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THE BONDAGE OF CONTROVERSY

THAT the heresies of one age become the orthodox beliefs of the next is an observation marked by worldly sagacity, yet it seems worth while to ask if there is no better way for men to improve their opinions. How many of the great men of the past five hundred years, from Copernicus to Einstein, from Martin Luther to Robert G. Ingersoll, were obliged to give expression to their genius either in the vocabulary or against a back ground of violent controversy? And to what extent has the determination to win battles—wholly "righteous" battles, no doubt—determined the choice of weapons, the bending of doctrines, even the interpretations of scientific discoveries, to suit the partisan purposes of controversy?

Perhaps thoughts of this sort haunted Alfred de Musset when he addressed his illustrious predecessor:

> Sleep'st thou content, Voltaire?
> And thy dread smile hovers it still above
> Thy fleshless bones . . . . ?
> Thine age they call too young to understand thee;
> This one should suit thee better—
> Thy men are born!
> And the huge edifice that, day and night, thy great hands undermined,
> Is fallen upon us . . . .

That edifice, it may be, had to fall into the desolate ruin of modern Christendom. The virus of dogmas had bitten too deep for the patient to recover; death and rebirth gave the only possible release from the oppressive weight of a thousand years of blind belief. But what sort of rebirth has taken place? A long list of thinkers, with men like Descartes and David Hume at one end, and John B. Watson at the other, have presided over the birth of modern scientific materialism—the orthodoxy of materialism, that is, which does not include the personal views of a number of eminent scientists—until, today, the typical college-bred individual is as bound by the dogmas of materialism as his ancestors were enthralled by the explicit claims, assertions, and threats of theological Christianity. Bertrand Russell's description of this process (in his Introduction to Lange's *History of Materialism*) is worth repeating:

> Historically, we may regard materialism as a system of dogma set up to combat orthodox dogma. As a rule, the materialistic dogma has not been set up by men who loved dogma, but by men who felt that nothing less definite would enable them to fight the dogmas they disliked. They were in the position of men who raise an army to enforce peace. Accordingly we find that, as ancient orthodoxies disintegrate, materialism more and more gives way to skepticism. At the present day, the chief protagonists of materialism are certain men of science in America and certain politicians in Russia, because it is in those two countries that traditional theology is still powerful.

But what, precisely, is this "Materialism" which was born, historians tell us, of Galileo's "World-Machine," of Descartes' arbitrary division between mind and matter, of Hume's denial of egoity, of the "scientific" theories of human nature fostered by the Enlightenment, of the Darwinian doctrine of the descent of man from the apes, of the Marxist interpretation of history, and last but not least, of the devastating effects of scientific criticism of the contents of the Bible?

To consider the doctrines of Materialism with both justice and understanding, it is necessary to regard them in at least two stages. They first became widely explicit in European thought through the vigorous polemics of men like La Mettrie and Baron d'Holbach. La Mettrie, the notorious author of *Man a Machine*—a book which scandalized all literate Europe of the eighteenth century—declared that only ignorance of the forces of Nature made men take refuge in

the idea of a God. Why should not Nature, he argued, produce everything out of herself? Nature, which is neither "blind chance" nor yet a theological deity, has infinite resources, he maintained, and he referred to the meager science of his day for the evidence of what Nature can accomplish without the help of a deity. Nature, indeed, seems to be La Mettrie's God. Back of La Mettrie's contentions, however, was no malignant antagonism to spiritual ideas, but simply this:

> If Atheism were universally disseminated, all the branches of religion would be torn up by the roots. Then there would be no more theological wars: there would no longer be soldiers of religion, that terrible kind of soldier. Nature, which had been infected by the consecrated poison, would win back her rights and her purity. Deaf to all other voices, men would follow their own individual impulses, and these impulses alone can lead them to happiness along the pleasant path of virtue.

Here, besides the horror of a just and humane man for the religious wars which had again and again turned all Europe into a mutilated and bleeding hulk, we see the optimism of relying on "individual impulse" as the proper antidote to the crimes of religion. But after a thousand years of distortion and suppression of the natural impulses of human beings, through the forbidding dictates of dogma—the claim of the innate sinfulness of man, the teaching of the vicarious atonement, and the brutal threat of eternal damnation—it is hardly remarkable that La Mettrie, and Rousseau also, tended to think that man in his primitive condition (the "noble savage"), without the corruptions of religious institutions, could do no wrong. Here was a kind of "Nature" Pantheism, naïve, perhaps, and without appreciation of the real problem of evil in human life, yet infinitely superior to the debasing conceptions of man and of nature taught by the Church.

This was the first stage of Materialism, which was simply a denial of the anthropomorphic deity of Old Testament religion rather than a rejection of spiritual reality, although the inevitable tendency of La Mettrie, as of his successors, was to seek for a mechanical explanation of all natural phenomena.

It remained for a later generation of thinkers to affirm, categorically and unequivocally, the modern doctrine of materialism. This has been simply put by Chapman Cohen in his *Materialism Re-Stated:*

> . . . the essence of the Materialistic conception is that all the changes in this world of ours, physical, chemical, biological, and psychological, are strictly deterministic in character. The one thing that would be fatal to Materialism would be the necessity for assuming a controlling and directing intelligence at any part of the cosmic process. Against any such necessity we have the whole force of scientific thought. Science has been able to develop only so far as it has set on one side this primitive anthropomorphic conception and worked as though Materialism were an accepted fact. To put the matter in another way: the essential issue is whether it is possible, or is ever likely to be possible, to account for the whole range of natural forces in terms of the composition of forces. That is the principle for which Materialism has always stood. By that principle it stands or falls.

This passage reveals the results of theological imperialism on behalf of Jehovah. In the course of a thousand years or more, the doctors of the Church had built up their God to such absolute omnipotence that belief in any sort of invisible intelligence or power other than Jehovah (or His minions) was regarded as the rankest heresy. It followed that when the revolt came, it was a revolt not merely against the tribal God of the ancient Hebrews, but against any possible conception of intelligence in nature. Lest Jehovah creep back into the picture, only the blind forces acknowledged by physics were permitted to have any reality, and these—called by Chapman Cohen "the composition of forces," and known to others, in Lucretius' phrase, as the "fortuitous concurrence of atoms"—ultimately became responsible, in materialist theory, for all the "miracles" of nature and man, from the shell of the nautilus to a Beethoven symphony.

Materialism, then, is the illegitimate offspring of dogmatic religion, and while it originated in the human longing for freedom and the human determination to have it, in the course of the struggle against the theological monopoly Materialism became almost as dogmatic as traditional religion, and sometimes as ridiculous in its defiance of logic and the primary values of human experience.

Why should anyone, for example, refuse to admit the reality of consciousness? All our thoughts are transactions of consciousness—even the theories of the materialist are expressed in terms of self-consciousness, that is, in speech—yet the prevailing school of psychology in America of some twenty-five years ago outlawed even the word "consciousness" from its discussions and explanations of human behavior! Consciousness, apparently, was regarded as a suspiciously metaphysical relative of theological doctrines: admit consciousness and you have opened the door to angels, devils, goblins, and the whole host of irrational dominions and powers of theology.

But John B. Watson of "Behaviorist" fame, and others of like persuasion, belonged, we may say, to the epigoni of the Materialist School. The great men of Materialism—or those who have been called materialists, unjustly, we think—were rather pantheists in militant rebellion against the theological invention of a personal God. They were freedom-loving, tolerant, but vigorous men who fought against the oppressions of the mind with whatever weapons their times could supply. They would as quickly, we think, fight against the oppressions of soul-denying materialism, were they born into an age where freedom was threatened by powerful and irresponsible interpreters of the "laws of Matter" instead of the "laws of God." Hence it was suggested not long ago, in a MANAS review, that what appears from the works of the giants of freethought—men such as Thomas Paine and Robert G. Ingersoll—

> . . . is the extraordinary surge of humanitarian power and sympathy for all mankind which dominates and even overshadows their skeptical rejection of metaphysical ideas. The love of human beings is itself a kind of unspoken metaphysic; quite conceivably, in another age, when the prevailing moral issues are focussed elsewhere than upon the struggle between freedom of mind and religious superstition and bigotry, men like Paine and Ingersoll would concentrate upon metaphysical affirmation instead of metaphysical denial.

In particular, the temper of a man like Ingersoll might be described by saying that, for him, in a contest between doctrine and freedom, it is the doctrine, and not the freedom, which must give way. Freedom, as we commonly understand it, is both a quality of mind and a condition of life. Completely logical justification of freedom may require roots in metaphysical doctrine, but a man like Ingersoll knows what freedom is without finding it necessary to explain it metaphysically. Such a man may even reject theoretical ideas about freedom while defending it mightily in practical ways. This becomes evident from a discussion of Ingersoll's views by his granddaughter, Mrs. Eva Ingersoll Wakefield, in her Introduction to the recently published volume of Ingersoll Letters (Philosophical Library, 1951):

> Ingersoll was both a believer in scientific determinism and a worshipper of liberty; a philosophical relativist, and a monist. He held with the sublime Spinoza, that "the Universe was One. The Infinite embraced the All," that the universe had no beginning, and will have no end. "It is; from eternity it was; to eternity it will be." This thought gave Ingersoll deep and subtle solace; for man can say to himself: "I am something. Without me, the Infinite cannot exist." The most infinitesimal electron is as necessary to the sum total of things as is the most resplendent galaxy of stars. "The universe is all there is, or was, or will be. It is both subject and object, . . . creator and created, destroyer and destroyed, preserver and preserved, and has within itself all causes, modes, motions and effects." Thus far Spinoza and Ingersoll are in accord in their Monism. However, the latter parted company with the great philosopher when he added that "The All is God"; and consequently, that all is good, because God is all-good and incapable of evil. Ingersoll felt that there is no moral purpose inherent in the universe.

> The only purpose in the universe is that which man himself succeeds in putting into it. . . .
>
> If, by a power making for righteousness is meant "that man, as he becomes civilized, as he becomes intelligent, not only takes advantage of the forces of nature for his own benefit, but perceives more and more clearly that if he is to be happy he must live in harmony with the conditions of his being, ... then Ingersoll agreed, ... But if the idea means that "there is something supernatural back of nature directing events," then, he asserted, "there can by no possibility be any evidence of the existence of such a power." Is it possible that "infinite goodness would create a world in which life feeds on life, in which everything devours and is devoured? Can there be a sadder fact than this, that innocence is not a certain shield?," he asked, out of the depths of his tender heart.

Here, one may say, is recorded the implicit metaphysics of a man who, because of his uncompromising opposition to anti-human theology, had given little attention to the philosophical development of his first principles. Ingersoll's *first* concern was with the rights of man—his rights as a self-reliant thinker as well as a free citizen—and philosophizing would have to wait. There is interesting measure of the inner strength of Ingersoll in the fact that he could find "solace" in the idea of the Infinite as containing All, with himself as a "part" or rather expression of it. Only men who are naturally philosophers are able to obtain peace and serenity from so abstract a conception—although, to Ingersoll, the idea of the Infi**n**ite could not have been an "abstraction," but was rather an inward sense of the unity of the living, pulsating Whole.

The curious anomaly of his simultaneous belief in both "scientific determinism" and "liberty" is worthy of special note. One would suppose that belief in determinism would logically lead a man to fatalism in thought and action. After all, if we are but the product of "the complement of forces," the idea of trying to determine our actions for ourselves has little encouragement from reason. Even our sense of identity is something of an idle trick of nature, if that identity is powerless to act as an independent agent. But this type of "consistency" was ignored by Ingersoll, just as it was by Clarence Darrow, another exceptional man of much the same philosophical persuasion and much the same philanthropic career. Ingersoll fought for freedom all his life, *as if* man were a free agent in theory as well as in justice and common sense.

So, in the long run, it becomes evident that Ingersoll was rather an anti-supernaturalist than an anti-metaphysician. And it seems reasonable to assert that only because supernaturalism and theology represent the perversion of metaphysics did Ingersoll apparently oppose metaphysical ideas.

Perhaps the profoundest of Ingersoll's philosophical perceptions lay in his refusal to admit the "goodness" of God. (It might have been some comfort to him, in his admiration of Spinoza, to have known, as Mosheim has pointed out, that Spinoza, who composed his major work in Dutch, had written "Nature" in all the places where the word "God" now appears, and that his translator changed "Nature" to "God" throughout the text of the *Ethics*, in order to protect the philosopher from persecution by the authorities.) The shallow optimism of the "goodness of God" is the fatal weakness of all "sweetness-and-light" philosophies. The evil in the world is a terrible reality. As Ingersoll observed in a letter to Traubel:

> I think Shakespeare understood Nature as it is, and looked upon human life as a tragedy. He also knew that the tragedy has a comical side; and in addition to this, he knew that nothing is as terrible as laughter frozen by fate.
>
> I think that Shakespeare thought this the worst of all possible worlds—and probably the best of all possible worlds. . . .

Ingersoll, in short, was agnostic in relation to the great problem of good and evil—he knew it was the all-encompassing problem of life, yet he refused to take the "easiest way out" by accepting a personal God as the "Author of all good," or a personal devil as the source of all evil. This, for

Ingersoll, was both a blasphemy against Nature and an attack on the dignity of man. His rudimentary metaphysics had no solution for this problem, but ignorance, he felt, was better than misleading pretense to truth.

But what if Ingersoll had not been persuaded that science was the royal road to knowledge—the science of the laws of matter, of his day and age? To this, perhaps, an answer is implied in Mrs. Wakefield's Introduction to the *Letters:*

> However, he {Ingersoll} shared the uncritical faith of the nineteenth century in science as the essential basis for human well-being and progress. In his identification of science with truth, he saw no conflict between science and ethics. He never dreamed that this marvelous new instrument of knowledge would be divorced from moral responsibility, to threaten man with destruction at his own hands. He recognized only the conflict between science and orthodox religion; and he was confident that science would triumph, and eliminate the last barrier to the achievement of the good and just society.

It would be a mistake to say that the science in which Ingersoll placed his faith has failed, just as it would be wrong to say that the religion of spiritual inspiration has failed—or had failed in Ingersoll's time. The failure belonged to the corrupters of religion, to the prostituters of science, and to the spirit of partisanship and opportunism in both camps, during the long struggle between both dogmatic religion and scientific materialism.

But we, if we had to choose, would swap a thousand St. Francises or St. Augustines for a single Bob Ingersoll, for the love of freedom and the love of intellectual honesty were strong in him, and upon these qualities all final knowing of the truth depends.

Letter from ENGLAND

LONDON.—Diderot, eighteenth-century French philosopher, advised his contemporaries: "Yes, my dear brethren in criticism, take my word for it, our judgments are too much of a single piece; we should learn to bring more freedom into them."

Diderot was one of the authors of the modern spirit, and his views, it might be supposed, should make for toleration and liberty; but, in fact, the whole man is still regarded as merely a creature of the natural world. Many consequences flow from this point of view. Among them are the endless debates on freedom and what it means, now going on in a world of diminishing liberty. On the English radio network talks have been going on in recent months about "The Definition of Liberty." The results were quite inconclusive—very much as if one were to discuss the apparatus of breathing in a room from which air is being persistently expelled!

The professor of Mathematics at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, for instance, argues that man is born "a mere bag of skin and bone," and that "society proceeds to make him as it proceeds to make boots or bombs." On this basis, Dr. H. Levi goes on to suggest that the first step towards liberty is the recognition of what the Marxist calls "the iron necessity of social survival," and the second, the planned use of the technological and social sciences as "the instruments of freedom." Such recognition and use will, he believes, avert international catastrophe. It does not seem to worry Dr. Levi that such scientific "processing" of the human being would inevitably lead to the gaol of the security police in order that our conditioning may be complete!

Only one other speaker in the series need be mentioned. Mr. Rex Warner, novelist and author, insisted that there is nothing self-evident about the belief that liberty is a good thing or that the possession of it is likely to increase our happiness. He then proceeded to ask why people are, in fact, quite often ready to give up their freedom. His short answer was that they do so in the desire for material or spiritual security or both. But freedom and discipline (he said) are not the same thing: "What gives meaning to our lives and to our civilizations is still this impossibility—freedom of the individual. The idea will begin to seem less of an impossibility when we imagine the individual as bound up with other individuals in relationships that are on a higher plane than those of politics or of mere organisation."

If anything is clear from current discussion on this age-old subject, it is that the conflict which we see everywhere has its source in the mind of man himself. " 'Society' is nothing more than the concept of the symbiosis of a group of human beings. A concept is not a carrier of life. The sole and natural carrier of life is the individual, and this holds true throughout nature." So spoke Dr. Carl Jung at a meeting of Swiss psychotherapists in 1941, and everything that has happened since reinforces the truth of his words.

If we repeat with Confucius, in our efforts to preserve liberty, "return good for good, for evil—justice," we need to be quite sure about the nature of justice, and to feel that it is within the power of every human being to practice it in his own circle of influence. There is nothing legalistic or diplomatic in the conception. With Plato, we had better perhaps ask questions about it. We may then find, also with him, that we are in for a discussion of the whole meaning and basis of morality, with implications of behavior and neighbourliness. And, with East meeting West, we are more than likely to conclude that an Indian philosopher is right when he says: "While resolved to renounce nothing, this generation wishes to enjoy the fruits of renunciation." And, to get rid of fear and to show justice, we shall try, in our own lives, to practice *abhaya* and *ahimsa*—awareness and the fellow-feeling for all living things—said to be the natural fruit of the spiritual life.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
WITH THE LIGHTER THINKERS

DURING the past five or ten years, a number of popular writers have been turning into amateur social philosophers and critics. They haven't been writing heavy tomes, but a current of commentary has been entering their works in a way that suggests that they are unable to keep it out. We have in mind writers like Philip Wylie, Nevil Shute, Geoffrey Household—and even Dorothy L. Sayers, although Miss Sayers' contribution was an essay in defense of orthodox Christianity rather than a new "line" in her detective story thrillers.

This "trend"—if it is a trend—seems quite different from the "social content" novels of the 1930's. The tendentious tales of the golden decade of radicalism were part of an ideological movement and program, whereas the writers we are talking about do not seem to fancy themselves as part of the *avant garde* of the coming social revolution. They are simply persons who have been noticeably successful in writing for the entertainment of their readers, and who, having had occasion to look around at the world they were writing for, and about, found it not good. In a way, their questioning is reminiscent of a rather remarkable editorial which appeared in *Fortune* for January, 1940. *Fortune is* certainly as representative of the successful and complacent members of our civilization as the writers who cater to the desire for "relaxation" and entertainment through light reading, yet in this editorial, the *Fortune* editors sound a little like a corporate Savonarola of the twentieth century, despite lavish offices in Rockefeller Center:

> . . . the solutions to material problems are not to be found in materialism. This is just as true as the fact that democracy is not merely a collection of political bodies. By no conceivable set of circumstances could materialism have produced the great "solution" of the eighteenth century that we have come to know as the American system. The American system has its origin, on the one hand, in passionate religious sects who believed in the spiritual absolutes that today are lacking; and on the other hand in those rationalists of the Golden Age of the American colonies for whom Reason was not merely mechanistic but divine. Similarly, by no conceivable set of circumstances will it be possible to solve by materialism the titanic problems, domestic and international, with which humanity is faced today. The ultimate answers to the questions that humanity raises are not, and never have been, in the flesh. . . . if these matters are left in the hands of the laity, to be solved on basically materialistic grounds, a gradual devolution will set in, and civilization, instead of going forward so breathlessly, will seem to recede.. . . . so long as the Church pretends, or assumes to preach, absolute values, but actually preaches relative and secondary values, it will merely hasten this process of disintegration. . . .

Thus *Fortune,* spokesman for the intelligent, prosperous, yet obviously somewhat disturbed "laity," who feel that somewhere, somehow, the Church has let us down. Genuine values, *Fortune* suggests, are missing from our civilization, but *Fortune* will not presume to tell us what those values are.

The *Fortune* editorial is nevertheless a symbol of the default of moral leadership in the modern world. And the fact that novelists and popular story-tellers are looking up from their work of entertaining the bored middle classes, and are composing little gospels of change, revolt and reform, is evidence of the same great lack. These little gospels are not terribly impressive, although we confess considerable fondness for Mr. Shute's effort in *Round the Bend.* On the whole, they represent criticism from *within* the System, and we are inclined to believe that criticism from within the System is never good enough. To see the System whole, one must break with it entirely—break with it consciously, unemotionally, and deliberately, that is—look it over carefully, and then determine what is good about it and what is bad about it, in terms of the fundamental needs of human life. Having done this, a man will doubtless find it necessary to work with the System in some respects and relationships, but having had his Long Look as an unattached individual, he can do this without developing any serious partisanship in behalf of the System's defects.

Mrs. Sayers, for example, turns her literary talents, which are considerable, to a vigorous criticism of modern materialism, but comes out, all

out, for orthodox Christianity. Then there is also Mr. Philip Wylie's series of barbed commentaries on the State of the Nation, starting with *A Generation of Vipers*, which held the cult of "Momism" up to scorn, followed by *Opus 21*, an ad-lib, autobiographical sketch already noted in MANAS, and concluded, for the moment, by the recent novel, *The Disappearance*, in which the author fires both barrels at the conventional notion of sex morality, custom, and prejudice. One object of instructive prose is to help the reader see himself as He Really Is. The fictional device employed by Mr. Wylie to accomplish this end is to divide the world into separate universes—all the men drop out of the lives of their women, and vice versa; the two sexes live for some four years by themselves in not-so-splendid isolation. They find out all sorts of unpleasant things about themselves, and when Mr. Wylie presses the button, making the two halves of the world pop back together again—back to the same place in time as in human relationships—the men and women all have gained a lot more sense—Mr. Wylie's kind of sense.

Mr. Wylie is undoubtedly right in suggesting that a lot of our troubles come from artificial and hypocritical ideas about sex—ideas which produce as their practical effect a combination of ruthlessly irresponsible egotism with morbid feelings of guilt—but Mr. Wylie himself seems to espouse another orthodoxy, a minority orthodoxy, to be sure, but nonetheless an orthodoxy, as his solution. One gains the impression that he regards himself as something of a "philosopher" on the subject, and that what is needed to save the world—or what will go a long way toward saving it—is the eradication of "possessiveness" in sex relations and more "freedom."

Just because Mr. Wylie pulls no punches, because he says exactly what he thinks without seeming to care how unpopular he may become among the staid custodians of traditional "morality," it is a bit difficult to find fault with his theory of reform. Actually, however, he seems afflicted by the determination to write a formula for the mass solution of what always has been and always will be an individual problem. Perhaps most of our difficulties in regard to "morality"—and morality, for most people, means simply sex morality—arise from the supposition that it can be codified, that rules of behavior can describe the perfect life, when the fact is that all genuine morality depends upon the subtle relationships which exist between a man's mind, his behavior, and what we may call his "conscience."

Surely, it requires no psychological survey or Kinsey Report to teach us that excessive preoccupation with sexuality has the effect of curtaining off great areas of impersonal perception, of weakening the idealist's dreams and of erasing the memory of high commitments. Jealousy, humiliation and susceptibility to affront are some of the emotional concomitants of preoccupation with sex—quite apart from questions of intrinsic "morality" in this relationship. And a discussion of the subject which ignores these considerations will hardly produce any genuine light—the light which enables men to create their own morality, the only morality worth having.

This returns us to our point, which is that social or moral criticism which is inspired by a reaction to a particular defect or class of defects cannot help but be "reactionary"—reactionary in the sense that it does not grow out of a positive and whole philosophy, but is, so to say, mere "sharpshooting" at the manifest weaknesses of an age. The unmanifest weaknesses, the hidden or unrecognized asymmetries, may be far more important, and these, we think, are seldom understood except by those who do what we have suggested—break entirely with the System, and re-create their outlook on the basis of their own, individual moral discoveries.

COMMENTARY
WHEN GUESSES ARE IMPORTANT

SIXTY years ago, in a passage which seems considerably out of character with most of his utterances, Prof. Thomas H. Huxley remarked that there must be beings in the universe whose intelligence is as much beyond our as ours exceeds that of the black beetle. We have always found it puzzling that Prof. Huxley pursued this observation no further. What sort of "beings" did he have in mind? Prof. Huxley, be it noted, was also responsible for formulating the theory of "Epiphenomenalism," according to which all mental activity of human beings is nothing more than a reflex of physiological function. To illustrate this view, the learned Darwinist proposed the analogy of a locomotive, in which the engine itself represented the physical human being, whereas the squeak of the wheels as it passed over the rails represented the thought-processes which proceed concurrently with physical activity. Huxley allowed no more "originality" to thought than these virtually accidental "squeaks." Perhaps we had better inquire, first, into what he meant by *human* intelligence, before seeking an explanation of his reference to "beings" so far beyond man.

The restoration of a philosophical working conception of the human being should certainly have the highest priority, today, from a practical point of view. In "Children" for this week, a psychologist wonders what holds people together, adding that sometimes she can't even "guess." Why not guess a bit out loud? Are the psychologists, like the anthropologists Dr. Kluckhohn writes about, subject to the fear that to offer a theory in explanation of difficult facts "is slightly indecent"?

Conceivably, the integrity of the individual can be, and in some striking instances is, stronger than the forces of heredity and environment; and greater, metaphysically, than either time or space. The powers of mind that Dr. Rhine has been studying for the past twenty years give evidence of an extraordinary range of human consciousness, beyond the usual limitations of "time and space."

Is it really so hazardous, so speculative a construction on the basis of established facts, to propose that man may be, not merely "have," a self-existent and immortal soul? When all the puzzles of psychology and anthropology, of biology, psychiatry, education, and the amazing records of genius in the arts and sciences are gathered together, the idea of a unitary soul seems no more than the minimum "guess" to account for what we already know about human beings.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

IT may, at first glance, seem to be wandering far afield from educational problems to discuss psychiatric case histories, especially when they have to do with adults. But apparently one fact of fundamental educational importance is beginning to emerge from such studies, namely, that we are still far from the core of the human being when we discuss his environmental conditioning, traumatic shocks, complexes, and neuroses. There is so much persuasive evidence that the child's character is not necessarily determined by adverse home and societal surroundings. As Dr. Jean MacFarlane of the University of California puts it:

> One of the most provocative questions which has arisen from our twenty-year study of cross-section families, and one on which further research must be done, is why many persons have become wise, steady, mature and tolerant, and have avoided flights into delinquency or neuroticism which anyone of professional competence reviewing their disturbing life histories would reasonably have predicted for them.

The foregoing was quoted by Erling Eng in an article in the Summer *Antioch Review*, "The Skeptical Psychologist." Eng is concerned with showing how carefully the modern psychologist must guard against pat formulations when trying to select the "determining factors" of human behavior. One of his best illustrations for arguing that there is often something about the nature of a child which is *beyond the reach* of either adverse or favorable circumstances is also derived from the work of Dr. MacFarlane, who has been associated with "one of the oldest child development studies in the country." Dr. MacFarlane tells of one woman, now fifty-two, who is presently

> . . . of great strength, understanding, compassion and affection, whose children have unusual stability, independence, a sense of personal and social responsibility and an easy adult relationship to her. She is extremely well-read, an accomplishment attained late at night after her double job of supporting the family and managing the home. She writes substantial poetry and enjoys music and art, a taste acquired through trying to give her children the esthetic satisfactions she had missed as a child.

But this woman's childhood was such as to make one expect a completely warped and neurotic personality:

> Her father died before she was three, and from an age of three to ten she and her brother lived separated from their mother in the home of a fanatically religious and sadistic grandmother who gave them no affection and beat them whenever they smiled, on the theory that they smiled only when thinking sinful thoughts. She beat them and terrified them with vivid accounts of hell fires and tortures when their undernourished bodies were unable to effect with competence tasks which were beyond their strength and skills. Our mother lived in a rural community and attended school less than three months of the year, walking four miles each way, many times in sub-zero weather for which she was inadequately clothed.
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> At ten she returned to her mother, married now to an alcoholic who did not support the family and, when drunk, beat his wife and stepchildren who were torn between hiding out to protect themselves and risking themselves to protect their mother. The girl escaped before she was sixteen, and married an itinerant worker by whom she immediately became pregnant and in quick succession bore five children.

Mr. Eng then turns to the records of another veteran psychologist, Dr. Anne Roe:

> If you found in a clinic a girl whose father had been the town drunk, her mother a paranoid schizophrenic, her first few years practically a classic of everything that shouldn't happen to a child, then a few years of extremely poor institutional care, followed by a life in a foster home with pleasant but inadequate foster fathers (the first one died) and a psychopathic foster mother who turned on her, you would not be surprised that she needed a psychologist. A history like that has been accepted as the explanation of practically any disorder you can mention, and as a sufficient explanation, whether you rely on constitutional or environmental factors. But I can show you the record of a girl with this history who got a good education for herself over her foster mother's opposition, got and held a good job, and is now happily married and an adequate person. She

> does have some somatic complaints but they are not important. How did she do it?
>
> I can show you the test records of more than one superior adult normal . . . which would occasion no surprise if taken in a psychiatric clinic. This is a point whose importance cannot be overstressed. Given a high degree of clinical maladjustment, how does it happen that in some persons it is translated into social maladjustment and in others it is not—what holds these people together? I can guess sometimes, but sometimes I can't even guess.

What do these facts mean? First, that each human individual is *more* of an individual than we usually give him credit or blame for.

We once heard an honestly confused professor confess to his class that, although he had desired for twenty years to believe that the character of human beings is developed through conditioning, he could not honestly deny a growing conviction that each child is born *with* something of his own—some unique factor of individuality. The extent to which we give credence to such a view perhaps determines also the extent to which we are willing to treat children as distinct individuals, from the start. And if we were to reflect further we might decide never to have *any* sort of theory about "how to educate children," as a sort of species, but only theories of what we must refrain from doing "to" any human being.

A second implication of these considerations is that the greatest help we can give a child may be by affording him an atmosphere of inspiration, by learning how to be inspired people ourselves. An inspired person leaves others free to pursue their own course, treats them as companions or equals rather than as prized possessions or as representing obligations. Third, if our children should happen to develop characteristics we consider bad, we might do well to refrain from tying ourselves into psychological knots from thinking it is our "fault." Responsibilities we do have, but they are definable and understandable, and we may overrate their importance when we feel that we are *fully and finally responsible* for our children. We can wish them well on their way, and do them the honor of treating them as human beings of dignity and promise—but perhaps they will actually *mold themselves* through their relationships, out of some hidden source of their own individuality.

FRONTIERS

A Tribute To Some Patient Bores

TO affirm that there is room for everyone in the world, today, regardless of personality or political persuasion, invites a certain amount of dispute. And, of course, it may not be true. Perhaps we shall be better off when and if everyone has been whittled down by some Big Brother of a State to be the same size and of the same opinions. But for those who prefer variety in their human beings, thinking that the whole meaning of our adventure in human evolution would be lost if men no longer had and compared differences, this may be a good time to take up the task of trying to prove that even bores are necessary. For if one could succeed in finding a place for Bores, everyone else, it seems clear, could easily be tolerated. Bores have never once, at all, been our favorites. We have liked a Fascist, or two, we have liked Moral People, we have liked Immoral People, we have liked Prize Fighters, Artists, Poets, and even Generals, but the bores always have a terrible Hooper rating, especially when they are the noble-sentiment kind who talk on and on about that glittering, utopian dream called World Peace.

It is even possible that, by defending bores of this least excusable variety, we might pave the way for believing that the Russians, who are certainly not bores, can be tolerated; and there is the further thought that pacifists may become extinct unless some kind of committee is organized to preserve them. We have committees to preserve rare bird life, and buffalo, so why not preserve the pacifists, too, who need a lot less personal attention?

In the world of the Big Brother State, these peaceful people, who are so often boring to us, can get to be downright irritating to the State, and almost every schoolboy is beginning to know how Things Can Happen to people who are irritating to a State when the State gets itself in a spot.

Shall we take the Quakers for our first example of Bores We should Learn More About? They have been puttering away for a good long time at their various humanitarian accomplishments, accompanying them by incessant cheers for ideas like Peace and Brotherhood. The government used not to mind this, and the cheers merely sounded monotonous to the rest of us. But now some of the cheers the Quakers lead for World Peace are getting to where they challenge the government. Besides being minor nuisances, what with petitions for this and that, and the publishing of things about how lots of people in Bad Countries are Good People, and so on, the American Friends Service Committee has implemented its prejudice against killing in wartime by counselling people to refuse to bear arms. The government has told the Quakers they can't do this, but they are doing it anyway.

Now the Quakers are going to be hard to change in their ways. Quite likely they will go right on doing what the government says they can't do, so long as they think it is right. And one of the reasons they will go right on is that they have practiced for years how to go right on doing whatever they think is worth-while, no matter how boring they seemed to others. They haven't changed, please note—we have. *Now* a lot of us think they are wild as anything part of the time, though still boring most of the time. But since they thus have a better record for consistency than we have, we ought to try to figure things out more accurately, studying them more carefully, both when they are wild and when they are boring.

We have before us an American Friends Service Committee publication entitled *Steps to Peace—A Quaker View of U.S. Foreign Policy*, which seemed to us to need this sort of introduction. Nothing the pamphlet says has not been said before, but it seems a good idea to appreciate those who *do* keep saying the same things over and over again. It's something, perhaps, just to have the desire for peace made articulate, however repetitive its expression. *Steps to Peace*, with fairly characteristic modesty

for the Quakers, is written anonymously, and signed by a Committee. It argues, simply, that good proposals for international cooperation are now before the public and oblige any conscientious humanitarian to support them:

> There are numerous proposals before the American public: those of Walter Reuther, of Senator Brien McMahon, of Stringfellow Barr, of James Warburg; there is the Nelson Rockefeller Report suggesting governmental action, largely through encouraging private capital; there is the Colombo Plan, well conceived, which hopes for aid from the Commonwealth countries and from others also. The United Nations Technical Assistance Program, and the United States Point IV Program are in part competitive and in part cooperative.

Here is some Quaker sociology, and some Quaker psychology. They sound good, too:

> In the broadest sense, any sound program of development is a part of the social revolution which is proceeding on a world scale. This is a revolution in which large masses of the people struggle for equalization of political power, and in which others seek earnestly to increase economic opportunity. In many densely populated regions the immediate objective is to provide some security against recurring catastrophes of famine and pestilence, but everywhere the long-term objective is a basic change in the whole society as it affects both cultural and economic opportunities.
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> Whatever its position on armament, there should be no question that each nation basically is in sympathy with raising world living standards. The problem is whether or not it will give concrete evidence of its belief by immediately and generously lending its support to the necessary work at home and overseas.
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> Such a program could be a common cause in which nations with different social philosophies might cooperate on a world scale. It is of course not certain that the Soviet Union and its associates would take part, since in Communist theory any improvement in living conditions is thought of as superficial unless it is preceded by violent revolution. On the other hand, the Soviet block in 1949 voted solidly in favor of the United Nations technical assistance program, so that Soviet abstention is by no means a foregone conclusion. However, a successful program does not hinge on whether or not Russia is prepared to participate in it initially. If she is, the effect would be an immediate reduction of world tension and the most promising opportunity for building a lasting peace that has appeared since the end of World War II. If she is not, and undertakes to offer a competing program, the competition would be more conducive to understanding as well as to human welfare than the present competition in armaments. It would be a competition in which all, by different means, would be working toward the same ultimate goal. In such competition, success does not presuppose the destruction of one of the competitors.

If we ever come to a time when the Quakers, and others like them, are no longer around to bore us with their monotonous affirmations, and to surprise us with a little uncooperativeness with war, now and then, we shall not be the better off. The Friends have "committees" to try to preserve a great many things. Perhaps we should form a committee for the preservation of the Quakers, who, if they are not all sages, are nevertheless often wiser than the rest of us.