth which gives life, but cannot be told. And

so there develops, in time, a kind of mystique for untellable truth, and even fashions in unintelligibility.

Some such misuse of logic seems inseparably connected with all *established* forms of religion. Since the highest truths are by definition untellable, it is made to follow that untellability is the sign manual of authentic religion, and the forms of rational communication are then held to be a blight on spirituality.

Another factor of importance in any survey of contemporary religious thinking is the contribution of the sociology of religion. It was natural for science, branching out from the physical and life sciences, to go on to the "objectivization" of religious activity. This was of course extremely distasteful to the serious practitioners of religion; no one likes to be watched, as though he were some sort of social insect, while he is performing his devotions, or to be asked about his blood pressure and his brain waves while he is communing with his Deity; yet the voluminous data of researches of this sort have had the chastening effect of making religious people ask a fateful question: What if my religion is indeed not really different from all the others? Is it possible that I, too, am but a mirror of certain *mores*, like the curious tribes described by Sir James Frazer? *What is form and what* is *essence.?* Once this question is honestly set, there can be no going back to a condition of innocence. The apple has been consumed, the serpent is installed in the Garden, Pandora's box is opened wide.

So, the thinking of today about the meaning of religion is really without option. It must be done. Life cannot go on in a vacuum of indecision. On the other hand, we do not know how to decide. There is a sense in which this compulsive indecision is a type of all phases of the human situation in the present.

What shall we do? Well, one inviting course would be to get rid of *all* institutional barriers to religious truth; that is, to conduct our investigation entirely *de novo,* asking our questions and devising our answers without any attention at all to so-called "group" opinions or solutions. But this may be acting without our host. What if significant portions of the truth we seek are locked in the vastly resourceful human capacity for self-delusion? What if the secret is somewhere within the boulder shouldered by Sisyphus? What if the links of the chain which binds Prometheus to the rock have all to be severed *one by one?*

This seems a not unlikely possibility. Religious truth may be somehow present in the pain felt by the bigot when he finds himself deserted by his emotional certainty. There is more than one way of carrying a cross, and Judases are everywhere. The truth of religion may be as inherent in the dissolution of hope as in the veritable "good news" of salvation. Again, as Ortega has put it:

> The man with a clear head is the man who . . . looks life in the face, realizes that everything is problematic and feels himself lost. . . . Instinctively, as do the shipwrecked, he will look around for something to which to cling, and that tragic, ruthless glance, absolutely sincere, because it is a question of his salvation, will cause him to bring order into the chaos of his life. These are the only genuine ideas, the ideas of the shipwrecked.

Are there, then, any planks to "salvation" on the contemporary scene?

There is one line of thought which might qualify in a link-by-link sense, now emerging in the field of psychology; for science, after all, despite its large assumptions and oversimplifications, has always been resigned to a step-by-step kind of progress. A recent and encouraging expression of this branch of science is a volume which appears in the Kappa Delta Pi Lecture series of Ohio State University Press—*Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences,* by Abraharn H. Maslow. This book is not science-in-revolt against religious dogma any more than it is religion-in-contrast to scientific materialism. It is thinking about religion in a scientific manner; it is subjective in relation to subjective reality, but objective in relation to the institutional trappings of both science and religion. These are, of course, large promises to make about any book, but one might say, instead, that Dr. Maslow's book is simply one more illustration of, after Emerson, Man Thinking. It is the author's lack of pretensions which makes the book so fine, so striking a tribute to human capacity,

for man is made to seem small and helpless mainly by the pretensions of institutions.

Some attempt should be made to differentiate this book from the expressions of despair which attend many of the recent explorations of existential mystery. Dr. Maslow is not a desperate man. He is a cheerful, matter-of-fact investigator of the potentialities of human consciousness. Like, perhaps, the Eastern mystic who, as Aldous Huxley remarked, has no need of experiencing a Dark Night of the Soul when his "Heavenly Father" fades into the penumbral mists of Pantheism, Dr. Maslow seems never to have thought of man as a guilty sinner. He is a scientist who wonders why there cannot be scientific study of the human situation based upon the sample of psychological experiences reflected in himself, and checked by the reports of similar investigators. His objective is to formulate new possibilities for naturalistic religion. His first steps in this direction seem sound, since he does not begin by deducing ethics from the deliveries of the empirical sciences, and then combining lyrical readings of nature with a kind of Unitarian benevolence. He starts out with the most intense reality in the spectrum of our awareness—what he calls the "peak experience" of human beings—and makes this his rock of Gibraltar. The peak experience is of course not new. But Maslow's way of looking at it is new. He finds, for example, that the spontaneous luminosity of an envisioning flight of consciousness is more important than the local symbolisms of the flight. The substance of the sublime is always the primary thing, the readings and interpretations secondary. It is this substance which he speaks of, as a kind of psychological "thing-in-itself." Then, having for years pursued studies of the peak-experiences of many people—including, doubtless, some of his own—he turns to the non-naturalistic religions with a still unprejudiced scientist's eye, drawing some instructive comparisons:

> It has sometimes seemed to me as I interviewed "non-theistic religious people" that they had *more* religious (or transcendent) experiences than conventionally religious people. (This is so far, only an impression but it would obviously be a worthwhile research project.) Partly this may have been because they were more often "serious" about values, ethics, life-philosophy, because they have had to struggle away from conventional beliefs and have had to create a system of faith for themselves individually. Various other determinants of this paradox also suggested themselves at various times, but I'll pass these by at this time.
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> The reason I now bring up this impression . . . is that it brought me to the realization that for most people a conventional religion, while strongly religionizing one part of life, thereby also strongly "dereligionizes" the rest of life. The experiences of the holy, the sacred, the divine, of awe, of creatureliness, of surrender, of mystery, of piety, thanksgiving, gratitude, self-dedication, if they happen at all, tend to be confined to a single day of the week, to happen under one roof only, of one kind of structure only, under triggering circumstances only, to rest heavily on the presence of certain traditional, powerful, but intrinsically irrelevant stimuli, e.g., organ music, incense, chanting of a particular kind, certain regalia, and other arbitrary triggers. Being religious, or rather feeling religious, under these ecclesiastical auspices seems to absolve many (most?) people from the necessity or desire to feel these experiences at any other time. "Religionizing" only one part of life secularizes the rest of it.
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> This is in contrast with my impression that "serious" people of all kinds tend to be able to "religionize" any part of life, any day of the week, in any place, and under all sorts of circumstances, i.e., to be aware of Tillich's "dimension of depth." Of course, it would not occur to the more "serious" people who are non-theists to put the label "religious experiences" on what they were feeling, or to use such words as "holy," "pious," "sacred," or the like. By my usage, however, they are often having "core-religious experiences" or transcendent experiences when they report having peak-experiences.

The capacity for transcendent psychological experience is Dr. Maslow's norm of the healthy human being:

> In principle, it is possible, through adequate understanding, to transform means-activities into end-activities, to "ontologize"; to see voluntarily under the aspect of eternity, to see the sacred and the symbolic *in* and *through* the individual here-and-now instance.
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> What prevents this from happening? In general, all and any of the forces that diminish us, pathologize

> us, or that make us regress, *e.g.*, ignorance, pain, fear, "forgetting," dissociation, reduction to the concrete, neuroticizing, etc. That is *not* having core-religious experiences may be a "lower," lesser state, a state in which we are not "fully functioning," not at our best, not fully human, not sufficiently integrated. When we are well and healthy and adequately fulfilling the concept "human being," then experiences of transcendence should in principle be commonplace.
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> Perhaps now what appeared to me first as a paradox can be seen as a matter of fact, not at all surprising. I had noticed something that had never before occurred to me, namely that orthodox religion can easily mean desacralizing much of life. It can lead to dichotomizing life into the transcendent and the secular-profane and can, therefore, compartmentalize and separate them temporally, spatially, conceptually, and experientially. This is in clear contradiction to the actualities of the peak-experiences. It even contradicts the traditionally religious versions of mystic experience, not to mention the experiences of satori, of Nirvana, and other Eastern versions of peak- and mystic experiences. All of these agree that the sacred and profane, the religious and the secular, are not separated from each other. Apparently, it is one danger of the legalistic and organizational versions of religion that they may tend to suppress naturalistic peak-, transcendent, mystical, or other core-religious experiences and to make them less likely to occur, *i.e.*, the degree of religious organization may correlate negatively with the frequency of "religious" experiences. Conventional religions may even be used as defenses against and resistances to the shaking experience of transcendence.

If you wanted to use impressionistic language, you could say that Dr. Maslow is offering notes for a naturalistic history of religion from the point of view of the *divine.* Here is no scientific relativism, no reductionist reference to sections in a catalog of supernaturalist fancies, but the measure of religious ideas according to a dynamic of individual inspiration. Criticism in these terms becomes a potent weapon:

> As we look back through the religious conceptions of human nature—and indeed we need not look back so very far because the same doctrine can be found in Freud—it becomes crystal clear that any doctrine of the innate depravity of man or any maligning of his animal nature very easily leads to some extra-human interpretation of goodness, saintliness, virtue, self-sacrifice, altruism, etc. If they can't be explained from within human nature—and explained they must be—then they must be explained from outside of human nature. The worse man is, the poorer thing he is conceived to be, the more necessary becomes a god. It can also be understood more clearly now that one source of the decay of belief in supernatural sanctions has been increasing faith in the higher possibilities of human nature, on the basis of new knowledge. For instance my studies of "self-actualizing people," i.e., fully evolved and developed people, make it clear that human beings at their best are far more admirable (godlike, heroic, great, divine, awe-inspiring, lovable, etc.) than ever before conceived, in their *own* proper nature. There is no need to add a non-natural determinant to account for saintliness, heroism, altruism, transcendence, creativeness, etc. Throughout history human nature has been sold short primarily because of the lack of knowledge of the higher possibilities of man, of how far he can develop when permitted to.

Well, suppose we have followed Dr. Maslow this far; what then? What, in terms of the traditional religions, have we been deprived of? Mainly, it appears, of doctrines and eschatological beliefs and mysteries. But it is these things, a wondering reader may say, that hold up the tired hopes of the masses of mankind. Have we here, in this "functional" sort of religion, a working faith for heroes alone? How shall we do without those consoling doctrines and colorful stories of beginnings and endings, of fulfillments and translations, that give traditional religions their hold on the popular imagination?

Several answers might be offered to this question. First of all, Dr. Maslow is not "making up" a religion. Rather, he is suggesting that those who want to are capable of making up their own. And this, he says further, is not a vanity of Western science but a psychological law of life. For there is a sense in which men who truly make up their own religion, do it with insights into the core of a common reality. So, while they do not make up their own religion in an exclusive sense, they make it their own in an individual sense. He is saying there is no way to get around this law.

Another reply would be that the doctrinal aspect of transcendental religion is of no value unless it has

some deep consistency with and dependence upon the spirit of the peak-experience. The prime fact is the enduring reality felt from within. The extension of that sense of reality into areas which can be reasoned about, or described, may be a consequence of learning how to *sustain* the perceptive power felt at first only at the peak, and men who long to bring knowledge, if not wisdom, to their fellows may devise allegories and other mythic devices as a means of popular instruction. Almost certainly, the doctrinal content of the great religions had its origin in this way. It can be argued that when the doctrinal content is allowed to cater to human weakness, then the corruption of religion sets in, to be followed, eventually, by angry atheistic revolutions. And these, born from the peak emotion of the will to be free, end by circulating rival doctrines which are intended to support the faint hearts of the revolution. So come the dogmas of the religion of Materialism, which also, as Dr. Maslow suggests, subvert the high possibilities of mankind.

But there is still another and for us perhaps better answer. It is that this kind of scientific analysis of religion provides a *modus operandi* of self-reform to all the religions of the world. Dr. Maslow both is and is not an iconoclast. He has a principle of regeneration to offer the man of religion, although its use will break a lot of images and bury a lot of sectarian hopes.

Who will welcome this principle, and who will fear it? People who have the habit of relying on an authority outside themselves will feel a threat in any invitation to look within, for there, they think, lies darkness and endless vulnerability. But those whose faith is only superficially sectarian—of whom there are many—can use this principle to universalize their faith.

There is one more answer. From a purely metaphysical point of view, Dr. Maslow's psychological approach to the realities behind religion has rather extraordinary by-products in substantive articles of faith. One who takes the peak-experience approach to meaning cannot help but say things about the nature of human beings. Simply to talk of "psychological health" produces data which can be generalized into the portrait of ideal, transcendent man. By the same means we get an outline of the dynamics of growth, and a kind of pragmatic schedule of right behavior, deduced from the behavior of people who exhibit the developed maturity that seems linked with a growing capacity for peak-experiences. This is all somewhat vague, of course, but the quality in human lives on which the generalities are based is *not vague*. Eventually, one must suppose, some doctrinal extrapolation from these facts will be inevitable—even scientifically permissible—for the purposes of comparison with the high religions of antiquity. This will bring some trouble, naturally, and a revival of those dangerous anticipations of self-knowledge which human beings have not yet learned to do without. But such dangers are a part of the human situation. And the forewarnings seem clearer, more solidly related to the facts of experience, this time around. The true believers of tomorrow—knowing something personally about truth, and also more about the nature of belief—may remember Dr. Maslow kindly, and gratefully vote him thanks.

REVIEW
BEGINNINGS

SOME of the most exciting contemporary writing is found within the pages of the several journals comprising the leading edge of modern psychology/psychiatry (The Third Force): *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry, Journal of Individual Psychology,* and others. Usually written in non-jargonized language which renders them accessible to many more than their professional readership, these journals offer the interested layman an opportunity to listen to and participate in—at least passively—inter- and intra-disciplinary progress reports on research (and speculations) the consequences of which will take decades to filter down to the level of textbooks and popularizations. This nearly "invisible" colloquy is a major source of what are emerging as revolutionary redefinitions and, especially, re-evaluations of traditional concepts of Man, of what is human and what is not. There is great hope in these explorations, perhaps even one basis for "supporting intelligent idealism under the conditions of life in the twentieth century."

A newly published journal attempts to widen and make more "visible" the colloquy of psychiatrists. Published quarterly in English, with Russian, French, German, Polish, and Spanish summaries, the *International Journal of Psychiatry* (Box 462, 32 Fruit Street, Boston, Mass. 02114) "surveys the 214 journals of psychiatry and hundreds of others in related fields throughout the world. From these, the most significant articles are selected for reprinting with an introduction. In addition, each issue contains a critical review on a specific topic with commentaries by specialists." The first issue contains articles and criticism by Harry Harlow, Gardner Murphy, Jerome Frank, Lawrence Kubie, and others; and articles include such titles as "The Organization of Psychiatric Services in the USSR," "Suicide in Western Nigeria," and "Mental Health in the Metropolis."

In a statement of purpose and policy, the editor (Dr. Jason Aronson of Harvard Medical School) launches the journal with an essay noteworthy for humanistic concern:

> The background of the journal is the crisis in civilization, the conflict between East and West, which is the background of all our lives. Never before in the history of man has the possibility existed of the complete destruction of life. Man's mutual distrust, and his often irrational behavior have led to many disastrous wars, entire societies have been annihilated. . . . At times it has seemed that only the mutual fear of total devastation has held back the use of nuclear weapons. History has shown, however, that mutual fear is not a strong and stable guarantor of peace. The very existence of our future seems to depend on a decrease in the massive distrust that currently burdens international relations.
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> Concern for this ominous problem tends to overshadow everyday activities. After all, what is the value of any research in psychiatry if civilization is to be destroyed? . . . the usual training and experience of a psychiatrist does not equip him to solve problems of public affairs. . . . Nevertheless, increased mutual knowledge in all fields, including psychiatry, might contribute to a decrease in the immense distrust that currently exists. . . .

New to this reviewer, although the issue at hand is Volume 4, Number 3, the *1nstitute of Applied Psychology Review* (15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y.), is another professional (more accurately, semi-professional) journal. Within its covers, "The experiences described are drawn from the employment or private practices of our contributors; the REVIEW presents their articles as valuable contributions to the field of human relations." One short article, "Random Thoughts on The State of Being . . ." by Geoffrey G. Lindenauer, may serve as a sample:

> . . . many people just exist . . . others survive in the face of difficulties . . . and a few live. When I was very little I met a man who was unusual—I might even call him a discoverer—for he had begun his life by existing, and he didn't like it. He learned later to survive—and found that was not enough. Finally, he began to live. It was only when he began to teach others how to live that he found he was living. For, you see as he learned the lesson of living, he discovered that each day contains a whole lifetime to

be lived. If existing is not enough for you, if surviving is not enough for you, the only thing to settle for is living. And my friend feels there is only one way to start.

THE WAY: What is it that you want? Now remember, I did not ask if you could do it, or how difficult it is. Just ask yourself, "What do I want?" The next step is to go out and get it—and in the process of getting it, you will discover that you are living rather than existing or surviving. But almost invariably, when my friend asked this question of others, he got the following response: "But I don't know what I want." And his answer was always the same: "That's because you don't have a purpose." . . .

A man who has learned how to live finds life very full. So full, in fact, that he has not the time nor the desire to possess another living human being—nor will he permit himself to be possessed. If you are only existing or surviving, you run into a basic problem when you meet an individual like this. Because of your own involvement in surviving, you attribute to others your own values—namely—"To be secure, I must possess. However, my insecurities prohibit me from being possessed." And so you find it impossible to trust any other person. . . .

Some of these small souls come to the conclusion that living is surviving—and survival is buying. And so he has made a great deal of money, the right marriage, or a great deal of personal fame, but we find this individual still miserable and spending his time getting "More than all the rest of the kids"—because he feels he *has* less. Which is merely a cover for an inner feeling of *being* less. And when you tell this individual "life is living, not protecting or buying," his answer is, "You are jealous because I have more than you." So, actually, the soul that only exists or survives is a miserable, unhappy soul—for the only meaning of life is living. . . .

This article might have been sub-titled, "A Self-Actualizer's Lament"; the tinge of anger may emanate from the writer's desire to live as he writes about living, and in a world peopled by others who live as he writes about living. The personal, conversational style is typical of this kind of writing; still rudimentary, autobiographical, and fragmentary. One can only guess at the fiction, drama, and poetry that will be forthcoming from this "tradition." It is likely that it will be both familiar—as the statement for our time of perennial humanistic themes—and unfamiliar, as an antidote to modern themes of alienation and dehumanization.

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COMMENTARY
THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

AN observation in this week's "Children" draws attention to the constructive influence of institutions—a side of their character which is probably too often overlooked in these pages. Speaking of the difficulty of getting general cooperation for projects of curriculum change in the schools, the writer observes: "Yet it may be wondered if the compulsion to at least lip-service to *non*-self-seeking cooperation does not point to the long-term solution." The implication, here, is that schools are bearers of this tradition; that a man who has made teaching his *profession* is somehow committed to think of others before himself. The school is a symbol of this attitude of mind and anyone who works in a school is subject to its suggestion.

The school has this influence in the same way a place that is loved, and cared for with affection, breathes an atmosphere of quiet friendliness. There is a kind of magic about the good that men have done together, an unmistakable *charisma* to which others cannot help but respond. Indeed, there are many flavors in institutional influence and atmosphere—the crisp, bright air of an athletic field where boys have learned skill in games; the patient invitation of a great library where people who love books are to be found; and the casual offer of companionship for young and old in a park or a village green.

The public places where men declare their principles, the courts where honest judges preside, the concert halls whose walls are saturated with the enchantments of sound, the theatres where players reflect in their art some of the concentrates of life; the art galleries, museums, even coffee houses and restaurants—all these hold in solution the culture of an age. They are the banks in which the riches of our common life have been invested—the chameleon matrix which accepts our coloring with a rich passivity. These places stand for something—something which the young, when they stand or talk, or run and play in such surroundings, may feel the call to grow up to, to equal in their own contribution, or perhaps to improve and surpass.

But institutions ought never to have any cold "authority"—only that gentle direction and stirring which has been put into them, across generations, by the free actions of generous men.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
EDUCATIONAL REVALUATION

INTRODUCING Paul Goodman's *Compulsory Mis-Education,* Robert Kirsch (Los Angeles *Times* book editor) suggests that "only by starting the right sort of argument can some profitable dialogue on the schools and the goals of education commence." *(Times,* Oct. 30, 1964.) Much has been written about the "barriers" to evaluation of curricula—from elementary school through the graduate departments of universities and into the field of adult education—and it is certain that these barriers are not broken without effective challenge to provincialism. Mr. Goodman writes:

> In my opinion, there is no single institution, like the monolithic school system programmed by a few graduate universities and the curriculum reformers of the National Science Foundation, that can prepare everybody for an open future of a great society.
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> Thus at present, facing a confusing future of automated technology, excessive urbanization and entirely new patterns of work and leisure, the best educational brains ought to be devoting themselves to devising various means of educating and paths of growing up appropriate to various talents, conditions, and careers. We should be experimenting with different kinds of schools, no school at all, the real city as school, farm schools, practical apprenticeships, guided travel, work camps, little theaters, and local newspapers, community service. Many others, that other people can think of. Probably more than anything, we need a community and community spirit, in which many adults who know something, and not only professional teachers, will pay attention to the young.

There is something about the idea of "curriculum" which tends to intimidate. Webster explains it as "a specific, fixed course of study or the whole body of courses offered in an educational institution or by a department thereof," and carefully calibrated syllabi of courses will lull many teachers and administrators into feeling secure, for in the mass of directions provided there are ample suggestions for using up class time. But the real responsibility of a teacher lies in stirring the imagination and affecting the attitudes of students.

Some colleges and universities are at least beginning to reach toward one another, in the hope of sharing resources—including pioneer projects and faculty personnel. The association of Midwest colleges—ten colleges in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois—have progressed in this direction, and four colleges in Massachusetts have created a *fifth* college as a synthesis of aspects of the four. Research projects such as the Coordinated Education Project of Santa Barbara are attempting to demonstrate to the community as well as to teachers and school administrators that it is desirable to "organize and update courses of study" and to "provide a greater continuity." But for such improvements to work it is clear that professional educators need more open-mindedness toward experiment. This, quite naturally, must begin with analysis of attitudes which inhibit change, and consideration of how both the inhibitory attitudes and legalistic obstacles may eventually be overcome. If the teacher is "professional" in the commercial sense, it is very easy for him to be as preoccupied as Madison Avenue is with "role-playing" and "status-seeking."

Education is today a vast and complicated enterprise with a bewildering network of stratifications. Status-seeking may not attract the dedicated teacher or administrator, but symbols of rank and concepts of role, according to status, seem widespread. *Cooperation,* after all, depends, not upon recognition of the locus of power, or authority, but upon belief that education is the "community enterprise" *par excellence*—that every professional in the field, administrator or not, is committed to *be* a teacher.

The individual's identification with a particular role, and his enjoyment of a prestige which arises from status according to function, is more or less expected in competitive industry. But education is neither acquisitive nor competitive, and manifestations of status-seeking,

status jealousy, or status-quo-ism make cooperation in reform difficult.

It is significant, however, that all educators agree to cooperative effort in theory. This suggests two lines of thought. First, we may be reminded of the presence, even among educators, of a sort of unconscious hypocrisy often excused as simply "human." "All men desire peace," remarked Thomas á Kempis, "but few men desire those things which make for peace," and this is seen to apply to their problems by those who seek a whole-hearted attitude of cooperation between agencies, officials, and individuals in most school districts. Yet it may be wondered if the compulsion to at least lip-service to *non*-self-seeking cooperation does not point to the long-term solution. Cooperative programs and centers might originate in many ways—through groups of teachers, administrators, university researchers, or even by way of interested parents or school board members. *Un*official groupings, working without the pressure of status considerations, may eventually lead the way to necessary "official" action.

The problem for education in our pluralistic culture has always been to find an integration of ends and means which has an effectiveness comparable to the methods employed by indoctrinating or dogmatic cultures. Our ends, we say, must be gained without deserting self-determination and freedom of thought and investigation, which are so obviously crucial to the spirit of the United States Constitution. On the other hand, such a philosophy of education needs above all a language which will enable the specialists in various fields of education to relate to one another.

It seems clear that each teacher and administrator needs to consider the meaning of "autonomy" and "self-actualization" in relation to himself. The "status problem" simply does not exist for men and women who seek to realize their own higher creative potentials to the full. A few characteristics of the self-actualizing person—as summarized by A. H. Maslow—are pertinent here:

> Self-actualizing people focus their attention on problems outside themselves; they are not problems to themselves. They are concerned with basic issues and eternal, unanswered questions of philosophy. Also, they seem to have a broad frame of reference rather than a petty frame of reference. Thus, they turn their attention to man's universal problems rather than to specific problems of narrow application. These people seem to be able to remain "above the battle." They are unruffled and undisturbed by that which produces turmoil in others. They can remain relatively objective and problem centered even when the problem concerns themselves.

FRONTIERS

Two Conceptions of Immortality

IT seems unmistakably a fact that, comparatively speaking, the more ancient the civilization, the subtler the conception of "soul." The idea of *physical* immortality is of relatively recent origin, like responsibility for the materialization of an original Christian symbolic meaning in resurrection. The Egyptians mummified their dead, but it certainly was not expected that the physical dust inside the bandages could be miraculously reanimated. But the Egyptians apparently did believe that certain essences might be kept in proximity to the preserved physical remains and that the soul would be able to reunite these in a serviceable corporeality when next ready for incarnation. *That* doctrine involves a great deal of subtlety, regardless of its fantastic sound.

Science-fiction writers have been utilizing the "time machine" and "suspended animation" device for many years. In the last century, thousands of fascinated readers were enthralled by Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* the classic Utopia in which Bellamy viewed his present from the year 2000, through the eyes of a man whom a strange "potion" had enabled to live through fire and earthquake underground, and to reawaken during the happy times of a rebuilt world. Mr. Bellamy, however, gave no attention to the process of suspended animation, but allowed the structure of an ideal society to capture his imagination.

Today, the possibility of indefinitely prolonged life through suspended animation (by freezing) receives some scientific plausibility from Robert W. Ettinger in his recent *The Prospect of Immortality* (Doubleday, 1964). The sensational expectation suggested by this physicist will probably fascinate people who rush after any "scientific" hope for life extension. But others will find that this book not only strains their credulity, but also offends with a macabre promise unrelieved by any interesting account of a regenerated society where artificially preserved man may awaken.

While Mr. Ettinger's claims are presumably based upon successful experiments in freezing living tissue and later transplanting it, one tends to be horrified by the "prospect" of tons of frozen catatonically quieted bodies stashed away (God knows not where), awaiting some new scientific convention of geniuses who will later have learned how to revivify and cure them of now hopeless ills. If cancer research were presently at a stage which could assure us that reliable "cures" will be possible within five or ten years, it would perhaps be reasonable for comparatively young persons suffering from cancer to ask to be put in "deep freeze" until the cure is available. Mr. Ettinger, however, is bent upon total persuasion now; so strenuously does he exercise his salesmanship that the reader may miss a whopping incongruity in the marvelous "immortality" promised even to the 80-year-old who is frozen in his final delirium and later brought back to life.

In order to get anything interesting or significant out of this book, one may take off from some of the carelessly-woven arguments attempting to show that this sort of physical immortality will improve the nature of man. We quote now from Mr. Ettinger, who, with physical death as an ultimate evil or an ultimate fear, and with an almost religious abandon, proclaims that "after maybe forty thousand years of struggling through the wilderness, the race has arrived at the banks of Jordan." He continues:

> It seems nearly certain that most of us will either see the point or will be initially in doubt. At first a few, and then mounting numbers will choose freezing, and before long only a few eccentrics will insist on their right to rot. Most people will not dare be left behind. There will be no generation of martyrs.
>
> Well worth repetition, emphasis, and elaboration is the startling transformation in human relations which the freezer program will gradually work.
>
> Not so long ago Sydney J. Harris, a syndicated columnist, remarked the effect on many people of the realization that we only live once. " 'I shall not pass this way again.' Then why does it matter what I do? Why not ruin the fields, deforest the woods, pollute the streams, trample the flowers, and treat people as a mere means to one's own ends?"

> Although Harris was making a different point [!!], it is obvious that a man who expects to be around for centuries or millennia will tend to behave differently from one who anticipates scant decades. In the long view, the fields, woods, roads, streams and flowers are my own; I cannot waste resources because I myself will need them later. I cannot cheat or injure a stranger, I cannot disregard his rights and feelings, because there are no more strangers, but only neighbors whom I will have to look in the face, again and again.
>
> With an unlimited future to redress the balance, everyone can put up with temporary burdens and inequities patiently, if not cheerfully, and negotiate in good will. We all have a long, long way to travel together. When tempted to some rash action, one need only say to himself, "The end is not yet. The end is not yet. The end is not yet. . . ."
>
> All measures of desperation, including nuclear war, will tend to be ruled out. The reckless are usually those with little to lose—and there will be no more such. Everyone will have a jewel beyond price—a glittering physical hereafter on the other side of the freezer. Heaven help Mao Tse-tung if he tries to persuade his people to turn their backs on this treasure, wrap themselves in tattered red flags, and lie down in moldy graves.

But this "jewel without price" (which we are informed the backward Chinese will be too unintelligent to appreciate) depends upon the development of several biological innovations—the preservation of our bodies from exposure to any risks which might make a later patch-up job impossible—and the ludicrous "decision" as to when during life we should make application for freezing. This prospect suggests the likelihood that every man will need a psychiatrist—and that every psychiatrist would perhaps need an astrologist! As matters stand, the psyche of the world is insanely oriented only part of the time, but in our private reading of Mr. Ettinger's "promise" of a physically discovered immortality, the psychological outlook would be considerably worsened, for what, then, could be more important than preservation of one's body?

The ethics Mr. Ettinger attaches to his doctrine of physical immortality are stated far more nobly in ancient scriptures, and one might here turn to the far different mood of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Upanishads.* In the *Gita,* the Christ-like figure of Krishna speaks to his disciple:

> Those who are wise in spiritual things grieve neither for the dead nor for the living. I myself never was not, nor thou nor all the princes of the earth nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. As the lord of this mortal frame experienceth therein infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same. One who is confirmed in this belief is not disturbed by anything that may come to pass. . . . These finite bodies, which envelope the souls inhabiting them, are said to belong to the eternal, the indestructible, unprovable spirit, who is in the body. The man who believes that it is this Spirit which killeth, and he who thinketh that it may be destroyed, are both alike deceived; for it neither killeth nor is it killed. It is not a thing of which a man may say. "It hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter", for it is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not slain when this its mortal frame is destroyed. How can the man who believeth that it is incorruptible, eternal, inexhaustible, and without birth, think that it can either kill or cause to be killed? As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the dweller in the body, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new.

And in the *Upanishads* there are these verses:

> The knower is never born nor dies, nor is it from anywhere, nor did it become anything. Unborn, eternal, immemorial, this ancient is not slain when the body is slain.
>
> If the slayer thinks to slay it, if the slain thinks it is slain, neither of them understands, for this slays not nor is slain.
>
> Though seated, it travels far; though at rest, it goes everywhere.
>
> Smaller than small, greater than great, this Self is hidden in the heart of man. He who has ceased from desire, and passed sorrow by, through the favour of that ordainer beholds the greatness of the Self.
>
> Through his past works he shall return once more to birth, entering whatever form his heart is set on.