VOLUME XVI, NO. 29
JULY 17, 1963

THE LONG WAY HOME

ONCE again the Supreme Court of the United States has brought down upon itself the wrath of critics who believe that a national government has the responsibility of providing a proper religious education for the young. In ruling that the states have no right to compel either prayers or Bible reading in the public schools, it is charged, the Court instituted as public policy a willful neglect of the "spiritual welfare" of American youth, apparently ignoring what are held to be the moral foundations of national character in the religious traditions of the people.

There are several ways to get into this argument. You can enter by way of political philosophy with the claim that the Bill of Rights prohibits the Government from exercising influence for or against any form of religion. You can review the history of nations whose past has been bloodied over centuries by the struggle of religious groups to obtain political power. Or, if it seems important to honor the intentions of the Founding Fathers, you can explore the implications of Deism, examine the record of the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention for evidence of what the makers of our national charter thought on this question, and read James Madison and Thomas Jefferson concerning freedom of religion. You may also recall that George Washington is on record as wanting to erect "effectual barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny."

Another approach would be through examination of what little is known about the processes of moral education. It is argued, for example, and not alone by freethinkers and humanists, but also by spokesmen of certain religious denominations, that only a vulgarized faith can be propagated by political means. The demand for indoctrination of children in religion by the schools, they say, is little more than a confession of the failure of the church and the home to perform the function of religious education.

Here, of course, the outcome of the argument depends upon what one expects as the fruit of "moral" or "religious" education. If the idea is to guide the thinking of the young in a direction deemed beneficial to the state, then some sort of uniformity of belief may serve the political community, as, for example, the civil religion of the ancient Roman empire contributed to its order. It will be recalled that the Romans did not demand actual conformity in thought, but only submission in outward observance. All the Christian martyrs had to do to escape the lions' jaws was to cast a single grain of incense on the altar of Caesar or Diana; this would have satisfied the trifling requirements of state religion.

But the advocates of (at least some) religion in the schools are not cynical Roman administrators. They ask that the schools take into account the claim that democracy and the ideal of the free individual originate in the Christian tradition, arguing that "not alone democracy, but indeed no worthy kind of social order can be sustained on the insubstantial secularistic ideals offered in the age of science." In an article in *Progressive Education* for February, 1949, William Heard Kilpatrick discussed the meaning of "teaching" in relation to this general question. He wrote:

> Teaching looks to two quite different types of character according as it stresses (1) obedient acceptance by the learner of what the teacher wishes to inculcate, or whether (2) it stresses the upbuilding of self-directing character, the ability and disposition to consider the total situation, including the rights and feelings of all others involved, before deciding to act.

One of the justices in the McCollum case said of position (1) in religion: it "does not leave the individual to pick up religion by chance. It relies on early and indelible indoctrination. Emperor Francis of Austria (c. 1822) illustrated the same ideal of teaching from a political point of view: "Obedient subjects are more desirable than enlightened citizens.

Herbert Spencer favored the second type of teaching: "The aim of your discipline should be to produce a *self-governing* being; not to produce a being *to be governed by others."*

What begins to be apparent is that the issue of religion and the state has grown out of the delegation to the state of public education. Separation of Church and State would hardly be a problem if we had not come to expect the Government to put our children through school and prepare them for life. The fact that so important a function now belongs so largely to the political authority lends substance to the idea that the state ought also to interest itself in the spiritual welfare of the young.

With this in mind, we can easily see how the argument moves into another area. If we allow the state this kind of responsibility, there is now the question of whether there can be any effective moral education without drawing on the resources of a particular religious tradition. One position on this question was stated several years ago by F. Ernest Johnson, a secretary of the Federal Council of Churches:

In the final analysis our secular culture can give no adequate support to the democratic ideal. . . . our culture is bound up with the quality of our public education; its secular character—the absence of a religious orientation in our common life—gives it a tendency toward disintegration. . . . the divorcement between religion and education is the most basic defect in American life, the correction of which may be reasonably expected to do more than anything else to overcome the sickness of a secularist society.

I do not believe that the separation of church and state is necessarily involved in this issue. Sectarian religious instruction is barred in our schools and I think it should be. . . . I believe that the American people as a whole are dissatisfied with the result of an educational system which does not consistently foster a mood of reverence, does not accept responsibility for making boys and girls familiar with our major classic, the English Bible, does not teach the significance in human history of that most elemental of all man's group activities, which we call worship, that they are dissatisfied with a system that undertakes, quite properly, to make the educative process continuous with the life of the community—and therefore puts into the curriculum industry, labor, civics, art, social welfare and the like—and then halts this process abruptly at the church door.

Commenting on the foregoing, John L. Childs, of Teachers College, Columbia University, observes:

Dr. Johnson would have the public schools lay "a foundation in knowledge, interest, outlook, and mood upon which organized religion can build in its own chosen way." He does not make clear how this religious "foundation" is to be laid without involving the schools in disruptive sectarian controversies, nor does he indicate what religious tests are to be applied to teachers in public schools in order to assure that their teaching will develop the desired positive religious "outlook" and "moods" in the young. Although Dr. Johnson holds that the separation of church and state is not involved in his allegedly "non-sectarian" proposal, many believe that little would remain of the historic American wall between church and state were his recommendations to be made an official part of our educational policy.

It is of interest that Dr. Johnson thinks instruction concerning the significance of "worship" would be "non-sectarian." No doubt the idea of the existence of "God" would be similarly regarded. Apparently, the thought is to include a large enough majority of various sorts of believers, so that only a few "atheists" or "secularists" would have ground for complaint. This makes it plain that whatever such advocates might privately regard as "true" religious education, in proposals of this sort they are relying on the political power of the majority to get the beginnings of a program going in the public schools. The hope is to use government authority to establish psychological attitudes receptive to a particular religious tradition, however broadly or "non-sectarianly" conceived.

Over against this tendency in religious circles may be set the provisions of the First Amendment to the Constitution, as defined and amplified by the ruling of the Supreme Court in the *McCollum* case:

> Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force or influence a person to go or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or for professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between Church and State."

So much for the issues of a controversy which seems likely to continue indefinitely into the future. What we should like now to investigate is the *reason* for the controversy, which seems to arise from differing factors of causation.

First is the fact that the social life of the community rests or "floats" upon a sea of assumptions about the nature of things. Some of these assumptions are philosophical or religious, some have to do with the nature of the physical world. The assumptions about *meaning* are almost entirely metaphysical, and therefore philosophical or religious, so that education, except for technical training, has almost by necessity to take these assumptions into account. An education which leaves untouched the entire region of transcendental thought is an education which has nothing important to say about the meaning of human life. It is true enough that at the university level students are brought into contact with the ideas of the great philosophers of history, but the encounter, with occasional exceptions, is what we call "academic," which means that it has little practical fruit in the affairs of men.

The secularist will not accept this conclusion. He will argue on humanitarian grounds that there is a morality implicit in the laws of the natural world, as progressively disclosed by the practice of science. He will say that the philosophy of social welfare produces a practical ethic which is entirely adequate for the purposes of public education, and he will contend there is no need to resort to the teaching of either supernatural religion or idealistic metaphysics for the foundations of responsible social behavior. In some measure, the secularist is right. But what is not openly admitted, or what participants in this debate often seem unaware of, is the fact that secularist ideals of the good life and the good society are often theologically decontaminated loans from some form of philosophical religion or metaphysical system.

We have only to go back to the early history of the United States for evidence of this sort of borrowing. Jefferson, for example, compiled his own version of the New Testament, editing out all that seemed irrelevant to the practical ethics he sought. Then take the idea of Natural Law, from which both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution derive their authority. For the Founders, Deism was quite plainly an attempt to salvage the philosophical content of religion while getting rid of its authoritarian flavor and its church-related abuses. The moral fervor which pervades the vision of the Founding Fathers is founded on high expectations of the capacities of human beings, once the restraints of Old-World tyranny were removed, and to man's natural endowments were added the disciplines and opportunities of education. It was consistent with the spirit of the age to anticipate the indefinite progress and ultimate perfectibility of man. The Enlightenment idea was that "the inner forces of growth and life can be trusted," the need being simply for institutions which would support that growth. The institutions would be forthcoming, it

was believed, so long as a proper estimate of man's potentialities was maintained, and if their development was scientifically planned and controlled. It is difficult, today, with the mood of disenchantment upon the Western world, to recall the thrusting spirit of enthusiasm and philosophical idealism which pervaded the thought of the eighteenth century. The thinkers of that age were filled with the visions of classical antiquity, which they tailored to fit the hungers and longings of their own time. Platonic idealism, Stoic resolve, and Socratic questioning filtered into the philosophy of the Enlightenment and helped to build a vast optimism. As Allen Hansen, a writer on this period, has said:

> Whereas man had been a means, he now became the end, and all institutions existed in order to make him free for creative, effective living. But it remained for man to discover the natural laws and to fashion the institutions according to them. Fixed institutions of religion and state were vigorously attacked in the degree in which they failed to aid in human progress. The only way in which they could aid in human progress was for them to be in harmony with the laws of nature. Pascal, Rousseau, Diderot, D'Holbach, Helvetius, and a host of others struggled for the liberation of mankind from the inertia of the past.

Turning to the conceptions which were intended to shape the civilization of the new country, the United States of America, Mr. Hansen continues:

> Thomas Paine declared that "the moral principle of revolutions is to instruct; not to destroy." A citizen of democracy must be one who "sees the rationale of the whole system, its origin and its operations." John Adams declared that "children should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom." . . .
>
> The separation from England was based not so much upon the economic issues that occasioned the protest, as upon an outlook which was the result of pioneer experiences and the eighteenth-century liberal view of man. . . . This new outlook was set before the American nation through the writings of Thomas Paine and other pamphleteers, and in the various petitions and proceedings. This outlook involved a recognition of the natural rights of man, the natural basis of society, the mutability and perfectibility of institutions, the utilitarian, creative conception of their functions, and the necessity of a form of education uniquely fitted to further democracy.

Here are the manifest riches of Renaissance philosophy turned to practical applications, made into the foundation of the political contract, the inspirer of systems of education, the preserver of human dignity, and the creator of a theory of progress for all mankind. This was the genius of the eighteenth century, which blossomed to its fullest extent in the New World, through the establishment of the United States. If we wish a purer or more abstract account of the underlying principle of this system, we have it in the work of the great Platonist of the Florentine Revival of Learning, Pico Della Mirandola. Pico was the founder of the Humanist movement in Western history, and his declaration of human freedom, placed at the beginning of his essay, *Of the Dignity of Man,* remains to this day the first principle of Humanist thought. It is that Man, unlike other creatures, is "coerced by no necessity," but "ordains for himself the limits of his nature according to his own free will." In Pico's allegory of Creation, the Deity says:

> I have given thee neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone, nor any function peculiar to thyself, Adam, to the end that, according to thy longing and according to thy judgment, thou mayst have and possess that abode, that form, those functions, which thou thyself shalt desire. . . . I have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that thou with greater freedom of choice and with more honor, as though the maker and moulder of thyself, fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are animal; thou shalt have the power, out of thy *soul's* judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms of life, which are divine.

Here, despite the rhetoric of fifteenth-century discourse, is as clear an image of the nature of man, in principle, as anyone has provided since, and it remains the charter of all Humanist guarantees and provisos. Man's capacity for self-development, self-determination, and self-improvement is his unique essence, the basis of all

protections to his freedom, of all educational resolves.

No special insight into the nature of democratic institutions is needed to see that they rest on concepts of value and meaning which are found in the philosophy or philosophical religion to which Pico gave voice. It is natural enough, therefore, when the positive ardors of building a material civilization begin to wane, for individuals who feel themselves responsible for the social and moral order to look for means of renewing the common inspiration. One way of doing this, they come to believe, is to use the authority of the state to communicate a fresh impulse to morality. In support of this theory, they have a great body of evidence from the past. That is, not until modern times has any society come into being without some direct relationship between political power and the system of religio-philosophical belief which justified the power and endowed the social organism with meaning. And there is also the plain fact that, with or without the sanction of political authority, no public institution can survive unless it bears to the people some sense of fulfillment of a meaning that they understand.

Yet it was out of a sense of meaning which developed from practical educational and political experience that the public school system of the United States gained its present character, which is well described by a writer in the earlier quoted issue of *Progressive Education* (February, 1949):

> The keystone of our public education is the institution of the public school. It derived from the philosophy of freedom that early displayed itself in the United States. It is a free school, providing education at public expense for all children within a specified age range. It is supported by taxes which each person, regardless of his religion or lack of it, is compelled to pay. The school is secular, and not religious, in its purposes and instruction. The public school is organized on the premise that its function is to provide all needed temporal knowledge, while maintaining a strict and lofty neutrality as to religion.

The question which needs answering is whether or not this "strict and lofty neutrality" will continue to be possible. Those who want to bring down the barrier between Church and State insist that it will not, and they offer various compromises, none of them especially attractive, and none of them giving signs of a serious educational purpose, through which relations may be established between the public schools and the institutions of existing religion.

What ought to be faced, but which seldom is faced, in terms of the public debate of this issue, is that the inspiration for freedom in this country was born of non-institutional religious philosophy. The United States came into being in a period of great transition in the thought of the Western world. It was a time of slowly shifting allegiances, when the faith of an independent and pioneering generation of men was rapidly shifting from religion to science. The first step of the shift, which took place in the persons of the Deists, was the abandonment of scriptural revelation and priestly authority, although the feeling of transcendent destiny for human beings was retained and made the motor of the new social order. There were "universal men" in those days—men in whom the rising spirit of science and this purified religious philosophy could find a synthesis that would work, and make them work for the common good.

Since that time, however, the inner logics of both the rejection of traditional religion and the growth and elaboration of the scientific institution went on developing and disclosing their inevitable consequences. The result, in time, was a sharply critical but philosophically barren skepticism in both philosophy and religion, and a satiated, technologically enriched acquisitive society. And now, emptied of positive beliefs, wasted by indulgence, and made aimless by a prosperity we are unable to enjoy because it is no longer honestly deserved, we want to turn back the clock and find our "faith" again.

It won't work. The political state cannot assume the responsibilities of the individual. It can neither do nor direct his thinking, least of all

his philosophical or religious thinking, with any success. Yet the diagnosis of the "religion in the schools" advocates is not without its somewhat hidden truth. We do need a revival of some sort. And the revival should be concerned with the meanings that religions have dealt with in the past. The scientific information of a secular culture is no help at all in providing what is wanted, although the disciplines we have acquired from pursuing scientific knowledge may turn out to be exactly what will protect us from getting what we *don't* want.

Religious people could help with all this if they were willing to recognize that the rebirth of the moral or spiritual life of the people can come only by the free asking of questions, and never from supplying them with old and familiar answers. The answers, as the history of our times should plainly show, are not known.

REVIEW
"RECONSTRUCTION IN RELIGION"

THE Humanist symposium under this title, edited by Alfred E. Kuenzli (Beacon Press, 1961; $3.95), opens the way to discussions ranging from religion to psychology and sociology, by way of philosophy. Mr. Kuenzli begins his Preface with these paragraphs:

> It is widely agreed that this is a time of considerable social flux. Change, of course, creates conflict and out of conflict comes reconstruction. This reconstruction is not automatic but instead has to be nurtured and implemented. The new perspectives have to be articulated and the new ways have to be made functional in daily life.
>
> Religion, the subject of this symposium, is one of the fields in which reconstruction has been taking place in recent years—a movement in the direction of what has been called "liberalism."
>
> The contributors are persons who are rooted in the behavioral sciences—psychology, psychiatry, sociology, anthropology, economics. They address themselves to mankind's most fundamental concerns—the search for faith, values, freedom and fulfillment within the natural and social world.
>
> It is becoming increasingly clear that the traditional religions have not really answered, in any satisfactory sense, the major questions about human existence. Nor have they been of much real use when it comes to dealing with important social problems. One of the motivations underlying the symposium is the feeling that these basic concerns and problems are too important to be entrusted any longer to the metaphysicians and priests. New sources of inspiration and guidance are appearing in our time and we need to see some of the alternatives that are now available to us.

An indication of what Mr. Kuenzli means by "a new spirit, a new climate of opinion," is provided at the end of the first essay, "The Religion of the Future" by Rudolf Dreikurs. Mr. Dreikurs writes: "The religion of the future cannot be authoritarian, only humanistic. Its faith is in man, not in God. Its truth must be found through human investigation, not through revelation. Its moral perspectives will be those of free men; its symbols will free man of his fears. And finally, its ritual will consist of mutual help so that we each can be the self-determined and self-respecting master of our fate, creator of the world around us and in us." Mr. Dreikurs' emphasis, like that of nearly all of the contributors to *Reconstruction in Religion,* is strongly anti-metaphysical, yet a paradoxical tension appears in the contrast between the idea that the "religious ritual of the future" will consist simply of mutual aid, and the following by Hadley Cantril in "The Nature of Faith":

> The inquiry we must undertake to gain faith is the sort which we can label "value inquiry" as contrasted to logical or rational inquiry. It involves "mulling things over," "meditation," "communion" or "prayer." Its purpose is to allow us to sensitize ourselves to our feelings, to reflect on the priority and weight we should assign to different value standards and to get *a sense of orchestration* into various aspirations and responsibilities we feel are right for us.
>
> For value inquiry to occur unhampered, we must insulate ourselves from here and now pressures. Christ went to the top of the mountain and Gandhi had his day of silence. The faithful Hindu sets aside a certain period each day for uninterrupted meditation. Only by getting away from immediate obligations and routines can our conscious and unconscious processes, together with our feelings, flow unhampered in surveying the widest possible range of cues to take into account in making our value judgments. It takes time.

It is difficult, apparently, to eliminate metaphysical considerations from discussions which involve the selection of values other than social or group values. Erich Fromm bridges this gap by pointing to a universal psychological content in basic religious symbolism, when the latter is separated from dogma and external authority. And in suggesting a need for a "relativistic religion" to supplant the notion that absolute truth can be communicated in religious doctrines, Ernest Bayles writes:

> If ideals or ends are taken as God-sanctioned, then man must not tamper with them. Therein lies sacrilege. Man has merely to determine what means

> are necessary for their achievement. In other words, God-sanctioned ends (which are absolute) are complete justification for any means necessary to attain them—"the ends justify the means." Need I enumerate the kinds of deeds which this principle has evoked during the course of human history?

Brock Chisholm is particularly concerned with "reconstruction in religion" as it applies to the education of the young. Writing of "Tomorrow's Children," Dr. Chisholm affirms that "children need a sense of identity with the whole human race." In the closing portion of his article, he writes of the obligation to inculcate universalism in the young, both before and during their sojourn in school:

> We have been talking about what not to do to children—how not to bind them to the "certainties" of the past, how not to deceive them with so-called harmless lies, how not to stunt their emotional development with the cruelest threat of all—that of the loss of life. But our responsibilities lie much deeper than a negative or even a passive level. There are certain positive things that we can and *must* do for our children; there are certain positive things that we can and must teach them.
>
> Our children need to learn, early in life, values that go away beyond the advantage of the group, the father, the mother the family and the local natives. They can be introduced and should be introduced to *world values* long before they go to school, and children are capable of recognizing the existence and importance of such values if their parents show that knowledge and that feeling themselves.

But here, however, there are considerations beyond agnosticism. Again we turn to Henry Miller for suggestive help. In *The Wisdom of the Heart,* Mr. Miller touches the elusive areas of reality which lie behind "the religious view of life":

> The acceptance of the situation, any situation, brings about a flow, a rhythmic impulse towards self-expression. It is the religious view of life: the *positive* acceptance of pain, suffering, defeat, misfortune, and so on. It is the long way round, which has always proved to be the shortest way after all. It means the assimilation of experience, fulfillment through obedience and discipline: the curved span of time through natural growth rather than the speedy, disastrous short-cut. This is the path of wisdom, and the one that must be taken eventually, because all the others only lead to it.
>
> The method is as applicable to what we call disease, or death or evil, as it is to a bullying adversary. The secret of it lies in the recognition that force can be *directed* as well as feared—more, that everything can be converted to good or evil, profit or loss, according to one's attitude. In his present fearsome state man seems to have but one attitude, *escape,* wherein he is fixed as in a nightmare. Not only does he refuse to accept his fears, but worse, *he fears his fears.* Everything seems infinitely worse than it is, says Howe, "just because we are trying to escape." This is the very Paradise of Neurosis, a glue of fear and anxiety, in which, unless we are willing to rescue ourselves, we may stick forever. To imagine that we are going to be saved by outside intervention, whether in the shape of an analyst, a dictator, a savior, or even God, is sheer folly. There are not enough lifeboats to go around, and anyway, what is needed more than lifeboats is lighthouses. A fuller, clearer vision—not more safety appliances!
>
> Many influences, of astonishing variety, have contributed to shape this philosophy of life which, unlike most philosophies, takes its stance *in* life and not in a system of thought. This view embraces conflicting world-views; there is room in it to include all of Whitman, Emerson, Thoreau, as well as Taoism Zen Buddhism, astrology, occultism, and so forth. It is a thoroughly religious view of life, in that it recognizes "the supremacy of the unseen."

COMMENTARY
FOR A "THAT"

THE religion of the future, says Rudolph Dreikurs, "cannot be authoritarian, only humanistic." "Its faith," he adds, "is in man, not in God."

This is well said. But if the humanist faith is to be rational, we shall have to find some way of supporting our faith in man. There are difficulties here.

One is reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction to Henri Alleg's *The Question*—the book about how the French tortured Algerian rebels. If, Sartre said, the French who were tortured by the Nazis in the 1940's could in the 1950's turn about and torture the Algerians, what are human beings, anyhow? Creatures of historical pressures? Would any men, given the conditioning suffered by the French, resort to torture?

Great things which move our hearts have been done by some individuals, but horrible things, unspeakable things, immeasurably evil things have been done by others. And the private crimes are slight by comparison to the crimes of men organized into States—like the French, like the Germans, like the . . . who are really exempt?

So if, indeed, we must learn to have faith in men, there is certainly a prior need to learn how to become better men, lest we be fools in our faith.

What is the Humanist Credo? It is that man has the capacity to make himself better. This sounds like operation bootstrap. No doubt it is.

One wonders, with this exciting and difficult prospect before them, why the Humanists are not more eager to examine, if not to embrace, the theories of human development which promise greater resources for change than our present educational doctrines afford. At any rate, the methods now in practice are not producing many notable transformations. Nor do you hear, from contemporary educationists, any impressive answer to the problem set by Ortega in his *Revolt of the Masses.*

You get something of an answer from Emerson, some more from Thoreau, and Henry Miller seems somehow to have learned secrets withheld from the great majority. But *how,* in the twentieth century, are you going to make this kind of philosophical enthusiasm popular? How are you going to get it into a *textbook?* How do you mass-produce and mass-distribute a truth which withers and dies in the moment that you cast it into the technological hopper?

A great many men are going to have to work on this problem with all their hearts, before we shall have an answer worth repeating.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
BEYOND THE REACH OF WAR

A READER has suggested that we become acquainted with a proud little volume titled *Mother and Son,* first published in Japan in 1950 and soon a "best seller" there. Since that time, this wartime correspondence between a Japanese school teacher, Isoko Hatano, and her teen-age son, Ichiro, has found its way around the world, and now appears in English, with an educator's foreword contributed by Odette Brunschwig, Inspector General of the Public Instruction in France (Houghton Mifflin). These letters, covering the period from 1944 to 1948, give evidence that even under the shadow of human debris which clotted the atmosphere after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, wisdom and love, in balance, could prevail. Odette Brunschwig provides an excellent characterization in these two paragraphs:

> Isoko tries more than anything to train her son in human relations. The respect that she accords to the boy still a child, to the impulsive gamin, to the scholar who follows the hard apprenticeship of knowledge, she expects him in turn to show to others. Above all she reveals to him the nobility in his father which the petty meannesses of daily life have hidden.
>
> I believe this teacher acquired her virtues by applying reflection to her gift of intuition. She loves, thus she divines; but she is not satisfied with divining; she examines with care, she criticizes what she does for her children, for her husband, for herself, yielding when necessary to the entreaties of a grateful and tender son who reproaches her not without liveliness for not having preserved the independence of which he is so proud. This humility of a mother who learns from her son to modify her conduct is both admirable and touching. "What you tell me will be helpful with the three younger ones." She reassures Ichiro against the pain he feels when the penetrating little wind of critical spirit insinuates itself between himself and his mother. She shows him that this is the way of growing up. She is glad it is so.

At the beginning of the war, young Ichiro is naturally saturated with propaganda, and so feels disturbingly alienated from his father, a psychologist who quietly evaluates the situation in entirely different terms. For the father sees neither Japanese nor American, East nor West but only evident cases of "neuroses of the nations." However, as time passes Ichiro begins to think for himself, and his 17-year-old's thoughts gradually bring him closer to the maturity of his father's outlook. Here is a letter from Ichiro to his mother, after Hiroshima:

From Ichiro to his mother, August 25th

> The Tokyo newspaper has published a report about the Hiroshima atom bomb. According to Truman, America spent two billion dollars on this new weapon, and one hundred and eighty-five thousand men worked on it in a vast number of factories. The research and manufacture of the bomb were already under way before the beginning of the war—before Pearl Harbor. The Americans insist that they were forced to strike back after being surprised at Pearl Harbor.
>
> But that's not true. America was already prepared. And then she did everything to get Japan into a difficult situation and force her into the war. In particular, she put a stranglehold on Japan by means of the blockade. And just as the starving mouse will eventually lash out at the cat, so Japan ended by attacking America.
>
> At the time of Pearl Harbor I was naïve enough to be enthusiastic about our daring; then Father explained to me how dishonestly we had behaved and I was ashamed of my country. In many of the chronicles of our past there are similar examples of surprise attacks—including that of Yamatotakeru on Mikoto. Father says that the Japanese have a natural tendency to consider the end result alone, without being too particular about the means they use to achieve it. That horrifies me.
>
> Nevertheless, if, as Truman has said, America was working on the atom bomb as early as 1940 and in anticipation of the war, she is the one to be ashamed. Naïve and quick tempered the Japanese fell victim to America's strategy, and now they have been beaten by an enemy much stronger than themselves.

It is so disheartening, Mother. America says she puts peace before everything else; but to judge from what has happened, she is not to be trusted.

Despite their separation, a genuine communication through letters was possible for Ichiro and his mother, and by means of this understanding Ichiro eventually comes close to his father. Here are two other letters, which speak for themselves:

To Ichiro from his mother

I trust you.

Thank you for not having hidden anything from me.

I do not want you to become a model boy, a paragon of virtue. Enjoy yourself without fear. Your father is taken up with his own affairs and he sometimes looks rather odd, but don't let that worry you. I shall speak to him. But take some care that it doesn't become too frequent.

I don't think there is any need to give you this advice, but don't forget to think about your behavior from time to time.

* * *

From Ichiro to his mother, October 10th

While you were out today I had a long talk with Father. At first we talked generally about school. Then we got onto "perception," about which I thought I knew something, and he really taught me a lot.

Father becomes a different man when he is talking about scholarly subjects. He is no longer satisfied with giving us vague answers, as he usually does. Without my having asked for anything, he went off and got me a book from the detached room, then he searched through all the shelves in the corridor to find another one for me and even got out a whole pile of reference books to explain the thing I had asked about.

I was very much surprised at the amount of trouble he took. When he talks about learning he commands all my respect. He is impressive. Is that what is called personality? Even I am beginning to understand how extraordinary a man he is.

I was really surprised to see this side of Father, who ordinarily takes little notice of what is asked him and generally makes life impossible for you by doing everything upside down. Does a man's personality reveal itself most clearly when he is speaking about his special interests in life?

I have often been told how lucky I am to have such a grand father. To be quite honest, I had never thought my father so wonderful that I could consider myself totally happy. But today I suddenly realized that it was true.

End of my report!

Ichiro learns to discuss the problems of young love, as well as the problems which follow a disastrous war. He comes to terms with the disciplines of scholarship and the growing responsibilities of a young adult. Above all, Ichiro is not simply a Japanese youth, he is the youth of promise of all climates and nationalities. And it is for this reason that the book *Mother and Son* has needed no fanfare to become beloved.

FRONTIERS
Nonconformist Musings

[This article is constituted of the main body of a letter which explores so searchingly the moods and wonderings of the individual at odds with his time that the conclusions reached should be of interest to many other readers. Some editorial comment is added at the end.]

THE independent individual, the nonconformist, in a conformist society is turned into something of a misanthropist. He is constantly placed on the defensive by a society which is hostile to his strivings, and eventually assumes, as a matter of habit, a defensive posture. He learns that he cannot afford to be too positive, too open, too trusting, for he knows that once he reveals himself to others, his trust is bound to be turned against himself. People do not trust a nonconformist, once they perceive him as such.

This defensiveness corrodes the nonconformist's relations with others and it eventually corrodes his relations even with his own kind. This is because he has learned to be suspicious not only of the average person, the person who *seems* to be like himself but who frequently turns out to be like all the others. For he finds that those "nonconformists" who, on first appearance, *seemed* to belong to his "species of humanity," in fact do not. There are some people who like to pretend to independence but who, in fact, are only pretenders. Their words count for nothing when they are confronted with the test of action.

Because of the rarity of the nonconformist "species," when the nonconformist comes into contact with truly genuine centers of nonconformity—with those with whom he might experience some real solidarity—he holds off and refrains from giving of himself. He remains aloof, reserved, critical. For he can never be sure. . . .

More disturbingly, the nonconformist gradually becomes jealous of his own independence and looks upon it as the sole preservation from the sinking ship, which is his culture. Through years of isolation, he has been forced to fall back on himself. The price of his integrity is a kind of pride and self-sufficiency (which he may secretly despise but which he cannot shake off). He finds that he cannot even make contact with his friends, so used has he become to sustaining no contact with his enemies (who are most of the people that he meets in daily life, a fact which he is reluctant to admit, yet which his enemies see and experience quite clearly). He imagines that there is no one quite like himself, that anyone who *seems* to be like him is not *really* so. For again and again, his trust has been betrayed, and he has found that what seemed solid was only appearance.

This, I would suggest, is something of the natural history of the relationship of the nonconformist with his society. Anyone familiar with psychiatry will recognize that it is also the natural history of psychosis. The distinction between the nonconformist and the psychotic is not an absolute one. In fact, sometimes the two coincide. The nonconformist, to the extent to which he is alienated, is more or less psychotic; and the psychotic, in the degree of his psychosis, no longer participates in the way of his society. The sane nonconformist can only look at his psychotic brother and, with sympathy proclaim, "There but for the grace of God go I."

The nonconformist's problems are strikingly similar to the Negro's, though with some important distinctions: The Negro's problems are, now, socially visible; the public feels guilty about them; and the Negro has the support of the numerous members of his race. The Negro problem has become a social problem; the nonconformist problem is still a personal, almost a psychiatric, problem. We see this in the fact that whereas a James Baldwin can engage in a public confessional about the problems of the Negro and be listened to attentively by the whole society, a nonconformist who attempted to speak of *his* problems would promptly be referred to a

psychiatrist. His problems are personal, of his own making. For him, the public confessional is socially taboo.

When I read Baldwin's words and witness the respect and attention they receive, I almost envy him. I think that for all his suffering and despair, his problems, and the problems of his race, are decades closer to solution than are the problems of the nonconformist. The nonconformist is where the Negro was fifty or one hundred years ago. A James Baldwin can become the spokesman for his people and be listened to by the whole world. He can even have the fantastic experience of finding white men who do penance at his feet. A James Baldwin who spoke for nonconformists would never be listened to at all. . . .

True enough, Baldwin happens to be both a Negro and a nonconformist, a fact which complicates (and confuses) the man and his predicament, as revealed by his tortured confessions. But he can only speak as a Negro, for he knows that he would not be able to be understood at all in his other role. Yet, he is disturbed that he must repress the other side of himself, and every once in a while, he cries out in anguish, seeking to be heard in his wholeness.

It is just possible that Baldwin is heard so clearly because he cannot wholly suppress his other voice. That is, while he speaks *for* the Negro, he makes his hearers think of the Negro, not as a black man, but as a man. And this is because Baldwin speaks only incidentally as a "black" man, himself. The quality of his intelligence dramatizes the irrelevance of his color, which is precisely what the whites must learn—that color is irrelevant in all cases. One may doubt that Baldwin could do this without having risen above partisanship in some department of his being. And there is a sense in which nonconformity is exactly such an elevation of the human spirit above partisan ends.

The general predicament of the nonconformist, as described by this reader, seems to be a special case in our time of what the *Bhagavad-Gita* terms the Despondency of Arjuna. The nonconformist (using the term in its best meaning) is always in advance of his age. He is by definition a pioneer, and therefore subject to loneliness. He has begun to fight battles which are not seen as important, not even recognized as genuine issues, by most of his contemporaries. One of his first tasks, therefore, is to acknowledge the inevitability of his isolation and to understand it. In the case of Arjuna, the explanation of the isolation comes in the form of the psychology of religion. But for the nonconformist of the present, whatever the psychological aspects of his individual situation, there is also an historical explanation.

We men of the latter half of the twentieth century are the inheritors of a politicalized, social-action morality. For many who grew up in the palmy days of the radical movement—the 1930's—there is a strong workingclass partisanship in the background of their critical thinking. Almost instinctively, "businessmen" are distrusted, and indications of affluence tend to be taken as proof of corruption. A nonconforming "radical" who goes into business finds himself subject to many curious psychological reflexes and impulses to moral judgment, some of which may be confirmed by experience, while others turn out to be irrelevant or manifestly unjust. There is the further shake-up, for such people, which results from such historical episodes as the Moscow Trials, the invasion of Hungary, and the disappearance of the "Humanist" side of the Castro revolution. The radical for whom these developments were crucial disappointments has now the problem of finding new criteria for objective evidence of radical "good."

Actually, this little summary of the transitions imposed on nonconformist thinking by the passage of events is far too simple. It is more to the point to say that what happened, during the past forty

or so years, was a breakdown in radical political theory so extreme as to leave all but doctrinaire die-herds in a state of confusion. While there are many parts of the world where not only the evolution to the Welfare State, but also the (eighteenth-century) political revolution, has still to take place, we cannot help but recognize that these political transformations will also introduce now "backward" or undeveloped peoples to the serious psychological and cultural problems of the advanced tecnological society. It follows that unqualified enthusiasm for political action intended to bring these peoples "up-to-date" in their social system can be felt only by those whose nostalgia for the simple radical "righteousness" of the past makes them blind to the disillusionments of the present.

In short, an objective criterion of fruitful nonconformity is by no means easy to establish, today. There are so many fronts, so many things wrong, so many situations which are compromising—more, or less—that it is the general thrust of an individual's life, rather than his specific behavior at a given moment, which is important. Of considerable help, here, is an extract from an early paper by A. H. Maslow:

> A study of people healthy enough to be called self-actualizing revealed that they were not "well-adjusted" (in the naive sense of approval of and identification with the culture). They got along with the culture in various ways, but of all of them it could be said that in a profound and meaningful way they . . . maintained a certain inner detachment from the culture in which they were immersed.

In *Motivation and Personality,* Dr. Maslow adds to this picture:

> Although they were not a radical group of people in the ordinary sense, I think they easily *could* be. First of all this was primarily an intellectual group (it must be remembered who selected them), most of whom already had a "mission," and felt that they were doing something really important to improve the world. Secondly they were a "realistic" group and seemed to be unwilling to make great but useless sacrifices. In a more drastic situation it seems very likely they would be willing to drop their work in favor of radical social action, *e.g.,* the anti Nazi underground in Germany or in France. My impression is that they were not against fighting but only against ineffectual fighting.

These facets of the nonconformist who does not wear his heart on his sleeve should have some kind of bearing on the problems discussed by our correspondent. It seems fair to say, further, that selecting the *effectual* form of "fighting" is probably the most difficult decision before the radical or nonconforming individual of today.