

IDEALISTS AND MATERIALISTS

THE argument between the Idealists and the Materialists—or between the Mystics and the Empiricists—is a very old one. Probably every civilization which has matured to the point of learning to deal with abstract ideas and issues has pursued this argument at great length. We are assured, for example, that every philosophical controversy known to Western thought was anticipated in Indian philosophy, centuries ago; no doubt there is truth in the claim.

The argument has inescapable fascination, which may explain why we return to it, periodically, in these pages. It is necessary, of course, to take a "side." We are firm believers in the opinion expressed by Charles Darwin: "How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view, if it is to be of any service." But to take sides in this controversy need not mean that one hopes to reach a final settlement of the question. Such matters, we suspect, cannot be "nailed down." All that seems possible, on any great question, is a growing feeling of rational support for one's "acts of faith." This, in turn, seems to fit with the idea that the great things which are accomplished in this world are always in some sense "acts of faith."

It follows from this view of the dispute between the Idealists and Materialists that the participants have an obligation to study as carefully as possible the views which oppose their own. And it might be contended that the man who gives the closest and most impartial attention to the "other side" of the argument is more likely to reach the truth than the partisans who believe that their opponents are either stupid or deluded.

There is commonly a great deal of partisanship present on both sides of the argument. The Idealists are subject to believing that because they are on the side of the Higher

Things of life, they are peculiarly virtuous, and therefore entitled to conduct their argument with a kind of spiritual grandeur. As advocates and exemplars of virtue, they think they enjoy privileges not allowed to ordinary debaters, such as the right to be careless of facts—or if not facts, what many people deem to be facts—and to wave away as without merit the opinions of men who have not felt "the call."

The Materialists, on the other hand, believe themselves to be the "true" devotees of Fact and Reality. For the more ardent members of this school, anyone not a materialist is a victim of wishful thinking and sentimentality. It seems likely that the Materialist, however temperate he may be as a human being, is less able than the Idealist to concede the possibility of insight into truth for his opponent, although such judgments may depend upon the kind of an Idealist or Materialist that you are.

But to get to the point, what we should like to suggest, here, is the examination by Idealists of several clear statements of the Materialist view, as the best possible means of clarifying the foundations and implications of Idealism. These statements belong to the Western philosophical tradition and are found in the following books: Frederick Lange's *History of Materialism* (Harcourt, Brace, 1995); Karl Pearson's *The Grammar of Science* (J. M. Dent, 1937); *Materialism Re-Stated*, by Chapman Cohen (Pioneer Press, 1997); and *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*, by Hans Reichenbach (University of California Press, 1956).

There are many more such books, and possibly better ones for the purpose, but these books at least make clear to the reader what William James meant when he spoke of the "tough-minded" thinkers. There is a stubborn

merit in the work of men who are determined to stick to "facts." There is beauty in every tenacious practice of an honestly held faith, with lessons to be found for those of widely differing faiths. As a matter of fact, it is probably easier to see in the writings of clear-thinking materialists what impartial investigation involves, since materialism deals with the tangible world. Weakness or carelessness in the materialist's argument shows up more clearly than in the idealist's argument, for the reason that the materialist deals (or tries to deal) with objective nature, or the realm of public truth. If idealists had to be as careful as the materialists in the development of their position, they might be less vulnerable to critical attack.

Of the four books named, the Reichenbach volume is probably the most sophisticated and the most inclusive in its statement of the materialistic view. Mr. Reichenbach was an extremely civilized human being, obviously devoted to honest pursuit of the truth, and his capacity for logical analysis (logic is his field) is probably as great as that of any contemporary. The value we found in his book lies in its reduction of the issue between Idealism and Materialism to one simple question: *Is there any ground in Reality or Nature for ethical first principles?*

Reichenbach believes there is not. He believes that all ethical ideas have their origin in custom and behavior. He thinks it is folly for philosophers to hope to find in the study of the natural world some basis for deciding what *ought* to be. Nature, he insists, has nothing to tell us concerning normative values. Philosophers who claim to find in nature, physical or transcendental, a basis for moral judgment have first to smuggle that basis into nature, as a swindler might "salt" a mine with metal-bearing ore.

Is, then, Mr. Reichenbach a man without "morals"? On the contrary, the morality or "ethics" he offers could quite conceivably be the same, at some practical level, as an idealist's ethics. But he does not, or says he does not,

arrive at his ethical position by the same means as the idealist. The important phrase in Reichenbach's discussion of the problem is "moral directives." A moral directive is a compulsion to behavior of a certain sort. The idealist believes that he gets his moral directives from recognition of the nature of things. This Reichenbach denies, saying that the nature of things, if there is a "nature of things," gives no directives. In scientific philosophy, Reichenbach says, one may conclude only that moral directives derive from "volition." Volition is the will of the individual. A man simply wants to do what he wants to do. However he explains these "wants" to himself, they are still simply wants or volitions. You can't get behind them or explain them in terms of something else which represents an "ideal" intention or value. Reichenbach writes:

. . . moral directives are matters of volitional decision. From this cognitive statement you can not derive any imperative. You can derive imperatives from other imperatives, or from imperatives in combination with cognitive sentences [statements of fact, not of value], but never from cognitive statements alone. . .

Reichenbach admits that, with no principle of restraint available (and where would you get it, in a world without ethical implications?), the anarchist position may be thought to result, allowing everyone the "right" to do as he pleases. However—

If I set up certain volitional aims and demand that they be followed by all persons, you can counter my argument only by setting up another imperative, for instance, the anarchist imperative "everybody has a right to do what he wants." You cannot prove, however, that my system of a volitional ethics is inconsistent, that logic compels me to allow everybody the right to do what he wants. Logic does not compel me to do anything. The directives I set up are not consequences of my conception of ethics, either, nor does logic tell me what imperatives I should regard as obligatory for all persons. I set up my imperatives as my volitions, and the distinction between personal and moral directives is also a matter of my volition. Directives of the latter kind . . . are those which I regard as necessary for the group and which I demand everybody to comply with.

Now you are in complete despair. You retort: "Maybe what you say is true, logically speaking; but do you really think—you, the author of a book on scientific philosophy—that you are the man to give moral directives to the whole world? Why should we follow you?"

Now Reichenbach reaches his decisive point—the kind of ethical philosophy science permits him to embrace:

I am sorry, friend. I did not intend to convey this impression. I was looking for the path of truth, but for this very reason I am not going to give you moral directives, which by their nature cannot be true. I have my moral directives, that is true. But I shall not write them down here. I do not wish to discuss moral issues, but to discuss the nature of morality. I even have some fundamental moral directives, which, I think, are not so very different from yours. We are products of the same society, you and I. So we were imbued with the essence of democracy from the day of our birth. We may differ in many respects, perhaps about the question of whether the state should own the means of production, or whether the divorce laws should be made easier, or whether a world government should be set up that controls the atom bomb. But we can discuss such problems if we both agree about a democratic principle which I oppose to your anarchist principle:

Everybody is entitled to set up his own moral imperatives and to demand that everyone follow these imperatives.

. . . I demand that you act in a certain way, but I do not demand that you renounce your demand to the contrary. That is good democracy; and in fact, it corresponds to the actual procedure in which differences of volition are fought out in a democracy.

I do not derive my principle from pure reason. I do not present it as the result of a philosophy. I merely formulate a principle which is the basis of all political life in democratic countries, knowing that in adhering to it I reveal myself as a product of my time. But I have found that this principle offers me the opportunity to propagate and, in large measure, to follow my volitions, therefore I make it my moral imperative. I do not claim that it applies to all forms of society; if I, the product of a democratic society, were placed in a different society I might be willing to modify my principle.

Reichenbach is careful to show that his ethical views are the result of "conditioning" by society; in effect, he admits to some good fortune in being born in a society which allows him an apparent satisfaction in the ethical views which result. The concluding section of this chapter ("Nature of Ethics") rises to such "moral" enthusiasm as the limiting character of his thesis permits:

. . . there are no rules by means of which we could discover a purpose, or a meaning, of the universe. There is some hope that the history of mankind will be progressive and lead to a better-adjusted human society, although there are strong tendencies to the contrary. To believe that the physical universe is progressive in the human sense, is absurd. The universe follows the laws of physics, not moral commands. We have been able to a certain extent to employ the laws of physics to our own advantage. That some day we shall control larger parts of the universe is not impossible, though none too probable. It is more likely that finally the human race will die with the planet on which its life began.

Whenever there comes a philosopher who tells you he has found the ultimate truth, do not trust him. If he tells you that he knows the ultimate good, or has a proof that the good must become reality, do not trust him, either. The man merely repeats the errors which his predecessors have committed for two thousand years. It is time to put an end to this brand of philosophy. Ask the philosopher to be as modest as the scientist; then he may become as successful as the man of science. But do not ask him what you should do. Open your ears to your own will, and try to unite your will with that of others. There is no more purpose or meaning in the world than you put into it.

In one other place in the book is a bit of moral fervor: "Let us throw away the crutches we needed for walking, let us stand on our own feet and trust our volitions, not because they are secondary ones, but because they are our own volitions. Only a distorted morality can argue that our will is bad if it is not the response to a command from another source."

The interesting thing about what Reichenbach says is that *some* idealists would not find it difficult to build a metaphysical foundation, agreeable to idealistic assumptions, under at least some of the corners of his platform. He would

probably regard this as a somewhat perverse coincidence (as attractive as Communist "support" would be to a forward-looking Democrat, a week before elections), but we poor Idealists can't help things like that. If the Materialists insist upon being "objective" or "functional" Idealists, they'll have to take the consequences.

The first part of Mr. Reichenbach's book is devoted to criticism of the Idealist position. Plato is the first notable offender. Plato's ethic derives from the need of human beings to conform their lives to the "Ideal" world, where alone perfection can exist. The philosopher, by reason, intuition and mystic perception, seeks acquaintance with the ideal world, in order to find direction for existence in this one. The analogue of ethical perfection or ideal reality lies in mathematics. The perfection of mathematical propositions and proofs can never be realized in the physical world, where everything is at best only approximate by comparison. Physical measurement and construction can never achieve the pure conclusions of mathematics, so that the truth of things real must be sought in the world of ideal forms. Hence the term Idealism to describe any sort of transcendental philosophy—which assumes that some vision, either plain or obscure, may be had of what ought to be, as contrasted with what is.

But, Reichenbach argues, we now know more about mathematics than Plato knew. Mathematics, he says, is empty of "ideal" implications. It may be made to apply to all possible worlds and to give an account of wholly imaginary relationships. Mathematics is not charged with "values" representing the true world of extension; instead, it is a wholly neutral tool of the mathematician or scientist. Neither mathematics nor any other form of knowledge can help in settling the problems of ethics, "because," Reichenbach says, "it cannot provide directives."

Therefore Plato's hope of an ethics founded on ideal forms, as construction in the physical world is founded on mathematical forms, breaks

down when the analogy of mathematics breaks down.

It follows from this sort of argument that ethical principles must always be improvisations by human beings, and never something discovered in Nature. Nature has no ethical principles to reveal, the doctrine of "natural right" is a myth invented to justify the revolutions of the eighteenth century.

Logic is like mathematics. So far as "truth" is concerned, logic is a vast system of tautology. It only unwraps for inspection what was there in the first place, in the premises.

Ethics, in Reichenbach's view, will result from the jostling competition of human motives or volitions in the market-places of life. One who wishes to study ethics, he says, should ignore the philosophers and "go where moral issues are fought out," learning "what it means to set his volition against that of other persons and what it means to adjust oneself to group will." Most of what are now believed to be "moral problems," he thinks, will be solved by reference to facts through pursuit of social science or other branches of scientific inquiry.

If you argue that all the distinguished men who have been idealists, from Socrates to Gandhi, cannot have been wholly deceived, he will tell you that, alas, they *were* deceived; that their contribution is great, but only in the realm of poetry. You can make lots of rhetorical arguments against Mr. Reichenbach's position, but you will not touch him unless you go back to the main question: *Is there any ground in Reality or Nature for ethical first principles?*

If you are going to disagree successfully with Mr. Reichenbach, this is the question you must argue with him. What this book on the philosophy of science requires of its Idealist readers is that they expose their principles in the form of primary convictions instead of sentiments or less daring implications of those principles.

The point, here, is that Idealists may be emboldened by the daring of Mr. Reichenbach and the others who press to its ultimate implications the scientific viewpoint. To hope that the whole world will some day become thoroughly "scientific" in their sense is to advocate outrage and mutilation of what are now normal human feelings. It is to deny the validity of most of our "intuitions" and to declare with a finality as "absolute" as that of any extravagant Idealist's claims that there is no meaning, no purpose, in the universe. (Between saying that the world has no meaning and saying that we cannot discover it there is a distinction, but no difference.)

If the logical positivists can insist that the world is meaningless, the Idealists need not be shy in making a counter assertion, even if they lack an armament such as the scientific method.

But from this point onward, the way of the Idealist is hazardous. The existence of Materialism and Logical Positivism is today a great and impressive historical reproof of Idealist follies and presumptions. The measure of those follies and presumptions is precisely the extreme to which scientific philosophers like Mr. Reichenbach are driven in order to escape, once and for all, from the consequences of Idealism as we have known and practiced it.

In general, however, an Idealist might affirm as a not unreasonable proposition that a world of ethical law or "reality" may exist in some kind of relation to the world of physical law, he may say that man is a being who lives in both worlds; that a dim sense of their ethical being dawns on human beings and produces all the wealth of ethical speculation and works of religious and philosophic genius; that the attempt to give to ethical truth the same *kind* of limiting certainty that is possible for truths about the physical world has led to incalculable confusion in religion, philosophy, morals, politics, and every phase of human relations; that we are mere infants in ethical perception, but that we do possess the germs of ethical knowledge; that intuitions of "ideal" human

behavior need not be branded as delusions because we are so unsuccessful in giving them rational development; that just as hypocrisy is a covert tribute to virtue, so are the follies of Idealism testimony to a vision as yet imperfectly perceived.

But since ideal truth is admittedly obscure, unlike the public truths of science, the Idealists might easily agree—indeed, should agree—that "Everybody is entitled to set up his own imperatives," although they might alter the rest of Mr. Reichenbach's rule to say, "and to respect the imperatives of others as well as they can." There will be collision and conflict, here, just as for the materialists; but there will also be occasion for "uniting one's will with others." The Idealists, if they have any sense, will be willing to practice empiricism with the empiricists, but they will also practice another sort of investigation on their own, having, therefore, two methods of reaching for valid ethical views instead of only one. Mr. Reichenbach is really getting after the "absolutists" in Idealist ethics, and not the humbler souls who do not pant to control the lives of others according to some "Divine Plan." The Idealist who wants to write an ethical program for others is not an Idealist at all, but a Materialist in Idealist's clothing, a wolf among the lambs.

REVIEW

DEBATE ON MYSTICISM

OUR review of Prof. Clark Moustakas' volume, *The Self*—a symposium on "Explorations in Personal Growth"—has doubtless raised questions in the minds of some readers. The selections from the writings of Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, A. H. Maslow, and others, all place great emphasis on the superiority of "intuition" over scientific analysis. As one critic has put it—Charles M. Harsh, in *Contemporary Psychology* for last January:

In adding up the gleanings from his contributors, Moustakas apparently favors the mystic side. One can "know" the self, but cannot communicate about it. Each self is unique and unified, yet it is unnecessary to prove uniqueness or to define unity. Self-actualization is good, response to learned motives is bad; yet we should not ask how to distinguish these behaviors. A healthy person can "feel" the difference.

If this implication is correct, the scientific study of personality—or at least of the self—is futile.

One significant value of *The Self, Explorations in Personal Growth* is that its opposition to "scientific method" as the only proper method of truth-seeking does not originate from any theological or doctrinal system. And Dr. Moustakas is not, of course, "against" the scientific method, but is simply seeking balance. W. Furness Thompson, in the *Saturday Review* for Sept. 7, gives several reasons why "intuition" needs to be given its due:

Did you ever read a scientific paper that begins, "For no good reason at all I had a hunch that . . ." or "I was just fooling around one day when . . ."? No sir! Seldom does a trace of anything haphazard, anything *human*, appear in published reports of research experiments. The scientific paper will more likely begin: "In view of recent evidence concerning the Glockenspiel theory, it seemed advisable to conduct. . . ." And the report will go on to describe a carefully thought-out experiment that followed not only a logical but also a chronological order. *This* was done, *this* resulted, therefore *these* conclusions were suggested. Scientific tradition demands that

scientific papers follow that formal progression: method first, results second, conclusion third. The rules permit no hint that, as often happens, the method was really made up as the scientist went along, or that accidental results determined the method, or that the scientist reached certain conclusions before the results were all in, or that he *started out with* certain conclusions, or that he started doing a different experiment.

Much scientific writing not only misrepresents the workings of science but also does a disservice to scientists themselves. By writing reports that make scientific investigations sound as unvarying and predictable as a pavan, scientists tend to promulgate the curious notion that science is infallible. That many of them are unconscious of the effect they create does not alter the image in the popular mind. We hear time and again of the superiority of the "scientific method." In fact, the word "unscientific" has almost become a synonym for "untrue." Yet the final evaluation of any set of data is an individual, subjective judgment; and all human judgment is liable to error. Thoughtful scientists realize all this; but you wouldn't gather so from reading most scientific literature. A pompous, stilted style too often seizes the pen of the experimenter the moment he starts putting words on paper.

Prof. Moustakas' concern has a different origin, yet in both instances one can sympathize with the view that modern man needs more encouragement to believe that he can find his own truth. Moustakas writes:

In essential being, the creative process itself is important. The person who does not use his intrinsic creativity is *motivated* by compulsive drives to success, competition, and achievement and *adjusts* to unhealthy norms and standards. His life, his entire existence depend upon other persons. In the healthy person autonomy, self-direction is the guide, not adjustment and popularity.

Adjustment is not a *positive* assertion of self; it does not indicate what we are living for, but points toward a giving in to external pressures, of leading a life apart from intrinsic nature and moral values. Adjustment leaves us without a positive expression of what is good, only the acceptance of good as the average or the absence of bad.

The tendency to maintain an existent or "safe" state is characteristic of sick people, a sign of anomaly and decay of life. The tendency in healthy

life is toward self-expression, activity, and progress. While adjustment and stabilization are perhaps good because they cut pain, they are also bad because development toward higher ideals, ordering and creation ceases.

Nevertheless, Mr. Harsh's critical review of *The Self* does establish one important point. Most of the contributors to the Moustakas volume, however much they recall Emerson's essay on "Self Reliance," fail to match Emerson's "forceful suggestions as to how integrity and nonconformity can be developed." The proper rejoinder to this is probably that one must first believe that integrity can be discovered within oneself before its development is attempted. And the mysticism Mr. Harsh finds "resurgent" is a constructive rather than a dangerous variety of "mysticism." The Moustakas book, while appearing to criticize the "scientific method," does not really assert that the tools of impartial analysis are to be feared or distrusted. The central argument, actually, is that there is great need, in the modern sciences, for finding larger ways of being impartial and objective. As J. B. Rhine has pointed out, it is logically ridiculous to maintain that the scientific method can in no way be applied to the possibility of human immortality—nor would this be true even if Dr. Rhine's laboratory data were not available. Essentially, much that is praiseworthy about "scientific method" is simply the attitude of conscientiously withheld judgment.

Nor is the withholding of judgment a merely neutral or negative accomplishment. The *reason* for "withholding judgment" is that one senses the possibility of new reference points which will alter the interpretation of data already at our disposal. The true scientist is always trying to draw a larger spiral around the circular systems of meaning he has already developed—in other words, his intuition makes him reach for a higher synthesis. The man who has stopped looking for a higher synthesis is no longer motivated by the spirit of science. Furness Thompson is good on this point:

In talking to some scientists, particularly younger ones, you might gather the impression that

they find the "scientific method" a substitute for imaginative thought. I've attended research conferences where a scientist has been asked what he thinks about the advisability of continuing a certain experiment. The Scientist has frowned, looked at the graphs, and said "the data are still inconclusive." "We know that," the men from the budget office have said, "but what do you think? Is it worth while going on? What do you think we might expect?" The scientist has been shocked at having even been asked to speculate. What this amounts to, of course, is that the scientist has become the victim of his own propaganda.

So we continue to think that books such as Rhine's *Reach of the Mind*, David L. Watson's *Scientists are Human*, the recently reviewed *Beyond the Five Senses*, edited by Eileen Garrett, and the Moustakas collection illustrate a widening area of investigation of the nature of mind. To divorce "intuition" from "scientific method," as Prof. Moustakas appears to do, is merely to criticize an interpretation of "scientific method" which belongs to the past. Man can no more be scientifically creative without reliance on intuitive sources of inspiration than he can proceed in development of a theory without due attention to careful reasoning. Of course, one may finally reach that "higher synthesis" to which we hopefully alluded. Religions, then, as we know them, will probably no longer seem necessary, for conventional religion has served chiefly as a substitute for both reason and integrity—substituting belief for reason, and someone else's alleged intuitions for our own.

COMMENTARY

THE AIRY CURVE . . .

MR. REICHENBACH asks the philosopher to be as modest as the scientist." How modest is that? You can equate "modesty" with the kind of certainty which the scientist claims for his laboratory findings. Most scientists practice a traditional or formal modesty in stating a theory. The conventions of the scientific method require it. A scientist does not assert a "truth" without giving an account of the experimental procedures by which he has arrived at proof.

This is modesty within the scope of the scientific method.

But then there is the claim that there are no truths to be discovered save those which submit to the scientific method, as currently practiced. Is this "modesty"?

No one, we think, has contributed more clarity to such questions than Ortega y Gasset. We quote, once again, a passage from *Toward a Philosophy of History*:

Scientific truth is characterized by its exactness and the certainty of its predictions. But these admirable qualities are contrived by science at the cost of remaining on a plane of secondary problems, leaving intact the ultimate and decisive questions. . . . science is but a small part of the human mind and organism. If the physicist detains, at the point where his method ends, the hand with which he delineates the facts the human being behind each physicist prolongs the line thus begun and carries it on to its termination, as an eye beholding an arch in ruins will of itself complete the missing airy curve. . . .

The past century, resorting to all but force, tried to restrict the human mind within the limits set to exactness. Its violent effort to turn its back on last problems is called agnosticism. But such endeavor seems neither fair nor sensible. That science is incapable of solving in its own way those fundamental questions is no sufficient reason for slighting them as did the fox with the high-hung grapes, or for calling them myths and urging us to drop them altogether. How can we live turning a deaf ear to the last dramatic questions? Where does the world come from and whither is it going? Which is

the supreme power of the cosmos, what the essential meaning of life? We cannot breathe confined to a realm of secondary and intermediate themes. We need a comprehensive perspective, foreground and background, not a maimed scenery, a horizon stripped of infinite distances. . . . We are given no escape from last questions. In one fashion or another they are in us, whether we like it or not.

It seems a pity that agreement with Ortega must produce a petty quarrel with "science," or with some of its advocates. The spirit of science is larger than such bickering, which of itself narrows the mind.

So far as we can see, instead of being "modest," the logical-positivist view is a carefully hedged advertisement of a "sure thing." Its modesty is only technical. What is sought is a sure escape from the hazards of speculation and subjectivism. What is obtained is only a vigorous denial of being human, since being human can never be a sure thing.

Divine Revelation offered one kind of sure thing. The techniques of "method" offer another kind. Both demand sacrifice of all other quests for certainty. For the social order, both imply collectivist forms of organization and authority. They worship at very different shrines, but the end-result, for the individual, is the same. Ultimately, Scripture, or The Method, is dictator. Both are means by which men trick themselves into believing doctrines of conformity. Both invite philosophy, not to modesty, but to suicide.

How have these mutilations of the mind become so popular? This is the sort of question with which the history of philosophy should be concerned.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTES

THE following letter from a teen-ager seems to merit being printed in full. If the language on occasion sounds extravagant, this may be because too many adults, like ourselves, shy away from the broad statements which indicate clarity of hope or faith. And, from any standpoint, a teenager is thoroughly justified in pointing out that, no matter how important his concern, he is unable because of his age to influence public policy save by letter. Mr. Dennis Weeks writes as follows:

Editors, MANAS: Having recently become acquainted with MANAS, I want to take this opportunity to inform you and your readers of a movement which may prove vital to the survival of the human race. At any rate, its failure, and the failure of other similar movements, would seem to me to be a small-scale failure of the Judeo-Christian ethic in modern democratic society.

For this reason I am interested in doing all I can to prevent such failure. I am, I suppose, an anarcho-pacifist, although in this movement I want the cooperation of others who are not necessarily of this line of thought. The movement with which I am connected is an anti-nuclear-weapons drive with a new twist added to it. I am a teen-ager, and, together with some friends of mine, I have drawn up and circulated a petition for the abolition of all nuclear tests.

The text of the petition reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, as teen-agers, are unable to vote for the people who we feel will best advance our interests and ideals. Therefore it is our intent to make our views known to the leaders who have been chosen by others, yet who hold our future as Americans in their hands. We are troubled by our nation's stand on nuclear weapons. Due to the danger to future generations from radioactive fallout, the ignorance and strife of scientists over the problem, and the world tension produced, we feel we must stop testing them, whether Russia cooperates or not, but we must stop immediately. This will give Russia a challenge she dare not ignore and prove to the world we want peace. There is no middle road. We urge you, as the President of the United States, to give this

petition your most careful and serious consideration and then to act to the extent of your ability."

This petition drive is entirely non-Communist in nature. We make no racial or religious distinctions; our only distinction is the age limit—only people between the ages of 12 and 21 may sign. They must be non-voting citizens of the United States—in some states, therefore, the age limit is 18. Anyone who meets these requirements is requested to sign the petition. It is planned that we will send all the petitions together to the President on Christmas, so time is short. All persons who are teen-agers themselves, or who know many teen-agers, are asked to contact me and circulate these petitions. Write to:

DENNIS WEEKS

409 Tilton Park Drive
DeKalb, Illinois

In our first, hasty scanning of this letter, we misread the meaning of the sentence wherein the writer regrets that those in his age category are "unable to vote for the people we feel will best advance our interests and ideals." We thought Dennis Weeks meant that the most instructive influences in our national cultural life are not chosen or determined by ballot. Just how do you encourage the influence of a Joseph Wood Krutch, a Robert M. Hutchins, an Erich Fromm, a Norman Cousins, or a Dwight Macdonald? It has often seemed to us that "basic education" in the home should involve a determined effort by the parents to introduce adolescents to the thoughts of such writers. If someone like our young correspondent can get a ball rolling in the manner he apparently has, he is also far and away old enough to appreciate the work of these and similar men, and to bring them up in class discussion. The philosophers and the psychologists, the naturalists and the humanitarians, need to be recognized as the true "elite" of ours or any land. They come the closest to Plato's conception of "philosopher kings," and say the things which, if our intuitions are alive, sound the most like ourselves talking to ourselves.

* * *

The following letter recalls our Oct. 16 discussion of education in various countries. The writer, an Englishman, has had intimate experience with schools in France, Scotland and Germany, and has seen five children through the fateful years of "educational decision" to successful maturity—and each one has

mixed the benefits of English schools with those obtained by association with students and teachers from other lands:

Editors, Children . . . and Ourselves: Terminology is the first fence that has to be taken when the theme is education in America and England, for much confusion can result without knowledge of what is meant by certain terms. The first of these is "Public School," the second "Prep School," the third, "State School." An English Public School, such as Winchester, Eton, Harrow, Rugby and many more, are private schools. They were, in their origin, charitable foundations, and in the course of time their character has been transformed, so that they are available, like Stillwater Cove Ranch School, only to the well-to-do. A Prep School is a private school that takes small boys and prepares them for entrance to the Public Schools, whose youngest members are around 13 and whose oldest about 19. The Public Schools prepare boys for the universities, mainly for Oxford and Cambridge, these being associated with the same class colouring as the schools named. State schools are of three kinds, the Grammar School, into which a child passes from the State Primary school at about eleven, by an examination including psychological tests, now much criticised, and failing in this, passes into a State Modern school, or a State Technical school. There is, under the State educational system as it has developed since the War, yet another type of school which combines the characteristics of the three types of State school just enumerated: this is known as the Comprehensive school.

In passing, a word about what the great Public Schools do for boys. The best of them give a first-class education. Winchester, Eton and Harrow, but three examples, have provided England with many Prime Ministers, generals, scientists, philosophers and men of action. The basic principle of these schools is Character before intellectual brilliance. The boy must feel that he is not a very important little fellow, whereas the honour of his House (the schools are divided for organizational and personal direction into Houses under a senior master) is everything, and, it follows, the honour of his school, and it follows again, in later life, the honour of his calling and of his country.

On the other side, it may be said in criticism that too much stress is laid on the suppression of emergent sexual urges; and too often, where the clerical element dominates the teaching staff, much preachification may result sense of guilt.

Preparatory schools, such as Cheam, are, happily, on the way out. They remain as anachronisms in this age, which makes it surprising that the heir to the Throne should have been placed in a school of that sort. No doubt Cheam has its virtues, but it is a dreary institution by any standard and resorts to the cane for small boys, whereas, as Bertrand Russell has said, the cane is the lazy master's way out. The point of entry for good sense and wisdom is at the other end of the human anatomy.

Do these great Public Schools (Eton, Harrow, etc.) produce snobs? I do not believe it and say so from observation. I have known many men from those and similar schools, but none were snobs. What such schools do pass on to the boy is great pride in his school. This leads to the innocent cult of the school tie, which is no more snobbish than a Yale banner, say.

In England class distinctions are complex and scarcely understandable by anyone who has not been brought up in the country. Though many factors may determine a person's class, there is one overriding factor, namely, accent. A man who speaks good English, whatever his school, his family background, is not likely to find a social bar up against him anywhere. But an Old Etonian with, let us suppose—the improbable—a Cockney accent, would find himself handicapped in most professions, and in particular in such as call for public speech.

Of general educational ideas that have rooted in England in the last three decades, the Dalton System, which came to us from America, has left the most wide-spread mark. As this system will, no doubt, be familiar to most readers of MANAS I will not say more of it than that it aims at achieving a correlation between discipline, in the conventional sense of that term, with *intrinsic discipline*, that is, balanced self-discipline wherein the will of the child is not in conflict with authority and submissive only by reason of *force majeure*, but is self-generated.

Somewhat loose, I trust these notes on your own observations on education, and, in particular, with regard to the important subject of the use of the hands in skilful work, may be of some value to readers.

FRONTIERS

The Unimportance of Money

EVERY man (or woman), if he is to achieve any sort of success as a human being, must at some point in his life declare to himself that money is unimportant, and he must mean it—that is, the declaration cannot be an expression of "sour grapes." Until a man is able to do this—and very few of us are—he holds his possessions illegitimately. Until then, he only confirms Proudhon's dictum that property is theft. He may have possessions legitimately as a free enterpriser or as a partisan champion of the current economic theory, but he cannot have them legitimately as a philosopher.

Now this proposition—which is not of a sort to win friends and influence people—is probably corollary of some more profound verity, but at the moment it does not seem too important to trace it to an ultimate principle. There is not a great interest in ultimate principles, these days, but we have a very great interest in money. Thus talk about "ultimates" is likely to miss the point.

Money is a convenience, and it is no more than that. The fact that it *seems* to be necessary to have a great deal of money in order to do a great deal of good is an appearance which results because so many people are firmly convinced that you must have money in order to do good. So we are confronted not only with a delusion, but also with an elaborately complex environment created by the delusion, suggesting that the delusion is an ancient truth written in the stars, inscribed on the rocks, and whispered by the wind. What is the proof of the power of this delusion? Nearly all the people who advertise that they are doing good go about collecting money. The first thing you must find in order to do good is a skillful fund-raiser.

And when you have the funds, what then? Usually, the funds dictate the policy of the good-doing. *They* are the power and the glory, and not the good, which is only a derived and secondary reality. The good-doing tends to be compromised

at the very outset by the requirements of fund-raising. Money is not particularly intelligent. People with money are not particularly worthy. This is of course a secret you do not disclose. If you are a skillful fundraiser, you take the money and you flatter the donor; or if conscience prevents you from flattering the donor, you place no obstacles in the way of the donor's desire to flatter himself.

Now this, you may say, is all very cynical. No, it is only partly cynical; or it is only partly cynical if you go on to say that *some* money is dispensed by men of intelligence who see the point in the good that is to be done, who do not want flattery and would not give you money if you tried to flatter them. But a lot of the time—probably most of the time—people give money to get other people to do things they cannot do themselves; and a lot of the time, too, the people who give the money do not understand very well the good that is to be done, or exactly why it is good. In this case, they grasp the "good" obscurely or irrelevantly, in the same way that conventions are grasped. Money always understands conventional language. The conventions are respectful toward money and money is respectful toward the conventions. Conventions are a kind of commonplace shorthand or symbol of the good which "everybody" knows is good. A convention is often a principle which has forgotten its origin, or a virtue which has become merely a habit. Money is labor with the sweat wiped away; it is energy which has been wholly dehumanized and made infinitely flexible. With money, people think, you can do *anything*. It has none of the oddities of the human beings who made it.

So the good you do with money suffers distinct limitations simply because it is done with money.

There are ways, of course, to take the curse off money. Sometimes people who give money give it to a man who commands an overpowering respect. He is given the money to do what he pleases with it. Anything *he* does with it, the

argument goes, is bound to be good. Sometimes this is true, and sometimes it is not. Sometimes a fine intuitive line of mutual trust and understanding unites the donor and the instrument of good. In this case there is seldom a question of the money making it possible for some person to do good. The money only enables him to do more widely the good he has been doing without money, or with very little. When this is understood—that money is a mechanical, not a moral, facility—then money is a great thing. But it is not, in itself, a force for good. The good is in the vision of the human beings involved and exists nowhere else.

What a pity it is that anyone should suppose people can be hired to be original, to be creative, or to do good! What a terrible mistranslation of the meaning of good!

It is as bad as supposing that you can make a country secure by having more and better nuclear weapons. It is not "as bad as"—it is "the same as."

A certain irony, and also a certain paradox, attaches to this situation. The irony is that, usually, the wrong people get the money that is meant to do good. The paradox is that the only people that can really use money for authentic good are the people who believe that money is unimportant!

What happens to well-meaning people who think that money is important? This happens to them: They come to believe that they can do no good without money, which means that they can do no good without getting money, which means that they can do nothing which interferes with getting money, which means that they shy away from and oppose any idea, attitude, or action which might have a tendency to intimidate, bewilder or belittle the sources where money is obtained. This makes getting money and doing good practically the same thing. If a man comes to think this way, an unqualified corruption afflicts his soul. He has sterilized whatever capacity he once had for doing good, if he ever had it.

You can't hire a man to do good. Doing good is a species of genius, and you can't hire genius. Sometimes, with luck, you can free a genius from harassments by using money, but what a genius can *do* has no price. You can't hire artists or geniuses or teachers. The values these people represent have absolutely no relation to money, and no relation, even, to physical circumstances or environment. There is no proper and predictable environment in which genius will flower, nor where education will take place, unless it be the environment of honesty and integrity, and you can't buy honesty and integrity and make a stage-setting out of them. Nor can you make honesty and integrity easy to achieve. You can do absolutely nothing about the really important values, so far as other people are concerned. You can only look after your own values, such as they are.

It comes down to the simple fact that the good that men do gets done by reason of an unalterable conviction of the truth of statements like the Sermon on the Mount. Nothing else will enable you to do good.

It sometimes happens that a small number of people with ideas and some inspiration get together and start doing something worth while for the community, worth while for themselves. It might be a theater, a forum, an elementary school, or a college. For a time, its influence is unique and great. The good it does comes from the spontaneous quality of what the participants contribute. Then, perhaps, some money comes, and the good is indeed multiplied. Then someone who understands money but not genius of the project begins to notice its random character, its lack of sound organization, the utter independence of the workers. To him the whole thing looks like a series of lucky improvisations. He begins to long for organizational instead of conceptual unity. He doesn't *see* the conceptual unity. Meanwhile the project has become somewhat dependent on money. Slowly, what was once a servant—*money*—becomes a power.

Then the well-meaning people who understand money, but not so much of the other matters, become a bit self-righteous. This thing called "spontaneity," or "freedom," is all right in its place, they say, but you need some kind of *control*. Then, like unappreciated saviors, they begin to slaughter the project by giving it "security." They bring the conventions into play. The authority which once sprang from a common recognition of value now develops from status and filters down through the familiar "chain of command." And the transformation of something which was alive, into something dead, is accomplished step by step, without anyone but a few throttled artists knowing what is happening, and even they may not realize what is happening, except that the time has come for them to go away.

This is what money, the need for money, and bigness, can do to a project.

There is nothing wrong with money—nothing at all—in its place. But the only way to keep it in its place is to prefer the things which money can't buy.