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A LOOK AT "BUSINESS"

IN the *Saturday Review* of Jan. 19, Crawford H. Greenewalt, president of E. I du Pont de Nemours and Company, writes a defense of "the businessman." His title is "The Culture of the Businessman" and his thesis is that the man of industry and trade is as well educated, civilized, and urbane as the next man, be he practitioner of medicine, law or religion. Mr. Greenewalt is himself well educated, civilized, and urbane, and his argument is well put together. Nevertheless, the reader who has just set down, say, a copy of C. Wright Mills' *White Collar,* before taking up the *SR* with Mr. Greenewalt's article in it, is likely to be puzzled. One suspects that the du Pont executive is writing about the *exceptional* businessmen like his friends and himself.

Even so, he is possibly right in claiming that the businessman is "no worse" than others in the matter of "conformity." He writes:

> Conformity is not a special characteristic of business; it is a characteristic of all organizations of whatever nature. I am inclined to think that, man for man, the large business unit provides greater opportunities for individuality and requires less in the way of conformity than other institutions of comparable size—the government service, say, or the academic world, or certainly the military. . . . It is not conformity in the outward signs which represents the danger; it is conformity in thought and in thinking. And on this level I suspect that business is less constrained than other ways of life. To cite an extreme, consider the monolithic unanimity of conviction demanded by the Communist Party. Members may, presumably, dress as they please, grow whiskers, or cultivate strange personal habits, but their views on everything are rigidly prescribed.

Instead of "blaming" the businessman for conformist tendencies, we should perhaps say that businessmen, in our society, form a group which has the power to compel conformity in others, with the result that the conformist tendencies of our total culture are sometimes enforced by businessmen, not because they are in business, but because they have power. Every association has some degree of power. Unions have power, societies of college professors have power, Negro organizations—like the organization of strikers against the bus system of Montgomery, Alabama—have power, and businessmen's organizations have power, too—a lot of it.

An instance of how a businessmen's organization may attempt to compel conformity occurred recently in a city of Southern California. This city has long enjoyed the presence of a conservative businessman who also believes in the equality of the races before the law. Many businessmen are able to believe this, but this one happens to be in the real estate business, at which he is quite successful. His principles, however, lead him to sell homes to Negroes in areas where they choose to live. His consistent practice in this regard within the past year deprived him of the office of president of the realty board—an honor due him from the well-established custom of elevating the vice president to the presidency. Meanwhile, his son, also in the real estate business, has not been able to become even a *member* of the realty board. There has been no particular equivocation with regard to this attitude on the part of the other people in the real estate business. They have made it quite plain to this man and his son that their nonconformist view on interracial housing makes them unacceptable to the community of realtors.

The *Christian Century* for Feb. 13 reports a comparable case. The employer of a Negro shipping clerk tells how the clerk was accused of impolite behavior by a customer of the employer, and that the latter was invited to dispense with the clerk or lose a customer. The Negro, it seems, had behaved with considerable patience and forbearance. The customer just didn't want to *see* a Negro making a delivery to him; so, since the employer refused to discharge the Negro, he lost a customer.

Now prejudice against Negroes is not a peculiar defect of businessmen. It is a defect of a large minority (one hopes) of white Americans, and the business community undertakes to enforce (whether reluctantly, in some instances, or not) the dictates of this prejudice. That the enforcement is on the whole successful is reflected in the fact that very few business concerns indeed place people of other races in jobs which involve "meeting the public" or "customer relations." In this respect, municipal, county, state, and federal agencies have become pioneers by giving such jobs to Negroes and to Americans of Japanese and other minority group origins.

Should we expect businessmen to be "heroes" and to lose sales because of a principled regard for human and civil rights? Perhaps not. But we can admire them and support them when they do, and attempt to establish other conventions of "good business" in the United States.

But if we excuse the businessmen from being "heroes" in employee and other policies which affect "public relations," let us admit, at the same time, that the institution of business is then by definition a *moral weakling* in the family of institutions of American culture.

If the making of a profit is the highest good for business—and this is surely the case, since a business which does not make a profit, or a return sufficient to assure survival, is not a business at all, but some other sort of institution—then this should always be the context of judgment of business activities and enterprise.

Now there is, of course, a pretty broad band of activity which business may pursue without offending the prejudices of its customers. And within that band are many kinds of achievements in which businessmen may take a legitimate pride. But there are unmistakable boundaries set to what businessmen, as businessmen, can do and still survive in business. Those boundaries define the system of conformity to which businessmen must adhere, and since persons concerned with sales become highly sensitive to the "values" of this system, rather elaborate rituals are built up as means to control the behavior of business people and to assure as much "good will" as possible for both product and manufacturer, and for distributor, wholesaler and retailer as well. This is the commercial system of conformity, affecting, in one or another, all businessmen *as* businessmen.

The point of the critics of businessmen is that some of this conformity acquired in business is bound to rub off on the human beings who make their living in business. This is a point which Mr. Greenewalt does not discuss, and it is practically the only point that he ought to have discussed, since everything else he says is pretty obvious.

The infection of private life with the attitudes of conformity prescribed by business also affects the families of businessmen, and everyone else in the community, since business is enormously prestige-bearing in our culture. What is "good" for business is very nearly regarded as "good" for everything else, and *this* is the really corrupting idea which needs to be taken up, examined, and rejected.

This idea is the psychological equivalent of a "party line," despite the fact that the "line," in this case, is self-imposed by the common consent of the business community, is continuously evolved and supplemented by the common sales sagacity of experts in merchandising, advertising, and public relations, and is confirmed through instinctive acceptance by all those whose self-interest makes them share in the secular theology of commercial "progress."

By a logic which is quite understandable, therefore, if not entirely just, businessmen have become the whipping boys of all those who feel distrust or disgust for the "values" which guide commercial decision. The same values are made to guide many other decisions which are not commercial at all, and this lends a "commercial" atmosphere to our cultural life, generally. Individual businessmen—Mr. Greenewalt says he knows some "who are learned men of vast and unremitting scholarship, some with the sensitivity of poets, and some with the patient calm of saints"—may escape some of the blighting effects of commercialism in their private lives, but this is hardly an effective defense of the business community generally or a vindication of the transfer of its motives to other fields. All that Mr. Greenewalt is saying, in describing these men, is that unusual individuals need not succumb to mass tendencies. We knew that, of course.

But Mr. Greenewalt's motive may be respected. He thinks it is silly to single out the business community for special condemnation, and he is, we think, right in this. Businessmen execute the wishes and satisfy the desires of the total community, and they do this, admittedly, for a profit. This, many people contend, is the "American Way." What needs to be admitted is that it is not a very good "Way," whether American or not.

To say this is not to "attack" business, as such. Getting goods and services to the people is a necessary function and businessmen perform it with considerable efficiency—more efficiency, probably, than is found in the way that teachers get knowledge into youngsters and government gets order into broad social relations. The reason, of course, for the relative success of business is that, compared to other functions in human society, the job of business is really a very easy one. It is the phase of life concerned with tangible things. Government, education, religion—these are areas filled with *intangible* realities, such as justice, wisdom, and truth. There is an enormous difference between the tangible and the intangible in human life. Methods which succeed with the tangible may fail utterly with the intangible. You can't run a school on the same principles that make a successful business. You can't produce religion the way you produce sales. You can't govern a country the way you would administrate a factory. The ends of business are capable of specific definition, while the ends of education, government, and religion can be spoken of only in great generality. You can say that education is supposed to produce intelligent human beings, but you can't intelligently predict what intelligent people will do, or ought to do. You can say that government is supposed to establish the conditions of freedom, but the conditions of freedom are subjective as well as a matter of laws—in fact, if the laws don't take functional account of the subjective qualities of the people they are intended to serve, they will be bad and stupid laws. You can say that religion is supposed to reveal the truth, but you can never state that truth in the form that religious truth becomes truly operative in human life, since for each man there are bound to be differences in both the truth and the way it operates.

The root trouble with business is the delusion of its own importance. Getting enough food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and communication is necessary, but it is not the most important thing in life. A clothed and fed man may not behave like a human being at all; he may behave worse than most animals. After he has been clothed and fed, given wheels, and supplied with a pencil or a typewriter, business must retire. It cannot help him to decide whether he will write Hamlet, compose the Moonlight Sonata, or study the art of blackmail.

Called upon to offer a single explanation of the troubles and confusion which afflict our "business civilization," we should be inclined to say that Americans, and others to a lesser degree, have made the mistake of trying to make business activities and purposes fill the mysterious abysses left by our relative failure in religion and education and government. We *know* how to do business, we say to ourselves, so let us do these other things the same way. It won't work. All that has happened is the commercialization of religion, education, and government, to a frightening degree. Business is conducted for a profit, and you can't conduct government, education, and religion for a profit. What *can* you conduct them for? We shall probably remain unable to answer this question until we begin to make the matter of profits and "business success" wholly irrelevant to our political, educational, and religious undertakings. Legitimate business is not corrupt or corrupting, but business "ideals" in politics, education, and religion destroy our ability to answer this question.

Letter from
Canada

VANCOUVER, B.C.—The recent controversy in England over the permission given younger members of the Royal Family to take part in fox-hunting elicits an article in the Canadian press by a visiting Baronet. He is, as might be expected in view of his social background, entirely in favor of fox-hunting or any sort of hunting, and he trots out the usual arguments. It is not necessary to repeat them, or to deal directly with any of them, because they can all be disposed of at one blow.

At the outset let us scotch any charge of sentimentality about death and suffering. The death (per se) of a fox, a stag, or even a man, is no tragedy in itself. Death is merely a particular sort of event in time, and as such is no more of a calamity than birth. Indeed, birth might rather be considered the calamity. The human race has today come very close to creating a world unfit for birth—human, animal or vegetable.

As for suffering, mental or physical, it has always existed on this planet and possibly always will. To recognize this from the standpoint of a realist and to refuse to become maudlin over individual cases does not for a moment argue a callous mind. We can be fully aware of suffering, highly sensitive to the presence of it and determined to alleviate or eradicate it to the best of our ability, yet remain as unsentimental about it as the medical doctor. The entire point can be summed up in the words of the old *Bhagavad Gita:* "The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead."

But, paradoxically, neither do the wise kill things any oftener than they can help. And they certainly do not kill things by way of diversion. Our fox-hunting Baronet doubtless goes to church on Sunday and regards himself as a good Christian—but we can defy him to picture in his mind the Author of Christianity galloping delightedly after a pack of bloodthirsty hounds until they caught up with some luckless beast and tore it to pieces. He cannot imagine it, and neither can anyone else. It is not a picture that fits the personal facts as we know and esteem them. Is that because Jesus was a sentimentalist? Certainly not. It is because the mind of Jesus was among the few in the history of this planet that can be called Civilized. The remarkable thing is that after twenty centuries of contemplation and adoration of a civilized Master the world is fuller than ever of thugs and killers and people who see nothing to object to in countless varieties of barbarism.

In the final analysis the deliberate taking of life is not justifiable except on grounds of necessity. (The Ten Commandments insist—a trifle unrealistically perhaps—that it is not justifiable at all.) To the Civilized man the need to cause death is always unpleasant, and to do it for "sport" is unthinkable. Like Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the Civilized man has a reverence for life and a consciousness of the fact that while it is a simple matter to destroy life, it is beyond human power to restore it. Yet—again like Dr. Schweitzer—he realizes and admits that existence is impossible without bringing some measure of suffering and death to other beings (including those of the vegetable kingdom). When a man kills a deer because he must have food for his family and himself, he can plead the Argument from Necessity with even more force than can the man who sickens at the thought of sticking a pig but goes into the store and buys himself a pound of bacon. Nevertheless, necessity—either direct or by proxy—is the ruling principle. The action has immediate relation to an unavoidable law of survival; it occurs within a definite cycle of necessity and may be assumed to carry with it its own absolution.

But the man who indulges a mere instinct for hunting—an itching for blood sports divorced from any real factor of necessity—is in a different category altogether. You can't call him a savage, because on the whole the savage does his hunting and killing in terms of direct and legitimate need.

All you can call him is a "civilized barbarian," under which self-contradictory heading he becomes something more mischievous than any savage. The person who affects to be civilized and yet is not, who possesses some measure of the intelligence of a civilized being yet exercises the destructive instincts of a barbarian and a torturer, is a moral monstrosity—the sort of entity to whom any enlightened society might properly say with the Psalmist: "If thou be neither hot nor cold I will spew thee out of my mouth." It is not the simple primitive who is responsible for the ills of this world. The anthropologist and explorer, W. M. McGovern, has testified (along with many others) to the fact that some of the world's primitive cultures are more essentially civilized than our own. No: it is to our characteristic product, the *semi*-civilized mind, that the world owes the bulk of its unforgivable savageries. The "in-betweeners" are today as ever the major threat to all existence. And among the assorted in-betweeners are the people who "love to go out shooting" or to follow the hounds and be "in at the kill,"—people with that strange blind spot in their humanity and intelligence that makes them not only content but happy to contribute their bit to the world's sum of suffering and its aimless sacrifice of life. What this world desperately needs is a vast increase in the ranks of the Civilized Mind.

CANADIAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

EDITH HAMILTON PREVIEW

THE editors of the *Saturday Review* are also, it appears, admirers of Edith Hamilton and her clarifying contributions to modern thought, through interpretation of Greek culture. The lead article in the *Review* for January 19, "The Greek Freedom—Truth, Discipline, and Reality," constitutes a summary of the themes of her just published work, *The Echo of Greece* (W. W. Norton, 1957). Although we shall doubtless give more attention to *The Echo of Greece* when time is found for a review, the *SR* essay is of special interest because of its development of the Greek concept of self-discipline, and because the Greek "theory of knowledge," as Miss Hamilton presents it, seems inextricably interwoven with individual impulsion to self-mastery.

Miss Hamilton shows that underlying the Greek concept of individuality is an interpretation of the human soul as a free agent, and respect for the acquisition of knowledge as the first and noblest work of man. The main point is that, to respect freedom, one must not only respect oneself—which is difficult enough—but he must also recognize the *desire* for a widening of one's personal horizons as a quality native to the soul. As Miss Hamilton puts it: "This conception of what freedom means dawned upon the Greeks. The quality they valued most—the Greek word is *sophrosuné*—cannot be expressed by any single English word. It is oftenest translated by self-control, but it meant more than that. It was the spirit behind the two great Delphic sayings, 'Know thyself' and 'Nothing in excess.' Arrogance, insolent self-assertion, was of all qualities most detested by the Greeks. *Sophrosuné* was the exact opposite."

Miss Hamilton is fully aware of the paradox of slavery as it existed in Athens. The Greeks practiced slavery, like the rest of the contemporary world. But the Greek's conception of human nature led them to *think* about slavery—and to think about slavery was eventually to condemn it. Two thousand years before the American Civil War, the school of the Stoics, most influential of the Greek citadels of philosophy, was "denouncing slavery as an intolerable wrong." But the Greeks were first of all concerned with discovering the roles of dignity and integrity in themselves, and to this end were not subservient to priestcraft or political authoritarianism. To the Athenians, integrity and dignity required humility and *self*-control as primary ingredients—to which would eventually be added faith in one's capacity to be a man "on one's own," needing no recourse to the powerful authority of either religion or State. The Greeks listened to their priests and to their politicians, but they thought for themselves. Miss Hamilton continues:

> That was the Greek ideal, and the result was their freedom.
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> The idea that only the man who holds himself within self-enforced limits can be free is one of their great legacies to us. Through *sophrosuné* Greece discovered how men could live together in freedom, and she expressed her discovery by creating the first self-government in the world. An insignificant little town in a small and poverty-poor country made the discovery under the leadership of a single man. It was back in the early sixth century, more than 100 years before Athens' great day, that bold and far-thinking statesman, Solon, conceived the idea of a completely new kind of state, in which all citizens would have an active share and all would be equal before the law. When he laid the foundation of it in Athens, free government came into the world. It was an experiment which could have been tried only in Athens, where the new was always attractive, a most unusual spirit to animate a people. It was a marked peculiarity of Athens. The disposition of the explorer distinguished her from other places. Ways never trodden before allured her. Athens kept that spirit for a long time. St. Paul, writing some 600 years later, said, "The Athenians spend their time on nothing else but to tell or to hear some new thing."
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> They were ready to listen to the new thing Solon had to tell them and follow him along a way no country had ever trod. The experiment which had never even been conceived of elsewhere was carried out not by warriors drawn up in battle array as at

> Runnymede, not by terror and the guillotine as in France, but peacefully, in some Athenian Independence Hall where the Founding Fathers of the new republic assembled to be convinced by one of the greatest statesmen the world has known. Only in diminutive Attica, of which Athens was the capital, would the new idea have been carried out. Greece had indeed long before come forward in ways of thought as well as ways of art. Science had been born in Greek towns at the end of the Mediterranean, and men were thinking as well not only about the universe, but about themselves as different from others—individuals, not indistinguishable human masses. The rights of man followed inevitably in a town like Athens with a man like Solon to guide her, but only the Athenians were able to take that step. The other Greek towns ruled the country around them. In Attica every farmer, shepherd, craftsman was a citizen, taking part in the government.

Turning to the *Menninger Quarterly* for December, 1956, we note, in an article by Gardner Murphy, Director of the Foundation's Department of Research, an encouraging echo of Greek philosophy. Despite the centuries of theological domination, and the succeeding period of embattled materialism which preceded modern psychiatric perspectives, Dr. Murphy returns to a definition of man which sees the quest for knowledge as the *summum bonum* of existence. As Dr. Murphy puts it, "the cognitive struggle to understand and grasp meanings, even abstract and evaluative meanings," is fundamental to conscious life. Dr. Murphy continues:

> From such a point of view it becomes utterly idle to say that the quest for knowledge is only a belated or tangential expression of human nature, that it is in some sense secondary to the great visceral demands, or that it is capable only of grasping the crumbs that fall from a feast of sheer physical food. On the contrary, the more man is seen to be genuinely man, the larger the role of curiosity, the more human nature is fulfilled in the very process of investigation. The elephant's child, you may remember, became completely an elephant only through the joys of progressive satisfaction of his curiosity. What can be true of the elephant's child can be true of the human child if, in our struggle for an educational theory, we refuse to be snapped back into authoritarianism and rigid routines.

The age of science contributed the realization, in Dr. Murphy's words, that "there is no final objectivity to the individual." Instead, "we struggle for objectivity against the backdrop of a world view of what humanity is and may become, rather than a final millimeter reading based upon a fixed and immutable measuring instrument."

This, surely, is psychology come of age—psychology released from queasy fears of philosophy and metaphysics which made it impossible for earlier investigators to conceive of anything save a statistical approach to the study of man.

COMMENTARY
PRESSURES OF "CONFORMITY"

THE discussion of "business" in this week's lead article takes no note of the fact that there is extraordinary variety in American business, and that the strictures commonly applied to business in general apply in much less degree to some companies.

Take for example Mr. Greenewalt's own firm, E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. It is essentially a chemical concern devoted to the primary advance of technology in industrial chemistry. Nylon, for instance, was developed by du Pont, and many new plastic and paint products. This is a type of operation which, at administrative and research levels, doubtless attracts men of unusual capacity and vision. Something of the spirit of science pervades the deliberations of such men, along with the sense of achievement and a dignity of purpose which are naturally associated with leadership in modern technology. We doubt that Mr. Greenewalt would take much pleasure in a lifework of producing cosmetics, tobacco products, or in applying his skills to a distillery. Nor would he, we think, find satisfaction in the responsibilities assumed by an advertising agency executive.

It is natural, therefore, for Mr. Greenewalt to say that in his experience The Gray Flannel Suit (he doesn't own one) is "a pretty superficial symbol." But Mr. Greenewalt should emerge from the du Pont cloister and recognize that the image of the super-salesman, etched in dozens of recent novels, from Wakeman's *Hucksters* to Spectorsky's *Exurbanites,* is drawn from life. The hucksters are the indispensable *nexus* between production and consumption in our acquisitive society. They popularize the metaphysic of commercial conformity, daubing the acquisitive instinct with the whitewash of an almost "spiritual" distinction. They may not be "ordinary" businessmen, but they are typical enough to appear with monotonous frequency in the novels of our time.

Another newsletter from Koinonia, the interracial cooperative community at Americus, Georgia, reports that the attacks against it, previously aimed at property, have now been directed at human lives. On Jan. 29, at 1:15 A.M., a burst of what seemed to be machine gun fire raked the community residence nearest the highway. Another burst was fired at a community member who was keeping watch while sitting in his car. A third burst of bullets entered a house in which several were sleeping. The bullets came close to several people, but struck no one. A tracer bullet set fire to curtains in one of the houses, but the flames were put out.

Three nights later, at about 9:15 P.M., ten or twelve shot-gun blasts were fired into the main cluster of Koinonia homes. Children playing volley ball in a lighted court were sprinkled with shot, but none was hurt. On the same night (Feb. 1), a .22 rifle bullet came through a window and narrowly missed a girl.

The Koinonia people, after suffering losses totalling $13,000 in property from these attacks, are now in danger of their lives. Some of the families have moved to other communities. Meanwhile the economic boycott from the surrounding area has been intensified, although some of Koinonia's problems have been solved, such as adequate gasoline supply (by installation of large underground tanks) and purchase of poultry feed (direct from a mill). Insurance difficulties continue, and for a while the community can sell only pecans and peanuts, since the meatcuring facilities, destroyed by dynamite and fire, have not yet been replaced. People who want to buy by mail-order from Koinonia are invited to write for price lists, to—Koinonia Farms, Americus, Georgia.

Are the people at Koinonia "accomplishing anything" by enduring these crimes? One thing is certain: Decent southerners are beginning to recognize with horror the sort of allies their partisanship of segregation has encouraged. Already religious groups and enlightened editors in Georgia feel disgraced by the attacks on Koinonia and have wholly rejected such methods of seeking "conformity." This sense of shame may spread, and be followed by a change of heart.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NOTES AND QUOTES

HAD more space been available when last week's MANAS was going to press we would have said more concerning the values of "order and discipline"—even as encountered in the schools of Soviet Russia. To our way of thinking, such a condition is not essentially different from recognizing the obvious fact that parochial schools often do a more competent job of training in the technicalities of language and mathematics than their freedom-loving, public-school counterparts. As psychologists have pointed out, children often feel an actual hunger for the sort of discipline that gives them a kind of security—a sense of order and measurable accomplishment. But to recognize this is by no means to wish that one's children could go to school in Russia or leave the public schools for the parochial system; it is simply that the ingredients of ideal education can sometimes be illustrated in extremes of practice. Our children need order and discipline, and they may need it badly, but they also need the encouragement to self-expression and the sense of joy in learning which modern educators of America and England are trying to give them.

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While some Russian primary schools, whatever their ideology, are proving that firm discipline may help, at least for a time, in the development of maturity and a sense of psychic security in children, an English educator continues to show that the wrong sort of discipline has so many adverse effects that only an atmosphere of extreme freedom can rectify the damage done to the emotional natures of the young. The *Manchester Guardian* (Dec. 27) again takes note of the work of A. S. Neill, Headmaster of the Summerhill School, near London. Author of *The Problem Family* and *The Problem Child*—both recommended in MANAS some years ago—Mr. Neill demonstrates that any educator devoted to his calling can aid youngsters in discovering that *self*-discipline is the most precious secret of a worth-while life. Neill, we must admit, is an extremist, but many of the pupils who came to his school began as "extremists," emotionally charged and rebellious, too long unintelligently reprimanded by parents and public school authorities. A. V. Wood's report on a typical open forum meeting at Neill's school is especially interesting:

> I was surprised to find that Neill was as tentative in raising his arm to catch the eye of the twelve-year-old chairman as the newest pupil would be. And though the chairman showed him slight favoritism the meeting as a whole gave only as much importance to his proposals as it gave to those from the little shy ones lying on their stomachs in the corner. But in exceptional cases Neill holds the reins. He confiscates all pocketknives and other dangerous armour from children below twelve, and there was a great dispute over this.
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> The absence of any age hierarchy allows the young to learn from the older in ways one is not used to seeing.

Summerhill is probably one of the noisiest schools in existence, but the record of its children, when they finally re-enter a world which requires either subservience or self-discipline, is excellent. Mr. Wood adds a closing note on the Summerhill atmosphere by remarking that, at Summerhill, "human happiness seemed to be released to a point beyond the mere fulfilment of personal desires; it is as though age and time were meaningless."

We are willing to face it. Neill would be out of a job in Russia or, rather, could never get one in the first place. But Neill's religion of freedom, if it is ever to be communicated to Russia, must be preceded by willingness to understand the Russian problem of education as viewed through *their* eyes.

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We have never before quoted from Alfred North Whitehead's *The Aims of Education*, and this is rather an oversight, for the internationally known philosopher and mathematician has provided some beautifully worded reminders of what the "teaching-learning process" is really about.

Whitehead's emphasis is on the quality of imagination. He contends that "the proper function of a university is the *imaginative* acquisition of knowledge." Dr. Whitehead continues:

> Apart from this importance of the imagination, there is no reason why business men, and other professional men, should not pick up their facts bit by bit as they want them for particular occasions. A university is imaginative or it is nothing—at least nothing useful.
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> Imagination is a contagious disease. It cannot be measured by the yard, or weighed by the pound, and then delivered to the students by members of the faculty. It can only be communicated by a faculty whose members themselves wear their learning with imagination. In saying this, I am only repeating one of the oldest of observations. More than two thousand years ago the ancients symbolised learning by a torch passing from hand to hand down the generations. That lighted torch is the imagination of which I speak. The whole art in the organisation of a university is the provision of a faculty whose learning is lighted up with imagination. This is the problem of problems in university education; and unless we are careful the recent vast extension of universities in number of students and in variety of activities—of which we are so justly proud—will fail in producing its proper results, by the mishandling of this problem.

A delusion in respect to the function of the university which Whitehead deplores is that the parallel between the necessarily complicated administration of a huge campus and that of an industrial plant is a close one. In his view, "the management of a university faculty has no analogy to that of a business organization. The public opinion of the faculty, and a common zeal for the purposes of the university, form the only effective safeguards for the high level of university work. The faculty should be a band of scholars, stimulating each other, and freely determining their various activities. You can secure certain formal requirements, that lectures are given at stated times and that instructors and students are in attendance. But the heart of the matter lies beyond all regulation."

Anyone who has served on the faculty of a modern university—or who has numbered instructors or professors among his friends—knows that a great deal of "scholarship" is accomplished by rule and by rote rather than by creative imagination. The amount of "publishable" material prepared by ambitious young professors looking for advancement contributes far too much to their future status on the faculty. Nor are the opportunities in any sense equitable in the various fields, for scientific journals and philosophic journals are far fewer in number than others published by, for instance, the historical societies. A person who enjoys pounding a typewriter can, in some scholarly areas, secure immediate publication for anything he cares to put on paper, and, as long as the prevailing system of promotion is in effect, the temptation to be careless and repetitious will be difficult to surmount. Further, a poor teacher can secure rapid advancement in this way, and this "made-work" research should never be rated as evidence of teaching capacity. Whitehead speaks to this point:

> Do you want your researchers to be imaginative? Then bring them into intellectual sympathy with the young at the most eager, imaginative period of life, when intellects are just entering upon their mature discipline. Make your researchers explain themselves to active minds, plastic and with the world before them, make your young students crown their period of intellectual acquisition by some contact with minds gifted with experience of intellectual adventure. Education is discipline for the adventure of life; research is intellectual adventure; and the universities should be homes of adventure shared in common by young and old. For successful education there must be a certain freshness in the knowledge dealt with. It must either be new in itself or it must be invested with some novelty of application to the new world of new times. Knowledge does not keep any better than fish. You may be dealing with knowledge of the old species, with some old truth; but somehow or other it must come to the students, as it were, just drawn out

> of the sea and with the freshness of its immediate importance.

As an effective way of emphasizing the difference between merely studious scholarship and the creative imagination, Whitehead turns to the history of western philosophy, and to the example of Socrates:

> It must not be supposed that the output of a university in the form of original ideas is solely to be measured by printed papers and books labeled with the names of their authors. Mankind is as individual in its mode of output as in the substance of its thoughts. For some of the most fertile minds composition in writing, or in a form reducible to writing, seems to be an impossibility. In every faculty you will kind that some of the more brilliant teachers are not among those who publish. Their originality requires for its expression direct intercourse with their pupils in the form of lectures, or of personal discussion. Such men exercise an immense influence; and yet, after the generation of their pupils has passed away, they sleep among the innumerable unthanked benefactors of humanity. Fortunately, one of them is immortal—Socrates.

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FRONTIERS
Miscellany

[From one who has taught Greek, in the original and in translation, for many years, comes this communication concerning an aspect of Homer's *Iliad* which is not referred to in Simone Weil's essay, "The Poem of Force."—Editors.]

AS was pointed out in MANAS for Jan. 16, 1957, Simone Weil has brilliantly shown how the *Iliad* presents force and its degrading effect upon those who resort to it. Also worth noting may be the fact that this powerful epic unfolds as well the experience of a man who by violence and hatred brings upon himself poignant suffering, and through the understanding developed by that suffering at last achieves peace of spirit in a realization of human brotherhood.

Achilles, who came from a small and independent country in northern Greece, was under no obligation to join the expedition against Troy, which was led by a great king from the south. He went to test his courage, accepting the belief then prevalent that a young man's worth was proved by bravery in battle, as an old man's was by wisdom in council.

After more than nine years, an unjust act of his commander's shocks him into a realization that war leads only to destruction for all involved, and he says: "Doomed alike are the man who holds back and the man who mightily strives. There is no more honor for the brave than for cowards—but only destruction both for him who has done nothing and for him who has done much."

A significant use of the Greek word *charis* is found in the lines that precede those just quoted. "There was no *charis* in fighting on and on with destructive men," Achilles declares. Translators usually render it *gratitude.* But this English word conveys only one third of the meaning included in the Greek. *Charis* may mean an act of kindness, or the feeling that prompts one to perform such an act, or the feeling of the person who receives the benefit. Here, it seems, as so often occurs in poetry, we are expected to understand the complete significance of the word. There was no good attainable for anyone by the act of fighting.

Achilles resolves to fight no more. But soon his dearest friend, Patroclus, falls in battle. Achilles is torn by an agony of grief, yet recognizes that he has brought this upon himself by hatred of Agamemnon, which had kept him from going where he could protect his friend. That hatred sprang from a quarrel in which Agamemnon, not Achilles, was entirely in the wrong. (Commentators have not always realized this. But there is no line in the *Iliad* condemning Achilles either for his actions or his attitude with regard to the quarrel.) Achilles now says to the goddess who is his mother: "Oh, that quarreling might be utterly swept away from gods and men! and anger, that makes even one with the power of thought become violent!"

Moved by bitterest self-reproach, Achilles again makes the mistake of accepting the custom of his time, and seeks vengeance. He will kill Hector, who had slain Patroclus. He plunges into battle with devastating fury, not aware that he is once more yielding to such anger as he condemned in the lines quoted above.

He kills Hector, then discovers that revenge brings him no relief. He does not feel that he has made reparation to his dead friend, though this is what he had expected, and what is felt over and over again in the *Iliad* by warriors who avenge a comrade's death by slaying his successful opponent. The suffering of Achilles, however, becomes more torturingly acute, in spite of honors paid to Patroclus, and dishonor to Hector's body. He cannot sleep, nor can he swallow even a morsel of food.

Then follows a deeply impressive scene. King Priam comes, unprotected, to Achilles to ask that his son's body be returned to him for burial in Hector's native Troy, well knowing that the request may bring him death. But Achilles faces the father of his greatest enemy, and sees a frail old man, who has lost the one who was dearer to him than all others in the world. The ten-year hostility of their warring nations becomes meaningless as the two men are suddenly aware of the deep underlying bond of their common humanity, and each knows that he has found in the other an understanding never met before. Achilles says: "Sit here by my side and, suffering though we are, we shall let sorrow lie deep and still within our hearts."

And now these men, whose agony had made them unable to touch food, find they can partake of it together. Wonder possesses Priam, as his eyes rest on Achilles, and he feels as though he were beholding a god. And wonder stirs Achilles, as he looks upon the old man's noble face and listens to his words.

So the epic that began with a quarrel of two erstwhile friends, and that is filled with violence and its revolting consequences, ends with the coming together of former enemies, joined in a revealing consciousness of brotherhood.

* * *

Another reader impressed by Simone Weil's *Iliad* has sent us a copy of an interpretation of the *Odyssey,* by Paul C. Kintzing, Jr., of Dartmouth College, in which the writer draws parallels between the wanderings of Odysseus and the stages of soul-development as conceived by Western mystics such as St. John of the Cross. Homer, Mr. Kintzing feels, is a guide "every bit as good" as the Christian mystics, although he suspects that Homer had no such plan in mind in composing the *Odyssey*. He says, however:

> That Homer describes the mystical way in a manner broader than any sect or religion would describe it seems evident. His wanderer is very human and makes very human mistakes; he could have existed at any time and in any place. Yet at all times there is a superhuman quality about Odysseus that makes his "way" almost predestined. His great desire to be home makes the trials and petty satisfactions of the voyage seem insignificant and not goals in themselves, but merely stepping stones from one shore to another.

For Odysseus, the goal throughout his wanderings is Ithaca. For the soul, it is Heaven. Yet, as this writer points out, Ithaca, when reached at last, is no final resting place for Odysseus:

> For Odysseus, there are suitors to be expelled, a wife to be re-won, a kingdom to be set in order again. For the soul, likewise, there is further growth to experience and higher realms to win. Heaven is no place of harp-playing stagnation; rather it is a place of further development of souls that have been victorious over the world. True, they are at rest; at rest from the meaningless cares and worries of our lives. But we may well suppose that in a richer, fuller life they are laboring on to greater glory in the world that is to come.

The question of whether or not Homer (whether a single poet or a "school" of Greek bards) intended the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to embody a hidden, transcendental instruction holds a certain fascination. One view might be that a great artist would endow his expression with many dimensions of meaning, and that the highest art would naturally contain such content, without any deliberate effort to be "didactic" on the part of the poet. On the other hand, the *Bhagavad-Gita*—or the *Mahabharata*—is obviously composed with complex symbolic intentions; likewise the *Ramayana,* of which the *Iliad* seems a Greek repetition.

Here, perhaps, the idea of collective authorship is of some use, since it seems likely that an unadorned tale of human striving might, in the course of centuries of retelling, acquire the minutia of endless symbolic significances, becoming a veritable palimpsest of undermeanings. The primitive tale of the quest, the ordeal, the labor, sets the form of the human drama. Then, each cycle of trial takes on a particular meaning, involving, for the protagonist, both an earthly labor and an initiation—both an adventurous episode and a further opening for the soul.

Traditional myths like the stories of Homer are naturally capable of many readings. In Mr.

Kintzing's account of the encounter of Odysseus and his men with the Cyclops, the one-eyed giants have the role of heavy-handed clods who are cleverly foiled by the wit and wile of the Greeks. Kintzing proposes that Odysseus was led by pride to match his craft with the brute force of Polyphemus—that he had no other reason for landing on the island of the Cyclops. His narrow escape is reproof for this defect of vanity.

But an entirely different rendering of this episode is possible. The Cyclops can be recognized as representatives of a more ancient culture than the Greeks, harking back to an archaic period when there were still men who possessed the "eye of wisdom," an epoch grotesquely symbolized by the single eye of the Cyclops. The superiority of this vision is hinted at by Socrates in the *Phaedo*, when he says to his disciples:

> I thought that as I had failed in the contemplation of true existence, I ought to be careful that I did not lose the eye of my soul; as people may injure their bodily eye by observing and gazing on the sun during an eclipse, unless they take the precaution of only looking at the image reflected in the water, or in some similar medium. That occurred to me, and I was afraid that my soul might be blinded altogether if I looked at things with my eyes or tried by the help of the senses to apprehend them.

Odysseus, as the type of the ambitious and scheming Greek, is contemptuous of Cyclopean simplicity and puts out the eye of the giant, Polyphemus, with a firebrand. Here, the meaning may be, not that Odysseus is an exceedingly clever man, but that in his mere cleverness, he is unable to appreciate the eye of wisdom, and *destroys* it. He is the type of arrogant intellectuality, without intuitive perception, and fated to wander and to be purged of his worldly conceit as a result.

But Odysseus had at least the wit to long for Ithaca, and the determination to reach it. The modern world is less fortunate, being fated to wonder if a destination or "home" exists at all.