

THE WISDOM OF LAO-TSE

IT was to be expected that our article, "Taoism for our Time," would bring some surprised comment and criticism. It did. At least two articulate readers felt that we were "letting down" the pioneering and deserving workers in psychical research, and one of them thought, also, that we were perhaps deserting both the principle of education and the scientific method as a means of gaining knowledge. Hopefully, this critic writes, "I do not think that you would agree with Lao-tse when he condemns education because it leads men away from a state of Nature."

The other reader wonders why we take exception to reliance on "experts." She asks:

. . . what is so awful about experts being at the forefront of explorations? Who else? I do not think we can ask the scientist to be a saint; all we can ask is that he do his work well, as objectively as possible, and with the same humility that any sincere worker in any field has, if he is truly devoted to his work. . . . Psychical research will no more replace self-search than has psychology, which despite the hopes of its professors remains only one of many methods by which man may discover what he is and how he may function better. One could perhaps predict a flurry of glamor and sensationalism as new proofs are found, but as anyone who has practiced meditation knows, psychic powers even though seductive can never be mistaken for the main line of self-discovery and spiritual realization.

The first correspondent argues for the merits of psychic discovery:

. . . I think it might be rather pleasant to walk on water and even to levitate once we learned to steer. Seriously, though, I can see the pragmatic value of reading "one another's minds." Suppose for example that the common people of Russia could read the non-diplomatic, non-political minds of Americans. Would we need to fear their attacking us? If we are going to talk about a "species of racial self-consciousness," why not put it to use?

And when you decry the usefulness of knowledge of an existence after death, you deny what

easily might be the cure for most of the world's present troubles. For—suppose it were unmistakably demonstrated that this earthly life is only a beginning—would not man behave quite differently? Suppose he knew his earthly conduct did have some effect on a certain future existence—would he be as liable to cheat and lie and kill as he is now when he has permitted himself to be deluded by the assumptions of science? Anyone who will carefully review the evidence obtained by psychic researchers in the last century must admit a strong probability that proof of an existence after bodily death will be forthcoming with an expenditure of sufficient effort. .

It is generally overlooked by those who now are inclined to rail against orthodox science, that the faults they protest are due not to the use of the scientific method, but rather to the assumptions with which most sciences start.

There is so much good sense in these observations that we are inclined to let them stand without comment, or to return to them only obliquely, after a pursuit of some of Lao-tse's rather elusive meanings. Actually, we hardly expected much assent to Lao-tse's puzzling iconoclasm, although it seems to us that the old Chinese sage speaks directly to certain of the difficulties of modern man—which is why we tried to suggest a value in a "Taoism for our Time."

Like other readers of the *Tao Te Ching*, and like our critics, we have had some difficulty in understanding what seems to be Lao-tse's frontal attack on "education." How can a man with such delicate ethical perceptions be so "unprogressive"? Lao-tse's exquisite feeling for the integrity of the simple life draws you on, while his apparently Machiavellian wish to maintain order at the cost of progress drives you away. He said:

In ancient times those who knew how to practice Tao did not use it to enlighten the people, but rather to keep them ignorant. The difficulty of governing the people arises from their having too much knowledge.

But what, in this context, does he mean by "knowledge"? Elsewhere he says:

Ceremonies are but the veneer of loyalty and good faith, while oft-times the source of disorder. Knowledge of externals is but a showy ornament of Tao, while oft-times the beginning of imbecility. . . .

He who is enwrapped by Tao seems wrapped in darkness. He who is advanced in Tao seems to be going back. He who walks smoothly in Tao seems to be on a rugged path.

The man of highest virtue appears lowly. He who is truly pure behaves as though he were sullied. He who has virtue in abundance behaves as though it were not enough. He who is firm in virtue seems like a skulking pretender. He who is simple and true appears unstable as water.

If Tao prevails on earth, horses will be used for purposes of agriculture. If Tao does not prevail, war-horses will be bred on the common. If we had sufficient knowledge to walk in the Great Way, what we should most fear would be boastful display. . . .

The wearing of gay embroidered robes, the carrying of sharp swords, fastidiousness in food and drink, superabundance of property and wealth:—this I call flaunting robbery; most assuredly it is not Tao. . . . Temper your sharpness, disentangle your ideas, moderate your brilliancy, live in harmony with your age. This is being in conformity with the principle of Tao.

It might be argued that "real" knowledge has nothing to do with "gay embroidered robes" and "the carrying of sharp swords"—that these alluring but superficial habits are only the froth on the wave of progress, and that you can't stop the spread of knowledge because some people are bound to misuse it. A modern Lao-tse would perhaps admit the technical validity of this objection, but might ask how you identify the working character of "knowledge" in a given society—in the way it *ought* to be used or in the way it is used? Knowledge, he might insist—agreeably to John Dewey—is a functional affair. Don't tell me, he might say, about the truth, goodness and beauty locked up in your heads; show it to me in your lives; but about all we could show him would be our embroidered robes and our sharp swords. What else would you show

him, that you could claim is "representative"? You might feel inclined to say that, after all, truth, goodness, and beauty have always been reserved for small minorities and distinguished individuals, but isn't that exactly what this argument is about? Lao-tse is not concerned with the welfare of sages—the handful who understand the Tao—but with the population at large. On this basis, to argue that only the few can have "knowledge" is to beg the question.

But there is another approach to the problem. Conventionally speaking, the people who are regarded in our culture as possessing knowledge are usually referred to as the "intellectuals"—which includes writers and literary people, persons in education and connected with universities, and many of our scientists. Our intellectuals, however, while acknowledged to have sharp intelligence, and often brilliance, are seldom thought of as rich in wisdom and serenity. They are as vulnerable to psychological disorders as the rest of the population—even more so, perhaps—and are not commonly expected to exhibit wisdom in their lives. In short, our familiar conception of knowledge is a "demoralized" conception, taking for granted the validity of the scientific separation between knowledge and wisdom, or between knowledge and ethical truth. It may be reasonable enough to say, as one of our correspondents says, that we can't "ask the scientist to be a saint," but that this seems an expression of common sense to us is also evidence that we do not easily find a *natural* place in our conception of the good life for wisdom in action. Who *can* you ask to be a saint? Or why is this so odd an expectation? A "saint" is a peculiar person who represents all the qualities we have neglected to understand, and have, therefore, sentimentalized. You can't ask anybody to be a *saint* for the reason that being saintly is not a reasonable objective in our society. Probably Lao-tse wouldn't ask anyone to try to become the curious abstraction we mean when we talk about "saints," since he had a wholly natural being in mind when he spoke of the man who understands the *Tao*.

Intellectuality, in our culture, is for the most part a source of moral pain and anxiety to its possessor. The intellectual has the *facility* of understanding, but is usually without the balance which he needs to behave like an understanding man. He has the technique of wisdom without its ballast of emotional maturity. He is often guilty of excesses in every direction. We are so used to this condition in the life of the intellectual that we do not even question why it should prevail. And as a not unnatural conspiracy of the intellectuals in justifying themselves, we are told with almost a single voice that we must not confuse morals with scientific truth, that to attempt to identify the objective account of Reality with ethical insight is to confuse the issue and to obscure the sharp outline of our sight of the "real world" out there.

But Lao-tse challenges the validity of this idea of knowledge. He says that it is not "natural." He declares that if intellectual facility outruns the deeper comprehension of which human beings are capable, a terrible alienation of man from nature takes place. He suggests that "knowledge" of this sort is really delusion, and he supports this claim from evidence of human behavior under the influence of such delusion. Thus:

When the Great Tao falls into disuse, benevolence and righteousness come into vogue. When shrewdness and sagacity appear, great hypocrisy prevails. It is when the bonds of kinship are out of joint that filial piety and paternal affection begin. It is when the State is in a ferment of revolution that loyal patriots arise.

Cast off your holiness, rid yourself of sagacity, and the people will benefit an hundredfold. Discard benevolence and abolish righteousness, and the people will return to filial piety and paternal love. Renounce your scheming and abandon gain, and thieves and robbers will disappear. These three precepts mean that outward show is insufficient, and therefore they bid us be true to our proper nature;—to show simplicity, to embrace plain dealing, to reduce selfishness, to moderate desire.

A variety of colours makes man's eye blind; a diversity of sounds makes man's ear deaf; a mixture of flavours makes man's palate dull.

He who knows others is clever, but he who knows himself is enlightened.

But Lao-tse also says to "live in harmony with your age." With this injunction in mind, we might partially render the above paragraphs in the words: "There is nothing wrong with intellectuality which an understanding of its limitations will not cure."

We should like to argue that every authentically wise man has to pass through the realizations represented by the *Tao Te Ching*. For example, the dramatic point of self-discovery in Tolstoy's life—when at fifty he turned away from his career as a popular and successful novelist to wonder about the meaning of his life, of all of life seems to bring the same illumination. In *My Confession*, Tolstoy wrote:

... my personal question, "What am I with my desires?" remained entirely unanswered. And I understood that [the experimental] sciences were very interesting, very attractive, but that the definiteness and clearness of those sciences were in inverse proportion to their applicability to the questions of life: the less applicable they are to the questions of life, the more definite and clear they are; the more they attempt to give answers to the questions of life, the more they become dim and unattractive. If you turn to that branch of those sciences which attempts to give answers to the questions of life,—to physiology, psychology, biology, sociology,—you come across an appalling scantiness of ideas, the greatest obscurity, an unjustified pretense at solving irrelevant questions, and constant contradictions of one thinker with others and even with himself. If you turn to the branch of knowledge which does not busy itself with the solution of the problem of life, but answers only its special, scientific questions, you are delighted at the power of the human mind, but know in advance that there will be no answers there to the questions of life. These sciences directly ignore the questions of life. They say: "We have no answers to what you are and why you live, and we do not busy ourselves with that; but if you want to know the laws of light, of chemical combinations, and laws of the development of organisms, if you want to know the laws of the bodies, their forms, and the relation of numbers and quantities, if you want to know the laws of your mind, we shall give you clear, definite, incontrovertible answers to all that. . . . Experimental

science gives positive knowledge and manifests the greatness of the human mind only when it does not introduce the final cause into its investigation. . . . Experimental science need only introduce the question of final cause, and nonsense is the result.

Socrates, whose account of the good life closely resembles that of Lao-tse, also makes a radical distinction between "objective" science and philosophical perception; and the *Upanishads*, which are probably older in origin than any other scripture, say the same:

The Self-Being pierced the opening outwards; hence one looks outward, not within himself. A wise man looks towards the Self with reverted sight, seeking deathlessness.

Children seek after outward desires; they come to the net of widespread death. But the wise, beholding deathlessness, seek not for the enduring among the unenduring.

Basic to this inquiry is the question of whether it is possible or even desirable to reconcile the culture of modern industrial society to the ideal of a Socratic community, to the orientation of the *Upanishads*, to the implications of Tolstoy's views on culture and art, and to Taoist "naturalness." Would we, in order to adopt this ideal, be obliged to give up something more than the "sound and fury, signifying nothing," of our civilization? Would actual values be diminished or sacrificed?

We are willing to be corrected, but we can see nothing indispensable in the endless round of "production" which characterizes modern industry. Nothing really important is created or perpetuated by the enormous projects of scientifically designed technology. Books? We could do with a lot less books. Nor would machinery have to be outlawed as the root of evil. Machinery in the service of man, as Gandhi said, instead of man in the service of machinery, would be a great boon. But its operations would have to be kept in scale with authentic human progress. No one who must daily submit to being carried along on the stream of traffic to and from places of "production," in order to get enough to eat, can

fail to reflect on the progressive insanity of the anxious rush to produce more goods. If we could recover from this madness, would we really be so far from Lao-tse's thinking?

There will be those, however, who hold that all this discussion of the ideal society misses the point—that, to be specific, psychical research is precisely the sort of science which brings into the luminous zone of observable, "objective" fact those elements of human experience on which spiritual attitudes and ideals are founded. Dr. Rhine, for example, suggests that "parapsychology is to religion what biology is to medicine or physics to engineering.

The comparison is apt in some respects, but there are qualifications to be entered. An engineer can build you a bridge and you can walk upon it, and a doctor can write you a diet that may heal your body, but can a minister of religion get you into Heaven? Not unless you are able to believe in the Vicarious Atonement!

In the range of action from the physical to the spiritual, there is an ascending scale of individual responsibility. To get the good out of the bridge, all you have to do is walk. But more effort than just walking is involved in following the right diet. Discipline of a sort enters here, and if you take the trouble to learn the principles of right diet you will have less difficulty than a person who simply obeys "orders." Suppose the doctor gets sick!

When it comes to religion or philosophy, another level of responsibility and discipline is involved. The final questions, as Tolstoy pointed out, cannot be left to the scientists, since the final questions are answered only in the realm of *noumena*, while the scope of science is limited to the range of observable phenomena. It may be true, as Dr. Rhine suggests, that no noumenon is without its corresponding phenomenon, but the ultimate reality is the *Self*, and in this no scientist, no one other than the *Self*, can instruct us.

Let us make one thing clear. We did not, in "Taoism for our Time," deprecate psychical

research. Probably no weekly of a general character published in the United States has shown more interest in the unprejudiced study of psychic phenomena than MANAS. What was suggested in this article is that such scientific studies, performed by laboratory workers and trained scientific people, are no substitute for philosophy and self-discovery. We suggested, further, that for revelations of the psychic potentialities of the human being to outrun by very much the philosophical understanding of people generally, could be disastrous. We do not expect this to happen, since credulity does not come easily, these days, but it *has* happened, in the past.

When a great religious institution finds its chief demand for the faith of its followers on the reality of *miracles*, the parallel is complete. A miracle, if it represents an actual happening, is nothing more than a fact of nature that the mind of man cannot assimilate. The propagandizers of miracles do not call them that, but that is their functional role in the minds of those who accept them as overwhelming "proof" of the truth of their religious beliefs.

As for the supposed certainty that "meditation" will bring the capacity to distinguish between the seductions of psychism and spiritual realization, we can only plead a less optimistic interpretation of the history of religion. People in India have been "meditating" for thousands of years, but the practice does not seem to have saved the culture of India from psychic vicissitudes which many modern Indians deplore, nor from extravagances of religious belief which the Buddha and many others sought vainly to correct. The practice of "yoga" is a lonely path, as more than one unhappy American with a subsequent background of experience in mental hospitals will testify.

It does not seem too far-fetched to say that Lao-tse and some of the psychotherapists of today preach very much the same doctrine. We need to get our thoughts and our feelings together, so that they work in harmony. A thought without its

validating feeling, or a feeling without its validating thought, can lead human beings to inhabit structures of delusion. When such thoughts or such feelings are entertained collectively, they produce *cultural* delusions which, because of their prevalence, are much more difficult to overcome. There is probably a strong element of cultural delusion in all the contemporary ideologies, religious doctrines, and even scientific theories of knowledge. Lao-tse wanted this sort of confusion to be understood; this is what we meant by "Taoism for our Time."

REVIEW

NEVIL SHUTE AND THE "LAST" WAR

WE have yet to encounter a book by Nevil Shute which failed to excite our interest. *On the Beach* (William Morrow, 1957) runs true to form in this regard, despite an entirely new sort of plot for this author. Partly because of Shute's inherent gentility, leading him to detour all conventional shock techniques, this patient description of the end of the world from nuclear fall-out is peculiarly effective. As John Winterich remarked in the *Saturday Review*:

. . . this could be the blueprint for all of us. This handful of Australians plan for the future (next year's farm crop, even next year's flower garden) in the certainty that their planning, like themselves, must come to nothing. No man or woman anywhere in the world can read this book without asking: "If and when this happens to me, shall I do as well?" *On the Beach* is a terrible tract for the times, presented with vigor and conviction, and absorbingly readable.

Shute's title derives from a few potentially prophetic lines by T. S. Eliot—though Shute's characters, praise him and the Lord, do not whimper:

*In this last of meeting placed
We grope together
And avoid speech
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river . . .
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

We have selected two sizeable quotations to convey the tone of Mr. Shute's description of the inexorable advance, to the far corners of the world, of radioactivity sickness. The scene for the conversations is Australia, one of the last territories to succumb. All human life has ceased in areas of dense population—the United States went under a year or so before—and portions of the Southern Hemisphere survive for a few months longer only because it takes time for the high, swirling winds to transfer radioactive dust from one system of air currents to another. At the

time of these conversations, communications in Australia have already broken down. But oddly enough, with everyone convinced that only a month or two of life remain, there is no mass exodus from affected areas; people turn to a quiet performance of the tasks they best love, whether this involves caring for the last proud remnant of a great Navy or tending a flower garden in Canberra. Life is portrayed as infinitely worth living, no matter how short a time of grace remains—and the reader will be more profoundly moved by the poignance of death for those who make such an honorable business of living, than would be the case if the principal characters reverted to savagery.

Our first quotation shows how doomed people may protest injustice without raving or fearing—and may accept what must be accepted with equanimity:

"It's going to go on spreading down here, southwards, till it gets to us?"

"That's what they say.

"There never was a bomb dropped in the Southern Hemisphere," she said angrily. "Why must it come to us? Can't anything be done to stop it?"

He shook his head. "Not a thing. It's in the winds. It's mighty difficult to dodge what's carried on the wind. You just can't do it. You've got to take what's coming to you, and make the best of it."

"I don't understand it," she said stubbornly. "People were saying once that no wind blows across the equator, so we'd be all right. And now it seems we aren't all right at all. . . ."

"We'd never have been all right," he said quietly. "Even if they'd been correct about the heavy particles—the radioactive dust—which they weren't, we'd still have got the lightest particles carried by diffusion. We've got them now. The background level of the radiation here, today, is eight or nine times what it was before the war."

"That doesn't seem to hurt us," she retorted. "But this dust they talk about. That's blown about on the wind, isn't it?"

"That's so," he replied. "But no wind does blow right into the Southern Hemisphere from the Northern Hemisphere. If it did we'd all be dead right now."

"I wish we were," she said bitterly. "It's like waiting to be hung."

"Maybe it is. Or maybe it's a period of grace."

"I won't take it," she said vehemently. "It's not fair. No one in the Southern Hemisphere ever dropped a bomb, a hydrogen bomb or a cobalt bomb or any other sort of bomb. We had nothing to do with it. Why should we have to die because other countries nine or ten thousand miles away from us wanted to have a war? It's so bloody unfair."

"It's that, all right," he said. "But that's the way it is."

The best passages in the book, in our opinion, occur during Shute's belated revelation of how the war of extinction began. So logical, and so "natural," too, as a projection of the lethal potentialities of our time:

They sat smoking in silence for a few minutes. "You think that's what flared up finally?" Peter said at last. "I mean after the original attacks the Russians made on Washington and London?"

John Osborne and the captain stared at him. "The Russians never bombed Washington," Dwight said. "They proved that in the end."

He stared back at them. "I mean, the very first attack of all."

"That's right. The very first attack. They were Russian long-range bombers, II 626's, but they were Egyptian manned. They flew from Cairo."

"Are you sure that's true?"

"It's true enough. They got the one that landed at Puerto Rico on the way home. They only found out it was Egyptian after we'd bombed Leningrad and Odessa and the nuclear establishments at Kharkov, Kuibyshev, and Molotov. Things must have happened kind of quick that day."

"Do you mean to say, we bombed Russia by mistake?" It was so horrible a thought as to be incredible.

John Osborne said, "That's true, Peter. It's never been admitted publicly, but it's quite true. The first one was the bomb on Naples. That was the Albanians, of course. Then there was the bomb on Tel Aviv. Nobody knows who dropped that one, not that I've heard, anyway. Then the British and Americans intervened and made that demonstration flight over Cairo. Next day the Egyptians sent out all

the serviceable bombers that they'd got, six to Washington and seven to London. One got through to Washington, and two to London. After that there weren't many American or British statesmen left alive."

Dwight nodded. "The bombers were Russian, and I've heard it said that they had Russian markings. It's quite possible."

"Good God!" said the Australian. "So we bombed Russia?"

"That's what happened," said the captain heavily.

John Osborne said, "It's understandable. London and Washington were out—right out. Decisions had to be made by the military commanders at dispersal in the field, and they had to be made quick before another lot of bombs arrived. Things were very strained with Russia, after the Albanian bomb, and these aircraft were identified as Russian." He paused. "Somebody had to make a decision, of course, and make it in a matter of minutes. Up at Canberra they think now that he made it wrong."

"But if it was a mistake, why didn't they get together and stop it? Why did they go on?"

The captain said, "It's mighty difficult to stop a war when all the statesmen have been killed." . . .

"It just didn't stop, till all the bombs were gone and all the aircraft were unserviceable. And by that time, of course, they'd gone too far."

"Christ," said the American softly, "I don't know what I'd have done in their shoes. I'm glad I wasn't."

Victor Wainright, the publisher of *On the Beach*, places Shute's novel on a par with George Orwell's *1984*. He concludes that the reading public is here offered further proof that "prophetic fiction is mightier than political exhortation." With the latter opinion we definitely agree, and so far as comparison between *1984* and *On the Beach* is concerned, we prefer Mr. Shute. Twisted and distorted characters, in an extreme situation, are gloomier and more repellent than Shute's inevitable types—men and women of decency and restraint.

COMMENTARY THE BIG QUESTION

BOTH *Frontiers* and the "Children" article for this week illustrate the difficulties in trying to deal intelligently and practically with the status quo without at the same time compromising one's ethical principles and social ideals. It is natural for the man who despises a system which permits extreme differences of life between rich and poor to feel contempt for all those social institutions which are manifestly devoted to the service of the rich. Likewise, in the case of the practice of psychiatry, it is the wealthy who get the most attention and, in a large majority of the cases of mental illness, the best therapy.

These privileges of wealth are repugnant to the dream of a society ruled by the principles of human rights and equality, yet what are you going to do about it?—what are you going to do about it in *this* generation, not in the next, when we may have better arrangements?

If you are a Communist, you may say that *this* generation is expendable, in order through ruthless liquidation, violence, and dictatorial control to establish a society in which such inequities no longer prevail. This point of view enables a man to justify unqualified contempt for existing institutions. Why worry, he will ask, about *this* generation, when its sacrifice will bring justice and freedom to countless generations in tomorrow's classless society?

But if you think the past thirty years give evidence that a revolution involving liquidation, violence, and dictatorship is unable to establish justice and freedom, what then? What then becomes the constructive attitude toward existing institutions? Is the endeavor to see in them a limited and qualified good a form of compromise? There is certainly compromise in a passive acceptance of the results of gross economic inequality, but is there not an element of utopian obliviousness in refusing to acknowledge any

good at all in the institutions which presently reflect aspects of inequality?

The big question, obviously, is, How do you get from what is to what ought to be? When we have answered this question, we shall have a sound basis for examining our emotional and intellectual attitudes towards all aspects of the status quo. Until then, a reflective caution seems in order.

Review in *MANAS* for Oct. 2 said that *Know Your Neighbors*, a hand-book for group-conversations by Rachel DuBois, could be had on request from the Workshop for Cultural Democracy, 204 East 18th Street, New York City. We have since learned that there is a necessary charge of \$1.95 per copy of this 70-page publication.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves RICH BOYS SCHOOL

OUR notes on the Stillwater Cove Ranch School (Sept. 11), one of the most attractive locations for education "out doors" that we know of, has brought criticism from a reader whose opinion we tend to respect, even though he seems here to have neglected our chief point of emphasis—which was headmaster Paul Rudy's insistence that all the boys of the school engage in productive ranch labor. Following, however, is the criticism:

This Stillwater Cove Ranch School bit leaves me cold. The reason is that I find a little silly the restricting of a child's environment to other boys, all from families well enough off to be able to afford the fees, probably all white (for economic if not discriminatory reasons) or at best with one "show" Negro or Oriental, mostly exclusive of Roman Catholics (who would be inclined to use their own schools), etc., etc. It's an artificial environment, regardless of how much dignity it may impart in the skillful use of hands, and consequently of dubious value in preparing children to live in a homogeneous world. Sure, you can make up for it at home—but why build your own obstacle course?

There is no doubt that most of the boys who attend Stillwater Cove are blessed (or cursed) with rich parents, but it is a question whether their attendance at this sort of ranch school exposes them to a more artificial environment than they might otherwise encounter. The children of the rich, unfortunately, even when attending public school, often gravitate toward tight groups and cliques, occasioned by their capacity to spend money in numerous pursuits impossible for the majority. Also, in contrast to the less privileged of their classmates, a false sense of superiority easily develops. But at a school such as Stillwater, the intricacies of practical ranch work must be mastered, and in contending with horses and fishing boats, farming implements and construction tools, these youngsters may participate in activities they might never otherwise encounter. It is not just the "skillful use of hands"

that the designers of the Stillwater program are interested in, but rather participation in an approach to practical communal life, with the end of basic orientation.

There are many angles to this "schools-for-rich-boys" question. One may argue that the prep schools of England, such as Eton and Harrow, have a centuries-long record of producing snobs, but they have also produced a lot of writers and thoughtful men of affairs who achieved considerable self-discipline based on a sense of responsibility which they felt must accompany their status. The children of well-to-do British parents, on the average, have learned a restraint and self-control seldom encountered in America, and this can be welcomed, even if we agree that snobbishness cannot. Note, for example, the daily schedule observed by eight-year-olds in Britain's Cheam Preparatory School, currently attended by the young Prince Charles. According to an INS account (*Pasadena Independent*, Sept. 3):

Charles will rise at 7:15 a.m., attend prayers at 7:50 a.m., breakfast at 8 a.m., and start classes at 9 a.m. He will study mathematics, English, history, geography, French and Latin.

There will be a break for buns and milk at 11 a.m., more classes until 1 p.m., a luncheon and rest period until 2:15 p.m., games from 2:30 to 4 p.m., and more studies from 4:25 to 5:50 p.m. "High tea" (supper) will be at 6 p.m., and bedtime is 6:30 p.m.

Like most British prep schools they use the cane to enforce discipline at Cheam, in addition to cancellation of privileges.

It might as well be faced—a rigorous "traditional" program *can* work out quite well for the child, stamping a sense of order on his mind during the early years. And perhaps this question ought to involve an estimate of the educative value of deeply rooted tradition. The only tradition in the American public schools is that of a very loosely understood democracy and, as our delinquency statistics demonstrate, license and abuse easily encroach when no pride in rigorous discipline obtains. An interesting contrast between the traditions of the Old and the New

Worlds in respect to school behavior is provided by an article written for the *New York Times* by Laurence Wylie, a Haverford College professor, who spent a year in France on a Social Science Research grant. Mr. Wylie's experience was not with children whose parents were endowed with wealth, but of the age-old system of familial guidance bolstered by the children's pride in participation—in other words, "tradition." This sort of education, he found, usually led to a sense of order and discipline. Mr. Wylie spent most of his time in the village of Peyrane, where the integration of children's activities with productive work in an agricultural region supplied, in even greater measure, the Stillwater Cove motif—just as Eton and Harrow may be said to reflect another dimension of the Stillwater emphasis.

Since Mr. Wylie had observed classroom behavior in Haverford's elementary schools, he was quite interested in the contrasts revealed by the behavior of the young French boys and girls he undertook to instruct. His summation is, we think, worth quoting:

The child of Haverford comes to school well aware of his importance. At home he has been, if not the center of the family attention, at least an equal partner in family affairs. School is a further opportunity for the expression of his personality, which he must learn to adapt to the collective personality of his class. He also acquires skills and knowledge in school subjects, but there is more emphasis on his development as a person than on his training as a scholar.

He is constantly called on to make decisions—individual and group decisions—which in another culture would be considered too complicated for a child of limited experience. Life presents itself as a total field in which his personality may unfold. Within that field he may devote himself in a large degree to what best suits him. He has a voice equal with his teacher's in deciding what country his school class will study in a class project, just as he has a voice equal with his parents in deciding where the family will spend its vacation. A parent or the teacher may determine the decision but only if he is skillful in persuading the group that his proposal is most attractive to them. The important thing is for

each individual to have his say and for each decision to be a group decision.

This system makes for orderly or chaotic families and classrooms, depending on whether each group happens to have a leader with sufficient manipulatory skill. It prepares the child admirably, however, to meet the demands of social and political organizations in which persuasion, effective compromise, the individual vote, and the collective will to abide by group decisions are essential elements. It is not surprising that children raised under this system should grow up believing that the strength of our country lies in our political institutions.

In Peyrane, it is the wisdom of a decision, rather than its acceptance by a group, that is important. Experience, training, rational control tempered by love, are considered essential in making a wise decision, and since adults have more of these than do children generally, it is the adults who make the decisions.

This system works perfectly at home and at school. In adult social and political organizations the various adult wisdoms come into conflict, so that the organizations lead a stormy existence, but there is no such conflict in the smallest social unit. It would be hard to find better integrated, more sturdy, more smoothly functioning institutions than the classrooms and families of Peyrane. The scourges of nature and of man bring devastation, but the family endures. It is not surprising that a child of Peyrane grows up believing that the most important thing in life is the integrity of his family. In the long run, he believes this is more important for France as a nation than what goes on in Paris or Indochina or Algeria.

The French child is in no way cowed. Rather, he is serious and dignified where such behavior is appropriate. Out of school he plays freely. In school he learns how to do tasks that are not glamorous but need to be done without a teacher's having to seek ways to make them interesting. He learns that experience is compartmentalized, that each compartment has definite limits and requires appropriate conduct. The Peyrane child's sense of appropriateness is reflected in a social poise that is truly impressive.

It has become stylish for American journalists and political scientists to look at French political behavior, shake their heads and moan, "France is sick!" French journalists and sociologists look at American family life, shake their heads and moan,

"America is sick!" Surely both countries have their troubles, but it is a poor diagnosis that is based on only one symptom. If these diagnosticians were willing to have a look at the total pattern of a nation's behavior—including the more humble aspects, such as what goes on in the schoolrooms of Peyrane and Haverford—their diagnosis might not be so self-flattering, but it would make sense.

In conclusion, we suppose we get back again to emphasis on our belief that "nature" is one of the most dramatically successful teachers. Whether children work at useful outdoor tasks on the farms of Peyrane or on a ranch school, they are apt to learn a number of important things which the most conscientiously maintained average public school in America cannot supply. We should, of course, be more inclined to agree with our critic, who argues that a child in a "rich boy's school," no matter what the surroundings and work-experience, gets out of touch with the actual world he lives in, in respect to those instances where the child spends five or more years in the "elite" environment. But there are thousands of youngsters who live, in wealthy homes, the most artificial lives of all, and who might benefit considerably by the experience they obtain, for a period of from one to three years, from such an interesting arrangement as Stillwater school seems to offer. We see no reason to begrudge healthful pleasure and beauties for any who are able to enjoy them, nor pride in such "school ties" as are developed. *Sometimes* those who have ideal circumstances in their early years are considerably less grabby after they mature, more cognizant of the lack of opportunities provided for others of different economic status.

FRONTIERS

New Tasks for Psychiatry and Sociology

FROM time to time, MANAS has taken note of the growing awareness among psychotherapists of a basic problem in the practice of their specialty—the question of whether their goal should be thought of as simply the relief or removal of symptoms, or, more largely, should include "personality growth" or "maturity." It is obvious enough that achievement of either of these objectives on a sound basis will involve at least *some* progress toward the other, so that raising the question at all in this form is bound to result in over-simplification, yet the question is legitimate since it relates to fundamental attitudes of mind in this work.

Moreover, the question is raised in exactly these terms by a psychiatrist in the August, 1957 number of *Psychiatry* (quarterly journal of the William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation, Washington, D.C.). The first contribution to a symposium, "On Some Convergences of Sociology and Psychiatry," is by Dr. Robert Cohen, director of clinical investigations, National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Cohen writes:

Basic to any discussion is the definition of the goal of therapy, and even these few papers hint at the wide variety and disparity of these goals. To the community, the goal is an individual who conforms to its social norms. To the parents, it may be the return of their child to his previous dependent and dutiful position. To the wife, it may be the husband's return to work and effectiveness as a provider. To the patient and to some hospital personnel, including psychiatrists, it may be the disappearance of symptoms. To some psychiatrists, it may be the achievement of substantial personality change culminating in what is considered real emotional maturity. Is the therapist who seeks more than the disappearance of symptoms justified in this view? He might criticize Morris Schwartz {another contributor to the symposium}, reminding him that morphine allays the pain of appendicitis, but does not prevent the inflamed appendix from bursting nor cure the peritonitis which may ensue. . . . Schwartz reports how the hospital staff, in discussion, developed a more effective way of responding to the demands of

the patient—effective, that is, in reducing the number and intensity of her demands. Did this lead to a general improvement? Did she soon leave the hospital? Or is she simply a more pleasant hospital patient, easier to live with but fundamentally as sick as ever? Is it possible that had the reasons for her demands been worked out psychotherapeutically, there might have been a subsidence of symptoms but on a different basis? Is the disappearance of symptoms the important point, or is the cause for their disappearance equally important?

Comment of this sort pulls no punches and probably represents a controversy of considerable heat among psychotherapists. Not only is the question one for doctors to reflect upon; laymen, also, are involved, for, as Dr. Cohen points out, relatives of the patient have *their* idea of what psychotherapy is supposed to do for him. The expectation of a parent, a wife or a husband, can hardly be left out of the calculations in examining this problem; hence the importance of developing lay opinion concerning the general potentialities of psychotherapy. In any event, it is certain that help for mental patients is often blocked by interfering and insistent relatives, while, on the other hand, relatives do have a direct responsibility to the patient and are bound to have some kind of voice, however slight, in determining treatment, even if this only goes as far as the choice of a therapist. The problem, in other words, is not merely a psychiatric problem, but also a cultural problem. Is the therapist only a physician, or is he "philosopher, guide, and friend" as well? Might he be considered even in the role of a priest? These are questions which have not been sought, but which have overtaken us.

Dr. Cohen has more to say:

To many workers in the field this quest for personality growth seems at best unrealistic. They point to the overwhelming mass of patients and the inadequate number of psychiatrists and other therapeutic personnel. In addition, they raise serious questions about the concept of maturity. There is evidence that this is not an absolute concept, but one which is culture-bound. What may be regarded as mature in one social class may be considered as undesirable and deviant in another. They point to

studies which indicate that the psychiatrist reserves his psychotherapy for members of one class, and prescribes physical treatments and environmental manipulations for other classes. They question the accuracy of the concept of personality growth, and point out that many therapists of ostensibly different persuasions and differing theoretical views seem to secure quite similar results. They cast doubt on the idea of a mature man as one who is freed from the bonds of his culture, and suggest that he has merely moved to another group. They advocate the development of a social therapy, and direct attention to such therapeutic communities as those described by Paul Sivadon and Maxwell Jones in this issue of PSYCHIATRY. These are serious questions not to be answered by affirmations of faith. But neither are they likely to be answered by the attempted application to the therapeutic situation of the experimental methods suitable to the study of physical and biological phenomena.

In a brief definition, Dr. Cohen distinguishes between the two views by saying that the doctors mainly concerned with the removal of symptoms are therapists who "may be considered as purveyors of social adjustment, in contradistinction to those who aim to free man from the bonds which stifle his creativity and spontaneity."

It is pertinent, here, to point out that the emergence of this question among psychiatrists can be regarded as evidence of the intellectual and moral demands of a rapidly maturing civilization. To come to maturity, a culture *must* arrive at some working definitions of the nature of man and some philosophic conceptions of goals in human life. If religion and philosophy fail in supplying these definitions and conceptions, the pressures of life as it comes to be lived in an ethical vacuum produce disorders which hand the problem to others—in this case to the practitioners of psychological medicine.

Obviously, this brings no automatic solution. It only obliges doctors to add the responsibilities of the philosopher to their already heavy burdens. The symposium in *Psychiatry* for August shows a willingness of the psychotherapists to share these responsibilities with the sociologists, who, of all

the specialists in social science, are most likely to have felt similar pressures growing out of the same basic cause.

We are probably fortunate in having men of this sort obliged to take the lead in explorations of philosophy. They, at least, are without theological inheritances to confuse the issue with empty words and emptier concepts, while they bring to the field of philosophical investigation a strong sense of the need for practical solutions in behalf of the human race.