

## WHAT, IF NOT A MIRACLE?

ON the day after Albert Einstein had been awarded a degree by the Sorbonne, with impressive ceremony in an amphitheater packed with the notables of the world, one of his relatives called him on the telephone at his small, undistinguished hotel.

"I wish to speak with Professor Einstein," he said.

"There is no Professor Einstein here," came back the answer.

"Oh yes there is," rejoined his relative. "I drove him there last night."

"Are you speaking of Albert Einstein, the great scientist?" came the puzzled tones of the proprietor. "There must be some mistake. There is only a little man here registered as A. Einstein, and he is, I am sure, a traveling salesman."

By what signs and portents was the hotel proprietor *supposed* to know the identity of his guest? Other men had been similarly confused. When a clerk in the American Consulate's office in Berlin was asked to visa Einstein's pass-port, he looked sternly at the quiet little man and said: "And what is your political viewpoint?" Einstein said he hadn't any, that he had been invited to go to the United States to collaborate with American scientists, but the clerk continued his interrogations with the air of Torquemada in the Inquisitorial chamber at Seville." Einstein, finally getting the message, grew pale and said: "Your countrymen invited me to America. This is the third request I have received from them. If I am to be questioned as a suspect, I don't go at all."

The clerk was almost fired for this dreadful conformity prescribed-routine. Why was he so "conscientious" in this case? Apparently, there was a cause. Hearing of Einstein's proposed emigration to the United States, an American group known as the Women's Patriot Society had lodged an objection with the State Department,

demanding that he be forbidden entry because he was a pacifist with Communist aims; and, for reasons still unknown, Secretary of State Stimson forwarded the protest to the American Consulate in Berlin. It was this that lay behind the clerk's inquisition, but Einstein, when he finally got the explanation, was only amused. He addressed an answer to the American people:

Why should one open one's doors to a person who devours hard-boiled capitalists with as much appetite and gusto as the Cretan Minotaur in days gone by devoured luscious Greek maidens; and, on top of that, is low-down enough to reject every sort of war, except the unavoidable war with one's own wife. Therefore, give heed to your clever and patriotic womenfolk, and remember that the capital of mighty Rome was once saved by the cackling of its faithful geese.

His final comment was this:

The trouble with hearings of the kind I was subjected to is that you don't realize until some time has passed just where the inquisitor is trying to get under your skin. I suggest that future consuls put pins in their victims' chairs, so that they will feel stuck from the beginning.

Einstein, throughout his life of fame, was subjected to a double embarrassment. He suffered, like any other talented man the demeaning distrusts of bureaucracy and the suspicious hatreds of the bigoted, and then, when his growing reputation brought him exemptions, he suffered a second sort of misunderstanding, since he knew his simple humanity was not the reason for the decencies uniquely allowed in his behalf. The practice was wrong both ways. But not entirely. There was in the public honor accorded to Einstein a recognition that breaks conventional rules because of the presence of a man who needs no; rules, who lives above them. Without knowing how or why, he aroused an immeasurable devotion in masses of men. As he

rode in a cab from the Sorbonne, after the ceremony, the streets were filled with cheering crowds. His companion asked why, and Einstein replied, *Das frage ich mich auch selber* (I also ask that of myself).

Einstein's son-in-law, Dimitri Marianoff, in his book, *Einstein, An Intimate Study of a Great Man* (Doubleday, 1944), attempted an explanation:

Great men in the past have disappointed humanity by not living up to their pinnacled heights. But here was a life rigidly simple in its human adjustments—no petty compromises with its mortalpadding—whose main and extraordinary trait, in that greatness, was his own iron refusal ever to use his fame for his own benefit, in one single instance.

It was the first time in the history of his own generation that a scientist retreated from scientific fields to take the role of defender of human rights. At these world gatherings Einstein bared himself and the public came to know another side of him. The world saw one of the great humanists of his era who said plainly and always, "Man is here for the sake of other men only."

So the masses eliminated the scientist they could not understand, and adopted him, and loved him for the thing all the world understands his goodness

They loved the little things about him; his life was an open book, all his acts a testimony of himself; he had no interest in the accumulation of money, or the occupation of high positions or in self-aggrandizement.

The world is a sensitive one. Like a seismograph, it reacts to elements unseen by the physical senses. There is a deep spiritual force that pervades all that Einstein does. It is emitted from values we cannot touch: from his humility, his benevolence, his lifting up of mankind in his thinking, from a viewpoint so lofty there is, in it, no room for condemnation of anyone or any kind.

Well, this can hardly be the whole story, but, so far as it goes, it is probably true. As Mr. Marianoff suggests, Einstein vindicated the human longing to see greatness of mind united with nobility of character. Almost by historical accident their correlation in him was exposed, and people felt it as some kind of Second Coming. His qualities restored an increasingly threadbare

faith in man. "One day," Marianoff relates, "on a city street I saw a woman standing with a little boy. She had a hand on his shoulder, and with the other she pointed to a man in a car and said:

"There is Albert Einstein. Don't ever forget you have once seen him."

This scene led Mr. Marianoff to write his book.

It is hard to know why that mother wanted her boy to remember having seen Albert Einstein; she may not have known, herself. Did she want him to remember Einstein because of the enormous distance between the physicist and ordinary men—because of his *otherness*? Or was it because Einstein was an extraordinary case of being richly *human*? We can hardly know. Part of the problem may grow out of the conspiracy in which mediocrity engages to hide from us the wonderful realities of human distinction, with the result that when break-throughs come, and we acknowledge them, they are so impressive that we regard them as some kind of miracle. You don't have to account for miracles; you just wonder at them, and then, after a while, forget them. The saddest thing about Einstein is that, for a great many, his greatness had the quality of a secular miracle instead of a demonstration of the potentialities of man. Another discouragement is that we are reduced to using him as an illustration of these potentialities when we ought to be able to make equally easy reference to dozens and dozens of men; or, even better, simply to talk about the qualities of human distinction, without having to give impressive examples. But the example of Dr. Einstein packs the wallop we need. The idea is not to apotheosize him but to humanize him, and to do this in a way that needs no complacent inventory of his small faults. To humanize Albert Einstein is to elevate man. Some passages from Marianoff will illustrate the problem:

While Albert Einstein is encased in a human body, and it is true that he eats and drinks and laughs and talks just as other humans, in certain ways he does not think as a human; he thinks in terms of the

universe. And because he does this the man and his thought are a closed preserve to a matter world. He tells you so himself. He once wrote:

"For the most part I do the thing my own nature drives me to do. Arrows of hate have been shot at me, but they never hit me, because somehow they belonged to another world with which I have no connection whatever." . . .

Once he said to me in Berlin—the exact phrasing of the words is lost but the fact in them was this—that when the truths of cosmic law and order became the inhabitants of his mind and took possession they brought with them a tremendous calm and a divine balance, and he was never to know restlessness or impatience again, ever. . . .

The failure of scientists to cooperate with him was one of Albert's bitter disappointments. This is the contradiction of Einstein. He is both skeptical and naive. His observations and his disappointments of earth's actors make him so. I used to try to reason out this contrast in his character, and I came to this conclusion:

Einstein's life (practically all of it) is spent in a far remove, in a contemplation of a universe of rare immensities where all is a monumental order, valid, irrefutable, with no conflicts and no variances.

In such spaces he sees with the eyes of Deity itself. When he comes down from the heights, he finds the world a disappointing place. He saw too much of the weakness in people. He saw too much of people's motives. They came to him in troops, in the name of godliness, in the name of charity; but they always spoke in terms of self—me, mine, I, I. He might have paraphrased Emerson: "I cannot hear what you say, because what you are speaks so loud." . . .

I do not see Einstein as a person. The presence of reality in his consciousness repudiates the human sense of things. It is as though the vast cosmic process of the universe in which he dealt had introduced themselves into his character. He cannot act in small human ways. You are most conscious of this when you see him with people. Regardless of how many surround him, he is always alone—not lonely but alone. Einstein does not need people. He receives them with warmth and kindness, but they are in no way necessary to him. You see this in his eyes when he leaves them; the expression is already one of extreme contemplation, and he is barely aware he has been with them; the line of his thinking is unbroken.

When he walks out, he thinks. When he sits quietly with his pipe in a chair, he thinks. . . . You would not interrupt him for a moment with any question, because always you see in his eyes thought, abstract, reflective. . . . It is not a feeling of good taste that tells you he must not be interfered with; it is more than that—it is a deep intuition that informs you that what is taking place before you refuses to brook any intrusion, and that you could gain no entrance even if you tried.

Does this portrait of Einstein shut out or invite in? We are not really praising Einstein here, but taking advantage of the remarkable perceptiveness of Mr. Marianoff in respect to another human being. One could wish for many more accounts of such men.

The question ought rather to be: Does our world shut out an Einstein or invite him in—which means, for our purposes, does our world lead us, naturally, to think of the qualities here displayed or described as among the goals of high human development? Not all the goals—this is not a "blueprint" idea—but some of them? Or is the rarity of such men so discouraging as to make us relegate them to the "miracle" category? To see them as random happenings?

Actually, most of us have had the kind of education which is calculated to make us say that a man like Einstein is simply "impossible," so that when one appears we are content to treat him like a sport of nature. And *what* would we do with such people, if there were a lot of them? Our social order based on acquisitiveness and status would tremble eerily on the edge of the abyss, hour by hour losing its foundation. Many more young men would refuse to go into the army. With enough hearing for such thinkers, the timeless world would be declared real; the wide universe might begin to be embodied in us, just as it was in Dr. Einstein. Gentleness, courage, and the determination to say only what you know would become honored virtues. Many houses of cards would come tumbling down.

Here was a man who had no need of "religion." Yet you could make a dozen religions

from the echo of his casual remarks. So, with many more like him among us, the religious orthodoxies of the world might collapse from neglect. You would have people whose religion was like their breathing, going on all the time, but needing no special notice or cultivation.

How many Einsteins must we be witness to before we are ready to abolish the statistical, status quo images of man as models and guides? How many Athenian sages will have to be poisoned, Brunos burnt, and Gandhis and Martin Luther Kings assassinated before we begin to bring up our children in the admiration and expectation of human greatness?

To ask this question is to see the evil of the miracle idea about human greatness. If you don't have to account for the heroic in human beings, then you don't have to account for the banality of all its contradictions; we can go on as we are, thinking the evil man an unfortunate intrusion, just as the wonderfully good man is an incomprehensible one. That way there is nothing to do. There is nothing to explain. You wait till the good man dies, then put his works in a museum for passive appreciation. You catch the bad man if you can, then execute him. And if, as often happens, you get the good and bad men mixed up, well, it's just too bad. After all, good men ought not to permit the spread of such misleading conceptions about themselves.

So, today, we have a manhunt going—if it isn't over yet—when we ought to be severely reproaching the preachers of mediocre predestination, and punishing by boycott the haters and fearers of human eminence. So, today, we have housewives trying to get home from the store before dark, wondering who will be murdered next in this great civilization where the most intolerable problems are usually solved by killing human beings. It is, alas, the people who want their self-esteem to be preserved without effort, their security to be assured at any expense, and their futures to be guaranteed even though it costs the slaughter of half a world of "enemies"—

or the obliteration of a universe, if they could find a way to get at it—who are behind these killings. Add unfeeling daring to mediocrity and you get the ethic of modern war; add narrow resentment to culturally rationalized egotisms and you get assassins who boast of what they have done as proudly as John Wilkes Booth.

How do you design an educational system with room for Einsteins at the top, or somewhere in that direction, and which discourages potential assassins? This is a fundamental problem, but almost nobody seems to be working on it. The neglect of this question made A. S. Neill explode when another educator spoke of how to make progress in teaching reading and writing. What you say, Neill stormed, is simply beyond me!

It's beyond me because you're talking about education, the three R's and science, and I'm thinking about the dynamics of life, the dynamic in a child, how we're going to prevent the child from becoming a Gestapo, or becoming a color-hater and all these things. The sickness of the world. I'm interested in what we're going to do *for* children to stop them from becoming haters, to stop them from being anti-life.

He is right, of course, but you can't put A. S. Neill into the curriculum, any more than you can put in a formula for an Einstein (supposing people would really let you).

Yet it's not all a matter of the curriculum; it's only partly so. If it was all curriculum and conditioning you wouldn't ever get any Richard Wrights and James Baldwins, or Willie Morris, either, but a succession of neat little mannikins, all cast in the same mold.

All we know about human greatness, now, is that we require it to develop against the grain. We stack the whole system against its nascent possibility, stamp out the earliest sparks in the young, blackmail defiant originality with demands for "gratitude" when they reach adolescence, and then do our best to mutilate anything that's left by sending them to Procrustes to get jobs.

And if they should happen to resist all this successfully, there's always the chance that you

can get them to go on television. If that doesn't finish them, nothing will.

What, really, did Einstein have, that seems lacking in most men? According to Marianoff, he had a cosmic sense of identity. Maybe other men have this too, but for him its threads ran true into all the moral qualities, and so effortlessly that "morality" needs new definition after reading about his life.

Asked by a colleague how he came to find out what he did about the universe, Einstein said, "I refused to accept an axiom."

An education which would warn the young that all the axioms may have to be replaced, some day, would at least be an education allowing for Einsteins. It would repeat no dogmas about the limits of human potentiality. It would open up to mythic dimensions the idea of both identity and achievement. It would revive the dynamic of *chivalry* from the Middle Ages, where the rise of industrialism and progress left it, hundreds of years ago, and devise a new idiom for its levels of aspiration. (For there *are* varying grades of excellence in human behavior. Nero was not a saint. George Babbitt was not Irving Babbitt.) It would not regard as blasphemy the idea that a man can become God, or at least a half-god. Tolstoy, in his own way, made it, or refused to try to be anything else, and his heroic effort still lifts up other men. So, in another way, do the struggles of Dostoevsky.

A humanistic theology? Why not? It would be a lot better than the trips-to-the-moon conception of human striving, or any other surrogate hero scheme. In time, we might learn how to recognize a great man when he comes along, or at least not mistake him for a traveling salesman or a Communist.

## REVIEW

### FAINT PRAISE, SOME GRATITUDE

WE have for review—through the kindness of a friend—three issues of *Psychology Today*, January, February, and March. Psychology, you could say, has quite plainly made it. No difficult subject is more effectively packaged than Psychology in this magazine. One wonders how they can afford it, with so few ads, but there it is, laid out even better than *Good Housekeeping*, with a lavish use of color and art director's know-how—obviously designed with the latest skills of communications technique for printing on the reader's psyche each valuable tidbit and insight. What good is technology if you don't use it in the service of truth, now that we have gotten around to admitting that self-knowledge is important?

You know that the magazine is after the truth because they practically say so, and even the ads are so confident that they make you feel pretty uninformed, if not completely inadequate. Here we are, struggling along in darkness, seeing a faint glow here and there, and trudging after it with what persistence we can muster, and then along comes *Psychology Today* with this Important Message about choosing your life-work:

This new instrument evaluates ten life goals: Esteem, Profit, Fame, Leadership, Power, Security, Social Service, Interesting Experiences, Self-Expression, and Independence to identify the significant motivational forces for planning a career.

All this within easy reach, and you have only read as far as the ad on the inside front cover!

But is this fair? We don't review the *Saturday Evening Post* that way! No, we don't; it isn't fair, and there are lots of good things in this magazine, to make us both sadder and wiser; but then, the *Satevepost* doesn't call itself *Psychology*, which is almost one of the Sacraments of our secular society, as people now feel about it.

There are various ways to look at this matter. For example, the genuine wisdom we sometimes feel able to recognize seldom arrives at our desk

all slicked up. The wise men we know go around in old clothes. Maybe they can afford new ones, but they don't want to be mistaken for rich people and they don't bother. We have found a lot of what seems psychological wisdom in little books with no pictures, no graphs, no color, and no predigestion by experts. Not even any experts. Just some exquisite, timeless thinking in a form that will never enjoy a big news-stand sale.

Don't the masses have rights, too? If they want pictures, why not give them pictures? Maybe, to that extent, the medium *is* the message. And if the masses, also think that the truth resides in great cathedrals, why not go there and talk about it, if the congregation is big enough? What other way is there to get so many people together? And where they'll keep quiet, too. It gives you a chance to fire Salvo One.

Well, on the other side of the ledger, *Psychology Today* has various contributors we greatly admire people like Rollo May and Viktor Frankl. Such men need to be heard. One should be grateful to whoever (whomever?) gives them a platform.

The interview with Viktor Frankl (by Mary Harrington Hall) in the February issue is especially valuable. It clears up the important matter of Frankl and religion; it corrects an error we have made in these pages; and it leaves you with an impression of Dr. Frankl that is better, if possible, than the one you had before. There is basic clarification in the following exchange:

*Hall:* Why do you call your theory of psychotherapy "logotherapy"?

*Frankl:* *Logos* is a Greek word that denotes "meaning." Logotherapy focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's search for such a meaning. It is this striving to find a meaning in one's life that is the primary motivational force in man. That is why I speak of a *will to meaning* in contrast to the pleasure principle of Freudian psychoanalysis or the *will to power* of Adlerian psychology.

*Hall:* Do you regard this concept of man as human only to the extent he reaches beyond himself as a religious concept?

*Frankl*: It has nothing to do with theology and the supernatural whatsoever; but it is a tradition of European philosophy. And this self-transcendence is lived out by what I call man's will to meaning. This will to meaning is frustrated today. More and more patients are approaching psychiatrists with the complaint of an inner void and emptiness, with a sense of meaninglessness, with the feeling of a total and ultimate futility of life. And this condition is not restricted to our culture. Communist psychiatrists have expressed frankly this condition I have called the existential vacuum, this feeling of meaninglessness. It is spreading among youth in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Russia.

The correction for MANAS is in Dr. Frankl's statement: "What is *not* true is that I came out of Auschwitz with my theory of psychotherapy. I entered Auschwitz with the manuscript of my book in my pocket." It was of course taken away from him. He adds, however, that the acid test of the death-camp experience confirmed "the tenets of logotherapy." The camp gave him "empirical validation of existentialism."

A while back, it was suggested in these pages that one of the most profound psychological insights of our age (an age so "good-environment" oriented that we scarcely talk of anything else) came out of the worst possible, indeed, the worst conceivable, environment—the death camp.

So this isn't true. Dr. Frankl's conviction that man's essential nature lies in his quest for meaning was born before the death-camp experience. What may not be known, however—and which this interview makes clear—is that Dr. Frankl did not *have* to go to a death camp. He had a visa to come to the United States. He could have escaped, but his aged mother and father could not escape. They wanted him to go, but on the eve of his decision he had a dream of psychotic patients lined up to enter the gas chamber, and he decided that "working as a psychotherapist in a concentration camp, supporting the people there mentally, would be incomparably more meaningful than just being one more psychiatrist in Manhattan." So he stayed with his mother and father until the Nazis came for them.

There may be a sense, however, in which Dr. Frankl's vision of the will-to-meaning has its impact on modern readers partly because of his heroic history. Logotherapy has its prosy aspect (no *id*); *From Death Camp to Existentialism* is not prosy at all. It speaks from a consciousness serene in anguish, and people have heard. More than 350,000 copies of *Man's Search for Meaning* (a revised edition of the earlier book) have sold in a few years in the United States. Just possibly, the monstrous "romance" of Dr. Frankl's past helped to distribute the books even more than the philosophic appeal of his "quest for meaning" thesis. Yet this thesis is in the book, and it is read and pondered. This sort of help in getting great ideas around is the right sort of collaboration from circumstances, especially when it is unplanned, and, "thankfully," unarranged. It is better than technological assists, however visually effective.

The interview with Dr. Frankl also provides interesting fragments of history—Frankl's early relations with Freud, with Adler, and the help he received from the late Gordon Allport, who got Dr. Frankl's book published. Dr. Frankl also defines his existentialism as affirming the value and dignity of man (in contradistinction to nihilist versions) and he connects himself with "the humanistic psychological movement as developed by Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow, and Charlotte Buehler." What he says about Dr. Maslow deserves special attention.

Dr. Frankl speaks to Americans with particular clarity, saying that our Statue of Liberty on the East Coast should be "supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast." He also says:

I fear I must contradict your Declaration of Independence. Pursuit of happiness seems to me to be self-defeating, because man originally never pursued happiness. Happiness and pleasure are side-effects, destroyed precisely to the extent that they are aimed at.

Well, this is only one sample of the excellences in *Psychology Today*. The February

issue has a contribution by Rollo May. The January issue has a delightful interview with Charles Schulz, creator of *Peanuts*; and the March issue presents Peter F. Drucker twice, in an interview and by a reprint. Mr. Drucker is always worth reading for his remarkable sagacity; it makes you wonder where it comes from. *Psychology Today*, if you don't mind the pictures and charts, will come to you from 1330 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar, California 92014, for \$9.00 a year (it's a monthly); single copies are \$1.00.

## *COMMENTARY*

### THE PURSUIT OF SIDE-EFFECTS

IT is a great misfortune that the expression, "the pursuit of happiness," is enshrined in our Declaration of Independence. For while happiness is a word of many meanings, some of them suggesting the quest for truth or similar high endeavor, in a society pledged to honoring majority opinion it was inevitable that "happiness" as personal enjoyment should come to be regarded as a God-given American right. It is practically unAmerican to confess to being unhappy. So, quite naturally, unhappy people continually look for scapegoats. Their right to happiness remaining unfilled, somebody else must be at fault. The incredibly high divorce rate in the United States—about half the marriage rate in California—is probably explained by this deeply patriotic conviction.

Somewhere along in the course of American history, as Arthur M. Schlesinger (Sr.) noted, the pursuit of happiness was transformed into the happiness of pursuit. For Americans, the end became the means. And these are the people who, with a show of amazement, say that they can't understand why Negro Americans keep talking about Black Power! You'd think that no one ever pursued happiness with determination until Stokely Carmichael gave voice to what is of necessity the black man's version of the American Dream.

Yet men don't become happy by pursuing happiness, and the happiness of pursuit eventually turns people into nervous wrecks. As Viktor Frankl (see Review) says: "Happiness and pleasure are side-effects, destroyed precisely to the extent that they are aimed at." And in *Frontiers*, a more urgent warning comes from Leslie Farber, who points out that the desperate demand for happiness—wholeness, peace of mind; there are lots of synonyms—has turned our technological civilization into an "addictive

society." Dr. Farber quotes from the *Los Angeles Times* (Oct. 9, 1966):

Use of illegal drugs in industry, especially among production-line workers, is so common that to arrest everybody who sold or used them would mean some plants would have to hire whole new shifts of employees, according to a police narcotics specialist. The drugs most commonly used are amphetamine sulfate compounds and barbiturate derivatives, which keep workers awake or put them to sleep. . . .

Wondering how to get at this question, we turned to George Seldes' *The Great Quotations* (Lyle Stuart), to see what distinguished men have thought about "happiness." It is interesting that many of them warn against the delusions the pursuit of happiness may bring. Lord Acton, for example, said this:

Whenever a single definite object is made the supreme end of the State, be it the advantage of a class, the safety or power of the country, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, or the support of any speculative idea, the State becomes for the time inevitably absolute.

And Freud wrote:

So in every individual the two trends, one towards personal happiness and the other towards unity with the rest of humanity, must contend with each other.

Immanuel Kant frames the question well:

Morality is not properly the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness.

Acceptance of Kant's counsel would have a noticeable effect on the way a man relates to Dr. Farber's two realms of the will. And it would put an end to both "pursuit" and scapegoating.

# CHILDREN

## ... and Ourselves

### THE MEANING OF MUSIC

THE question of the part played by music in the life of children becomes extremely difficult, once the obvious things are said. To go beyond the obvious probably has little immediate point, yet it may be useful in preventing the development of rigid ideas concerning what music is. Rigid ideas about any "art" can have a very bad effect on children, as many parents realize only in later years.

Small children don't seem to know anything about pitch. Yet they are capable of extraordinary "unpremeditated art" in composing long, recitative sagas which fall into appropriately random periods. The voice goes up and down, but there is no real pitch. There are sometimes fugues and codas, but not the forms with which we are familiar. These are not "performances," but only a child unconsciously revealing what may be one of the origins of art in human life.

Then, in time, comes the encounter with culturally transmitted melodies and established rhythms; and these, with a little good fortune, have their own natural fitness as beginning forms for the process of "socialization." How do you tell the cliché from authentic "folk" in children's songs and games? This probably takes both experience and insight. Insight tells you that the clichés exist, and experience enables you to recognize them, to confirm your suspicion—just as you recognize with some pain that five-year-olds bring home from nursery school the petty, commonplace vulgarities of their peer group, making you wish that mother didn't have to have a job.

Well, these are thoughts which come after a reading of Gordon Epperson's *The Musical Symbol*, an Apollonian work on the philosophy of music by a distinguished cellist (Iowa State University Press, 1967). It is a learned book; that

is, much of it will have little meaning unless you are a musician or a music-lover of the sort who can recall the tides and feeling of a musical composition simply from having it named. And in this case the obligation put upon a reviewer by Bishop Berkeley—to "think with the learned but speak with the vulgar"—becomes practically impossible to fulfill unless one is learned in musicology. The fact is, however, that anyone can find value in this book, since every art has complex symmetries and good writing about an art means that the author has been able to convert its symmetries into the vocabulary of another art form—that of speech. *The Musical Symbol* is both a history of the ideas of musical meaning and an essay by the author on this subject. It is done in the scholarly tradition, packed with illuminating quotations from philosophers, and from composers, with useful, framing comment by the writer. The effect on the general reader, perhaps because there is so much he does not understand, may stimulate him to devise his own theory of the meaning of music. This, after all, is the author's intent.

The book has many constructive accomplishments. For example, in relation to music appreciation it is comforting to people who have tried to enjoy Schoenberg, but find it practically impossible. Yet the book will probably increase the reader's respect for Schoenberg. We know a modern composer who, during the war, carried around a recording of a twelve-tone work with him for thirty days. From a sense of duty to his field and to the idea of aesthetic impartiality, he played the work every day during that period. "I got familiar with it," he said, "but I couldn't like it." Mr. Epperson generalizes a justification for this view:

The mature Schoenberg was a great theorist and teacher, as well as composer, and his claim to eminence does not depend on any single facet of his labors. But an artist who, after more than a half-century of productivity during which his name becomes familiar to every serious student, still does not break through to an audience commensurate in

size with his own stature cannot hold that audience altogether responsible.

The basic critical point may be here:

One might easily get the impression from a sampling of the available literature on the subject that the devices of serial technique were the *raison d'être* of the musical works which exemplify them.

The kind of confusion which can result from a failure to distinguish technical devices from musical meaning is reflected in a statement made by Portnoy in reference to Reger: "He was concerned with technical values of tone and form and because of his zeal for purism, misinterpreted his idol Bach by emphasizing the musical symbol rather than the emotion which the symbol represents.

An illuminating comment on this distinction is taken from Hindemith:

But when Hindemith, out of his own profound knowledge, adds further testimony to the concordance we have been building (when he says, for example, that "music does not express feelings but merely releases images of feelings") we know that we are receiving the evidence of a master. Similarly, when he tells us that it is only with the memory of feelings in our mind that we can have any feelinglike reaction caused by music, we get the equivalent of Wordsworth's emotion recollected in tranquility," but of course, independently arrived at.

"*What happens* in listening is what the music *means* to the hearer," Mr. Epperson says. But what "ought" to happen? This question he does not answer, except suggestively, since music may lead both to delight and to transcendence, and these are very private and very individual affairs. Sometimes the composer has fairly certain ideas about how his work is to be understood, and then he tries to tie the interpreter or performer down with detailed instructions in his scores. Stravinsky is an example of this; but—

Copland, in contrast, sees the interpreter as an important—indeed, indispensable—intermediary between composer and public; the interpreter is one who can bring a work to life or bury it. Copland concedes that an interpreter may even discover in a score nuances which the composer had not consciously intended but which he may be joyfully surprised to hear.

The listener is less subject to the composer's controls, and this is as it should be. The riches of the music stir the riches of the listener, and may make them multiply in wonderful ways—a high synergy situation. One may for example listen to Pablo Casals' arrangement of Catalonian dances and find irrepressible the train of images generated by this music—the tumultuous, out-of-step march of humanity seems in it, led by jesters in cap and bells—gay and stern by turns, determined and light-hearted, bringing to the ear far more than fifty years of Europe, and with distant hints of a cycle of Cathay.

The question, Aren't you reading too much into this work?, really has no meaning, most of the time, in relation to music. The simple truth is that a work of art can only be interpreted by another work of art, which also becomes the listener's responsibility. He must do what he can, and no one can tell him how, although there are some wonderful examples of what has been done in literature. That is all a book on an art can provide—examples of what may be done, samples of generated effects. These are, of course, inimitable.

And so with all music. Music for children is really a golden age expression. Children shouldn't be bothered with the responsibilities of self-consciousness, which will come soon enough. Artists know how to lead the young to these subtle and inevitable transitions. They may not know how they do it, but they know, and sometimes they skip back and forth, from a "Listen to this, just *listen!*" passage to a "Who are you, anyhow?" sort of inquiry. And always the language is unique.

Mr. Epperson's book is valuable in helping the reader to see these and other possibilities in musical expression.

## *FRONTIERS*

### **They'll None of Them Be Missed**

MANY years have passed since the days of Senator McCarthy and the degradations of American life produced by his ugly inquisitions. These still go on, of course, but less feverishly, and their most noticeable, long-term effect is in the impoverishment of our government of men of independent moral opinion. As James C. Thompson, Jr., remarks in the April *Atlantic*, much of the passive acceptance in the State Department of the war in Vietnam is owing to the fact that McCarthy's witch-hunting activities long ago drove out of that Department nearly everyone but timid, time-serving yes-men.

During the McCarthy days, it was natural to wonder, in a private Walter Mitty mood, what one could say to dramatize the depths to which public life had fallen, and to put before the country ideas that might arouse people to a better conception of citizenship and loyalty to the American Dream. Breathes there a man with soul so dead who did not try to imagine himself attempting something like this?

In a recent novel by Merle Miller, *A Day in Late September* (William Morrow and McFadden), the author does extraordinarily well in this department, and even if it is a bit late to review this book, which has many unexpected virtues, the speech of one of his characters before a Senate committee is too good to leave unnoticed:

In October 1950, Abel was called to Washington to face the Inquisition. He first outraged and then delighted the sullen senators; finally he outraged them again.

There was no need for him to stand on either the First or the Fifth Amendment.

"I never belonged to *that* party although in the thirties practically anybody who was worth anything did belong. Now most of them are seeking absolution and many of them are seeking it here, of all places. Their instincts were right, perhaps I should say left, in the thirties, and sometimes they were even almost noble. They shouldn't apologize now for having been decent. . . . Myself, I never joined the Party because among other things I was born a pacifist and will, God willing, die one.

"Nowadays, of course, I don't see how anybody in this country with a brain the size of a goldfish *could* belong to the Party. And that's not because of Christian gentlemen like you. Or because of Mother Hoover in the Federal Bureau of Inconsequential Information. . . . I ask you, gentlemen, has J. Edgar Hoover ever met a payroll?

"But I was speaking of the present-day American commissars. Gentlemen, they are both tedious and inconsequential. Myself, I would rather spend the evening with the president of the American Association of Manufacturers, or even—I am a glutton for punishment—a Southern Baptist preacher.

"Dangerous? They are about as dangerous as a garter snake; they can't even run a decent hootenanny, let alone threaten our *security*. . . . The Soviet Government treats them with ridicule and contempt, which is what you gentlemen would do if you used the good sense God presumably gave you.

"You ask did I ever know anybody who was a Communist? Why, many, many. As I've said, in the thirties and even far into the forties many people who wanted a better world than the one we've got became Communists, some for a short while, and some lingered on. . . .

"Could I name names? Gentlemen, I have never had a memory for names. Faces, yes. For example, I will never forget a single one of your faces, but even now your names have slipped my mind. And both your names and your faces will slip the mind of history. Who was the head of the Know-Nothing Party in America? He's not even a footnote. And yet at the time he was ranting and railing he cast his shadow over the entire American scene, as you gentlemen do today. Who was the leading anti-Mason of his day? Who was the foremost leader of the Ku Klux Klan in the South after the Civil War? In the Midwest in the twenties? Nobody knows. Nobody cares. But there will always be people who remember the name of Eugene Debs. And the names of Ben Tucker and Henry George, Veblen, Dan De Leon, Wendell Phillips, and for my money the greatest of them all, John Peter Altgeld, after whom, I am proud to say, my grandson is named.

"But for the names of people I have known who were Communists, why, gentlemen, anybody who seemed to be going in the same direction I was I allowed to tag along. I never noticed their size or shape or the color of their skins or their politics; I never asked their names. . . . Any further questions?"

There were no further questions.

Bernard Shaw once said that the characters he created in books would appear fifty years later, on the historical scene. It would be nice to have this come true for Mr. Miller's Abel. We could use Abels by the dozen right now.

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Since MANAS reviewed Leslie Farber's book, *The Ways of the Will* (Basic Books, 1966), its key conception keeps cropping up by quotation in other MANAS discussions. Dr. Farber's examination of the ways of the will in human life becomes a valuable explanatory principle through his distinction between what can and what cannot be immediately "willed." Because this distinction is neglected, he calls the present the "Age of the Disordered Will." We persist, he says, in trying to will what cannot be willed. You cannot, for example, will to have "wisdom." You can will to have information, and then go after it, but wisdom is not achieved by direct "go-getting" technique. Wisdom flowers out of subtle processes of growth which have almost no connection with the manipulative activities we identify with acts of the will. From this general analysis Dr. Farber concludes:

If anxiety is more prominent in our time, such anxiety is the product of our particular modern disability of will. To this disability, rather than to anxiety, I would attribute the ever-increasing dependence on drugs affecting all levels of our society. While drugs do offer relief from anxiety, their more important task is to offer the illusion of healing the split between the will and its refractory object. The resulting feeling of wholeness may not be a responsible one, but at least within that wholeness—no matter how perverse the drugged state may appear to an outsider—there seems to be, briefly and subjectively, a responsible and vigorous will. This is the reason, I believe, that the addictive possibilities of our age are so enormous.

In this article—which first appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* for Dec. 11, 1966, and is reprinted in the Winter 1968 issue of the *Review of Existential Psychology & Psychiatry* (Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15219)—Dr. Farber uses drug addiction to typify what he regards as a broad cultural tendency—the attempt to manipulate our way to desirable states of mind or feeling. Once the

achievement of personal discipline or difficult inner growth, "peace of mind" is now regarded as a response to chemicals. The following illustrates the scope of Dr. Farber's analysis:

Since it is forbidden to peddle or "push" most drugs, including whisky, on television, Madison Avenue has responded to the double dilemma of addiction by advertising aspirin as though it were *the* drug for every tribulation we must undergo. On television we are shown scenes in which mothers snap at their children, employers lose their tempers with employees. With only an awkward swipe at the questionable ethics of permitting this poor old headache remedy to carry such a heavy burden, advertisers show these embattled and suffering creatures putting one hand to their heads while a kindly neighbor advises them that this new aspirin combination is the perfect cure for "tension." . . .

Most touching are aspirin commercials in which an aging movie star, long past his prime and no longer regularly employed, sits thoughtfully in his well-appointed study, telling the television audience that movie-making is a hectic and demanding affair. To avoid tension and headache, intrinsic to such activity, he has always resorted to this particular remedy.

Although probably unintentionally, such a commercial goes to the heart of addiction, for we must contemplate the pathos of this formerly glamorous creature whose powers have so dwindled that he is reduced to doing headache commercials in which, fooling no one, he pretends nothing has changed. As he holds his bottle of pills to the audience, he seems to say life is really impossible without these pills. But we know, and he knows, that aspirin is not enough; for the vast restitution he demands of life, more powerful drugs are needed.

Dr. Farber covers many phases of the tendency to seek in drugs the solution of human problems; he devotes space to non-drug addictions such as "shopworn ideologies" through which people are able to avoid thought. But the claims made for drugs as the corrective of practically all psychological problems show the addictive tendency in its most dramatic and pervasive form—as, for example, in an advertisement to physicians which pictures an overwrought mother, with the caption: "Her kind of pressures last all day . . . shouldn't her tranquilizer?"