

"THE IMPORTANCE OF ANY COUNTRY"

SOME years ago, Ortega y Gasset wondered in an essay whether or not the novel was exhausted as a literary form. This question, we think, is no longer arguable. The novel is not a dying form, but is rather getting better and better. In the 1930's, it was widely held that a novel ought to have "social" content—that it should preach as well as entertain—should, in short, convey a "message." If you go back and read some of those books, you are likely to feel that the message is somewhat dated; or, to put it otherwise, that the message was not a genuine message, but a species of propaganda. It didn't seem so much like propaganda, then, perhaps, but the fact that it seems so now suggests that both readers and contemporary novelists have grown a bit wiser. Both are able to maintain that a work of art should not be conceived of as merely a vehicle for a "moral." Rather, the moral, if there is a moral, should be intrinsic to the story and unfold because it is there, not because it has been "inserted" for the instruction of the reader.

It may be that contemporary novels are better for the reason that their "message"—and they do have a message—comes closer to expressing a fundamental truth about human life and human values. If this, as we think, is the case, they will not sound like propaganda a generation hence, although their message may seem more familiar. Take for example a recent story by James Ramsey Ullman, *Windom's Way*. (Ullman's *The Sands of Karakorum* was noticed here some months ago for much the same reason.) Windom is an American doctor who finds that he can't practice the kind of medicine he wants to practice while living with his rich wife in New York City. He goes back to Papan—a small village in Southeast Asia where he had been during the war (Ullman doesn't place the village in any "country," and it doesn't matter)—and begins to live out his ideals

for the first time in his life. He is physician to people who really need him, and he comes to feel that he needs them, too.

A lot of familiar currents move through this book. There is the war for one's country, for freedom and against totalitarianism, as historical background. There is the typical European colonialism and exploitation of the "natives." There is corrupt and opportunist government. There are shallow functionaries, unthinking "good-fellow" soldiers, and brutal policemen. There are angry, doctrinaire communists—in fact, all the ingredients of the social novel of a few years ago. But these currents supply no more than the schematic background for Ullman's story, which is about Windom, an American, who has to do what he thinks is right. In other days, the struggle for social justice would have been the big thing. It *is* a big thing, but what Ullman realizes is that social justice without individual integrity and here-and-now morality is a terrible fraud.

Ullman goes the whole way in testing his hero's integrity. The story begins with Windom treating his patients—Americans on the scene call them "gooks," much to Windom's distaste—and with trouble brewing because the villagers want to raise their own rice, while the local rubber plantation manager has managed to make this sort of subsistence agriculture illegal so that the people will have to work all their time on the plantation. Observing American officials sanction this policy with the argument that rubber is essential to winning the war against communism. Therefore, the natives must not be allowed to raise their own rice. There is a strike, and an old Buddhist priest who has counselled the villagers is jailed and then murdered by his captors "while attempting to escape." This enrages the villagers. There is an uprising, the plantation is burned, and some of the police are killed by the peasants to avenge the

death of the priest. The plantation manager escapes to the capital. Then Windom, whom the people trust for his kindness to them, advises them to undo the results of their violence as much as they can. By slow persuasion he gets them to start rebuilding the plantation. They do this while they are planting their own rice crop, which was their principal "strike aim." Windom tells them that when the officials come back they will see that the villagers have tried to make amends for damaging the plantation. He promises to intercede for them in the matter of the rice paddies. Then a government plane swoops over the men rebuilding the plantation, spraying them with machine gun bullets. Several villagers are killed.

This produces a crisis. Windom suffers the reproaches of the villagers, who point out that they relied on his confidence that the government would return in peace if they repaired the plantation. Then Windom again appeals to them, this time asking them to go away into the hills, so that when the government troops arrive to "pacify" the area, there will be no further bloodshed and he will have time to explain what has happened.

The troops arrive along with a high official in the government who promptly accuses Windom of communist sympathies. The doctor, he suggests, has been the "strategist" of the strike. He claims that the departed villagers have gone to join the communist forces to the north of Papan. Windom denies this and says that he will bring the villagers back to work on the rubber plantation, provided the official will promise to let them raise their own rice and make no reprisals against them. The official agrees and Windom sets out into the jungle.

Now comes the double tragedy of the story, in which Windom is twice betrayed. It develops that the official has no intention of keeping his promise, and plans to shoot the villagers when they return. Meanwhile Windom reaches the camp of the villagers, only to find that they have

gone over in a body to the communists. All his assurances to the official and an American army officer observer are now no longer true.

But Windom doesn't change; he goes back to his little hospital at Papan and gets ready to take care of the patients who will be crowding his tiny wards as soon as the fighting with the communists begins.

Much of the mood of the book is conveyed by some dialogue between Windom and Hasbrook, an American colonel stationed in the area. After the plantation was burned, Hasbrook questions Windom:

. . . you've decided the gooks are right."

"In—"

"In wanting their rice. In striking for it."

"Rice! Who gives a damn about rice?" Hasbrook didn't wait for an answer. "The thing you don't seem to get, doctor is that all this adds up to much more than one flea-bitten valley. It's not rice we're concerned with, it's rubber. It's this Thankar up north. It's China and Russia and World War Three. You know as well as I what the Reds are trying to do here in southeast Asia. And we've got to keep a firm hand on these people."

"There are different sorts of firm hands," said Windom.

"No, there's one sort. Authority. Strength. Showing the Reds we can handle them."

"But these people aren't—"

"All right, they aren't Reds. They go to Sunday School. They're kind to their grandmothers. But they're going to be Reds damn soon, if we don't keep them in line."

Windom shook his head. "It strikes me just the opposite. That the one sure way to lose them is to keep on exploiting them, the way we always have." . . .

Hasbrook's eyes followed him. . . ."Maybe these people are getting a bad break, as you say. God knows, their government's lousy and corrupt. That's too damn bad, but we're not here as reformers. We're here for just one reason and that's to hold the line against the Reds. Anything that helps it is good.

Anything that hurts it is bad. In this man's word, . . . you have to be on one side or the other." . . .

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"First of all, to cooperate with Belhedron."

"By betraying those who trust me?"

Hasbrook's patience snapped again. "God damn it, stop worrying about your gooks. Worry about your own people for a change. Try to realize what's going on in the world—and that the only importance of this country is its rubber and its strategic position."

Again Windom didn't answer.

"You don't believe that, doctor?"

"No."

"What *do* you believe, may I ask?"

"That the importance of any country is the people who live in it."

"That's your way of seeing things?"

"Yes, that's my way," said Windom.

It is a very simple thing, perhaps, the point of this book. Windom cannot be made to retreat from his position. He is betrayed by everyone—the villagers, the government, the men he has befriended, his wife. But Windom betrays no one. In fact, one interesting thing about Windom is that he is never seriously tempted to give up his principles, although Ullman has a little soliloquy which seems to represent a moment when Windom thinks about leaving Papaan with his wife and going back to America.

Ullman's story with its simple thesis reminds us of two other writers—Tolstoy on public opinion (in *Christianity and Patriotism*) and Dwight Macdonald on radical morality in *The Root Is Man*. It is a great thing, finally, for a man to find his salvation in standing alone. This is the essential message of religion, and when, as in the totalitarian times of the present, politics begins a systematic betrayal of this idea, and therefore of all genuine religion, events themselves begin to separate the men from the boys.

This is the kind of a revolution Tolstoy was interested in, and it is the kind of a revolution

Dwight Macdonald supplies with an intellectual rationale in *The Root Is Man*. It comes to this, as Windom found, that if you have to do present evil in order to accomplish some hypothetical future good, you will find the evil growing immeasurable and the good disappearing from view. The analogy of the surgeon who hurts the patient in order to cure him will not work, here. For the surgeon only constrains the body, while political coercion constrains the will and the mind of human beings. This is the initial evil, which leads, eventually, to excuses for planning destruction of half the world with atom bombs, in order to "save" civilization.

We are inclined to think that this story by Ullman represents a growing temper among modern writers—that what for Tolstoy was a unique and revolutionary notion is becoming a clear first principle in life for more and more thoughtful people. A man has to do what he thinks is right, and if you don't dare believe in this philosophy, you don't dare believe in human beings.

There are some chances involved, of course, in believing in human beings, but look at the alternative: no chance at all, there it's sure to fail.

THE ARTS OF PEACE

A THOUSAND DOLLARS isn't very much these days, but it is nevertheless encouraging to learn from a recent *Christian Century* that UNESCO has allotted from its meager budget a thousand dollars to the International Federation of Philosophical Societies to help pay for the publication of what are to be called the "Classics of Democracy and Tolerance." The *CC* editorial report is brief and pointed:

The first project will be the translation and distribution in German of Locke's *Treatise on Government* and his *Letters on Toleration*. The first has not been available since the beginning of nazism; the second has never been translated into German. The series will provide bilingual editions for school and college use. Greek and Italian as well as German editions—all requested by these countries—will be issued. This kind of activity deserves help and should be extended. It offers an example which the United States Information Agency should follow, or which a foundation could use to advantage. Why not make available in Asian as well as European languages inexpensive editions of Hamilton's and Madison's *Federalist*, John Stuart Mill's *Liberty*, De Toqueville's *Democracy in America*, or Bryce's *American Commonwealth*? Surely they are more essential than the translation into a dozen languages of books by ex-communists. Why not write your congressman or U.S.I.A. urging dissemination of the classics of democracy?

It is pleasant to be able to speak of another "classic of democracy"—this one quite contemporary—the U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in American education. Carey McWilliams, writing of the decision in the *Nation*, quotes an approving Kenya tribesman who said: "America is right. . . . If we are not educated together, we will live in fear of one another. If we are to stay together forever, why should we have separate schools?" Time, of course, will be occupied in applying the decision in the southern states, but the principle is now clearly established as law in the United States. It is a principle which dark-skinned peoples in other

lands will appreciate fully as much as American Negroes, for whom it represents long-delayed justice.

In the sense that knowledge is essential to both freedom and peace, the following paragraphs from the May *Progressive* may fit into this column, as throwing light on the causes of the struggle in Indo-China:

The war in Indo-China is now in its eighth year. Hostilities broke out after World War II when France sought to reestablish her colonial control over the Associated States of Indo-China—Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. A customs dispute in the port city of Haipong, in Vietnam, convinced the French military command that the natives needed to be taught a "lesson" and shown who's boss. Six French warships shelled the defenseless city on Nov. 27, 1946, killing 6,000 men, women, and children. The war was on.

It is a war, incidentally, for which the United States has lately been bearing nearly 80 per cent of the billion-dollar-a-year cost.

REVIEW

SIGNIFICANCE OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

THERE are three ways in which the human mind has dealt with mysteries of the psyche. First, supra-normal phenomena have been woven into the fabric of superstition and elaborate religious doctrine. Second, it has been possible to pretend that all the apparitions, levitations, and "hauntings," all the testimony regarding clairvoyant dreams and visions and effective psycho-kinesis describes "hallucinations." By this method have many confident men of scientific mind persuaded themselves and their readers that there is nothing in the psychical realm worthy of exploration. The third alternative is to accept the reality of psychical phenomena, consider them mysteries well worth investigating and to devise philosophical means for making sense out of them.

G. N. M. Tyrrell, late President of the London Society of Psychical Research, is certainly an exemplar of the last named approach, and a recent (1953) edition of his *Apparitions* (published by Gerald Duckworth of London), gives ample evidence that this is one subject which philosophical analysis does not deaden, but rather enlivens. The main text of *Apparitions* first appeared in 1943; it has survived the time-test of a decade, at least, and the 1953 revision contains the unqualified endorsement of Oxford Professor of Logic, H. H. Price, who contributes a lengthy preface.

Since from both Mr. Tyrrell's standpoint and our own it is necessary to distinguish between Spiritualism and genuine psychical research, we quote first from the concluding paragraphs in *Apparitions*, which make it plain that the author was never interested in bizarre phenomenalism *per se*, but rather in the light which investigation of unexplained psychical factors might throw upon the nature and destiny of man:

Psychical research, conducted by a mere handful of explorers working under difficulties, has not been able, up to the present, to influence the scientific and educated world to see the importance of the subject or

to see it in its true light. The cult of popular Spiritualism, which is our worst enemy, unfortunately serves to increase this misunderstanding and mistrust. But in spite of our difficulties, we have gone far enough to feel sure that we have embarked on a rich field of discovery. If a weighty body of people now existed, sufficiently detached from worldly interests and sufficiently enthusiastic to make a great effort to obtain light on the Human Situation—on the questions of What we are, Why we are, and Where we are—it is probable that psychical research could do more permanent good for mankind, struggling in its present quagmire, than all the schemes of social reconstruction, necessary as these are. For the world seems to have reached a stage in which belief in the value of the individual can no longer be sustained by the forces of religion and morality alone, but needs the backing of an intellectual conviction based on direct exploration of the human being. Psychical research has certainly not drawn a blank. It has, on the contrary, discovered something so big that people sheer away from it in a reaction of fear. They feel that they cannot cope with it, and are unwilling to make the drastic overhaul of their cherished convictions which the subject demands.

It became evident to Tyrrell, as it did recently to the American philosopher, C. J. Ducasse, that the all-important question of "survival after death" can easily be more confused than clarified by seance manifestations. If the mumblings from beyond the grave reported by mediums represent the true nature of a surviving soul, there is, indeed, little reason for believing that survival is important in the first place. But it is quite possible, Tyrrell and Ducasse believe, for the "spirits" of the dead contacted in seance to be simply disintegrating portions of a transitory personality. And, if there *are* such remains, however unimportant their phonograph-like repetitions of things presumably thought and known during life, we are naturally led to ask whether something besides this aspect of the human personality *also* survives. Discussing "Evidence on Survival," Tyrrell writes:

In the case of most great questions it is the background which counts. It may be worth while to illustrate this in the case of the dispute about survival by quoting some of the commonest *a priori* objections to it. When these objections are raised, the questioner

almost invariably has in mind a background of thought, which it will be convenient to call the "common-sense-outlook." The slight glimpse we have so far achieved shows that personality possesses mid-level elements which cannot be grasped by common-sense ideas, and which therefore lie outside this common-sense outlook. At the start therefore, the way lies open to misunderstanding: for it can scarcely be denied that the question of survival and the nature of personality are intimately connected. These mid-levels as soon as we catch sight of them, present the most baffling problems to common sense. They differ from one another in function and character without showing any clear numerical separation. They sweep away the idea of a clear-cut Self (one kind of thing) inhabiting a clear-cut Body (another kind of thing). Instead, they invite us to contemplate a personality *informed* by Selfhood, but informed by it, in respect of its "levels," in varying degrees. This is a baffling conception. The personality is in some sense hierarchical, and the higher we go in the hierarchy, the more self-like the levels of the hierarchy become and at the same time the more impossible for our minds to grasp. The lower we go in the hierarchy, the less self-like the levels become and the nearer to numerically separate units. The mid-levels, therefore, can be regarded as an *internal environment* to pure Self from one point of view and as *being* that Self from another. This idea of selfhood *in degree* is very strange to common habits of thought. Yet it seems to hold down to the lowest level of the personality, the Body.

One encouraging thing about the approach of a man like Tyrrell is his lack of arrogant surety in respect to the theories he has evolved. He is less concerned with pontificating about "answers" to the survival questions than in seeing that those questions are formulated clearly. Recognizing that most of the assumptions of modern thought need to be enlarged and revised, before the survival question can even be properly posed, he counsels extensive reformation of conventional intellectual criteria. There is no use, in other words, in wasting one's time with psychism or Spiritism unless one is willing to become a philosopher in the true sense of the word—abandon all comfortable preconceptions in a search for truth, be willing to follow any road, regardless of where it leads. In Tyrrell's chosen field, of course, as everywhere else, there has been

a dearth of philosophic experience; otherwise J. B. Rhine's experimental work would not have faced so much ridicule.

Tyrrell here describes the sort of "psychological resistance" situation Dr. Rhine has also often remarked:

On the whole, as I have said, our work appears to have evoked a reaction of indifference tinged with contempt. In no quarter has the keen, exploring spirit been shown—the spirit anxious to learn all the subject has to reveal. Our work has been almost studiously ignored, such criticism as has been meted out having taken the form of *escapist* tactics. And this, it seems to me, should teach us a good deal; for the reason alleged, namely that our evidence is too poor and meagre to merit attention, is not, I believe, the true one. The true reason is that all the facts we have brought to light clash violently with a widely accepted view about the nature of things. You cannot take facts like telepathy or precognition and simply tack them on to this accepted outlook. Telepathy demands a revolution in current ideas about human personality; and precognition demands a revolution in current ideas about time. In general, the entire outlook necessitated by the findings of psychical research breaks up the naive realism in which the human mind is steeped and shows it to be largely illusory; and I suggest that the distaste for psychical phenomena is mainly due to a half-conscious instinct which prompts people to rally in defence of common-sense realism. It is, in a sense, a reaction to defend a *creed*. We most of us feel in our bones that whatever castles the intellect may build in moments of abstraction or whatever direction theory may take apart from the activities of daily life—whatever queer facts, even, may occasionally come to light—common sense still remains the final guide to truth. That is why people "recover" so quickly from cogent psychical evidence and even, sometimes, from psychical experiences of their own; and why they "recover" from the arguments of philosophy and religion as soon as they get back into the everyday world. People are not nearly so fastidious about logical standards of proof in other matters as they pretend to be in psychical matters; but their attitude does not really arise from any extreme respect for logic, but from a fear that psychical evidence will lead them, to use a colloquialism, "up the garden path." They think that if they once admit this evidence it will plunge them headlong back into superstition and wreck the structure of law on which science has been

built. They think, as one psychologist put it, that it is a case of psychical research alive and science dead, or *vice versa*.

Many people still "believe" in apparitions, or at least delight in hearing tell of them. *This Week Magazine* for April 25, for instance, printed "The Legend of Ghosts in the White House," wherein the strange experiences of residents with "the ghosts" of Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln were recounted. Part of the popular appeal in such stories undoubtedly lies in their "thrill" implications, but it is also possible that, since most ordinary people forego only with difficulty the idea of immortality, anything relating to the persistence of human consciousness after the death of the body touches deep chords of interest.

Tyrrell's own conclusions in respect to survival are well put. He obviously believes that the further research is carried, the closer one comes to accepting the survival of some kind of "soul" as a possibility. However, he does not think we have yet found the key to the mystery, but still face a mental barrier which permits us to see little more than that *something* beyond the physical realm really does exist.

In conclusion, we offer Tyrrell's final repetition of his central thesis—with addition of an affirmative footnote:

As long as we ask questions in terms of an inadequate background of thought we shall continue to receive misleading answers. If we insist on asking these questions (and people do insist), we must first devote our energies to the attainment of an adequate background. The way to attain such a background is quite obviously to study human personality.

Whether psychical research has given reasonable ground for either a positive or negative conclusion regarding survival, must, of course, be a matter for individual judgment. It has often been questioned whether positive proof is possible. If I may speak personally, I would say that it seems to me that the crude question has been rubbed off the slate (for the very reason of inadequate background), and instead of a direct answer we have had revealed to us something of the general perspective in which the question ought to be asked. We have been shown, in fact, that new conceptions must be grasped before the

question can be intelligibly answered. But I think we can say that if the reply had been a simple negative, the vistas of personality now gradually unfolding before us would not have been found to exist.

COMMENTARY

JUSTIFICATION OF METAPHYSICS

METAPHYSICS, according to *Webster's*, is "the science of the fundamental causes and processes of things." Prof. Gotshalk (see *Frontiers*) calls it "a theory of the general nature of the human being and his world," which is much the same thing.

For at least a generation, metaphysics has been extremely unpopular among modern thinkers. Anyone who dared to propose a general account of the nature of things was regarded as, at best, an idle speculator, at worst, a philosophic reactionary and dogmatist with medieval tendencies.

There are at least three clearly defined reasons for the unpopularity of metaphysics. The first is the dominating influence of what is spoken of as "scientific method." The scientist, almost by definition, is not concerned with the general nature of man or the world. General propositions tend to be unverifiable by any familiar scientific techniques, and the scientist, therefore, being unable to deal with them, falls into the habit of arguing that they are either meaningless or unimportant.

A second reason for suspicion of metaphysics arises from its resemblance to theology. In fact, one could say that theology is metaphysics with a bad case of authoritarian fever. A metaphysician who becomes a theologian is a man who is either unconfident of his own power to reason or believes that other people less talented than himself need the insistence of dogma or "divine revelation" to convince them of the truth of what he says.

Outright contempt for theology stems from two historical causes in European history. It was blind faith in theology which prevented the doctors of the Church from acknowledging the revolutionary discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo. The long delay by the Church in accepting the heliocentric system (it remained in the *Index Expurgatorius* until 1820) was alone

enough to earn for theology the lasting disrespect of both scientists and all educated persons. Added to this was the tendency of theology to justify and bulwark the authority of the "powers that be." Theology and theologians, unlike a just and impartial deity, are usually found on the side of the big battalions. It was natural, therefore, for social revolutionaries and reformers to join with scientists in the rejection of theology.

Metaphysics, meanwhile, because of the origins of theology in metaphysics, of which it was a dogmatic perversion, suffered much the same fate. No self-respecting scientist, scientific or typically "liberal" writer would dare be caught expressing opinions or views which might be condemned as "metaphysical." To be found guilty of an interest in metaphysics would mean that he would soon be without an audience, and almost certainly without a job. As Clyde Kluckhohn put it some years ago, in the journal, *Philosophy of Science*, "to suggest that something is theoretical is to suggest that it is slightly indecent." Dr. Kluckhohn was speaking of anthropological studies, but what he said applies more or less to all the sciences.

Today, however, a new interest in general theory, or metaphysics, begins to be evident. Not only are the enormous stores of accumulated "data" increasingly seen to be meaningless without general principles of interpretation, but, also, a world without philosophy—and metaphysics is the intellectual foundation of all philosophy—eventually grows chaotically irrational, falling prey to the pseudophilosophies of totalitarian politics and the pseudo-religions of emotional faith.

It is Prof. Gotshalk's perception that a world in which liberal thought may prosper and liberal practices gain encouragement and support is a world conceived in terms of clear first principles. For only such first principles will support the tenacious moral convictions which the liberal must have if he is to practice what he preaches and hold firm to ideas of impartial justice and human freedom.

The important thing, then, today, as we enter a cycle of vital interest in metaphysics, is to avoid a dreary repetition of old mistakes. Metaphysics is *not* theology; it is an independent discipline of the mind engaged in isolating for inspection those truths about nature, life, and man which, so far as we can see, are indispensable to intelligence and consistent morality in human life.

What Prof. Gotshalk does not mention, but which seems to us inevitable, is that a reconsideration of metaphysics, to be thorough-going, must investigate an entire category of ideas which have long suffered serious neglect—the ideas of soul, immortality, what is sometimes termed "spiritual reality," and, indeed, the whole purview of ancient mysticism and cosmology. Progress in this field, no doubt, should proceed slowly, and with great caution, but the investigation cannot be avoided. Nor will it be, if the recent tendencies of clinical psychology and the renewed interest in Eastern philosophy and psychological disciplines are of any serious account.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

ADDITIONAL material concerning educational controversy has arrived. Another subscriber suggests that our already much discussed "Fratricide Among Educators" could have been more helpfully titled:

I do not believe that dissatisfaction with the school system should be presented as a disagreement, battle or whatever you choose to call it, between parents and teachers with the kids being kicked around in the middle. Most teachers today are, or will be parents. I think all the hoopla about the schools is a healthy symptom of people's general need for community, and for direct contact with issues that confront them. As such it should be encouraged, not deplored, and used constructively instead of made into a nasty fight between parents who are school teachers and parents who aren't. If we could start by assuming that everyone has a right to a concern and has something valuable to contribute even if he is not expressing it very clearly, perhaps we could make more progress toward an intelligent program.

It seems to us, however, that the precise value of discussing our public school system lies in the hope that "dissatisfaction" may be translated into terms of intelligent disagreement. Disagreement can be helpful to both parties, whereas dissatisfaction is simply a feeling. Most public school teachers and administrators would dislike any phrasing of disagreement which suggested that a "battle" is going on between educators for the reason that the majority of professional teachers are now definitely "anti-traditional." In other words, when the traditionalists were "in power," the anti-traditionalists were a radical minority, but now, with the situation reversed, educators feel that the public should at least understand that most active teachers in public schools compose a united front against reactionism. Our own point, however, is that while the transformation has been a good thing, even some of the unpopular "reactionaries" may have a point from time to time, and, insofar as such points are made effectively, their protagonists also serve as educators of the public.

The reversal just mentioned brings to mind the fact that a visitor from another planet might easily conclude that our whole approach to teaching children has been backward-forward from the beginning. Children *do* need to live, at least part of the time, in a complex situation involving discipline, but on what ground must we assume that *education* is the ideal situation for this purpose? The most natural disciplines, as Gandhi taught, are those which relate to community interests and responsibilities—particularly those of a practical sort.

But education could be mainly a sphere of enthusiasm, creative expression, enjoyment—and even amusement. A church-dominated society naturally inclined to the belief that sinful propensities should be curbed by rigorous programs. But this assumption was, after all, merely a prejudice in regard to the essential nature of man. If one inclines more to the beliefs of Rousseau than of St. Augustine, the whole situation changes; it thus changed for those educators who believed there was something fundamentally wrong with the medieval method.

The "backward-forward" point is nicely illustrated by a Los Angeles *Times* story (May 2) on UCLA's "Progressive School"—an experimental institution possessed of remarkable facilities for finding out just how far one can go with a "child-centered" program. The interesting thing is that those who guide the destiny of the University Elementary School have discovered in Plato a basic test for their theories. The *Times* story says:

"Let early education be a sort of amusement; you will then be better able to find out the natural bent."

The soundness of that advice has been in dispute ever since it was first issued by a Greek named Plato back around 300 BC.

Today on the UCLA campus, Plato's "progressive" philosophy is undergoing a thorough test on 300 youngsters who could be described as educational guinea pigs.

All the new-fangled ways of teaching reading, writing and arithmetic are tried out on them at the University Elementary School, the oldest and one of the most unique institutions of its kind in California.

Plato put it this way: "Knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind."

The passages from Plato will no doubt surprise many readers, for it is generally assumed that the Greek metaphysician was very much a moralist and a disciplinarian. True enough, but his concept of discipline was *community* discipline, and had to do with the best organization of discovered talents for the benefit of the whole. Plato, then, was a kind of "socialist," but in no sense an ideative forerunner of the grim theologians of the middle ages. And Plato sounds very good to us, for why should education be "hard work," and the child's free time devoted to the aimless seeking of amusement? Plato's ideal teachers would, we imagine, be defined as those who help children to discover just how enjoyable life can be by increasing their capacities for experience and by encouraging them to discover themselves. Then "the natural bent" would finally reveal itself.

There is no reason why each person, young or old, should not be encouraged to learn in his own way and according to his own tastes, thus keeping the life of the mind free from the stultifying effects of indoctrination. But Plato would not, we are sure, feel insulted if the entire child population of UES were expected by both teachers and parents to care for the grounds and buildings, help in the construction of new units, etc. For this sort of discipline would not grow out of someone's *theory* in respect to the nature of man, but arise, instead, in an entirely natural manner, out of needs and opportunities for practical service.

The sad part of it all is that Plato's sort of education is most needed when the requirements of practical labor are extensive for the children. In our present culture, most youngsters are left with a tremendous excess of free time, and their

parents have great difficulty, even when they are of a mind, to discover ways of "letting" children be useful. The contrast today is more apt to be between hours of liberal schooling and still more hours of "free time" wherein no constructive guidance of any sort is forthcoming. In a society where children really need to work, work fairly hard for home and community, the adventure of schooling could be a happy release from disciplines and responsibilities, but in our own day the young may need to find in school more of a sense of order and discipline than they encounter either in their homes or elsewhere. This psychological situation, we submit, should be the concern of all "new educationists" presently at work in the schools. We no longer live in a time wherein children have insufficient opportunity for amusement—but rather in an age when innumerable people become neurotic from feverish seeking of entertainment. Often that which "relaxes" children the most is that which offers contrast to their familiar psychological experience.

FRONTIERS Dilemma of Liberals

IN a short article in the Spring *Antioch Review*, D. W. Gotshalk, professor of philosophy at the University of Illinois, brings light to the problems of modern liberals. The problems, clearly, are great:

To the nearsighted hatchet men of the Right, he [the liberal] can only seem over on the Left, a dupe, pinko, or frontier. To the mechanically minded men of the Left, he must belong dialectically to the Right, to the soft decadent outer crust of a diseased and dying civilization. In our tense and angry world, inevitable as this dilemma is, it is also extremely dangerous for the liberal. It invites enmity from two directions, indeed, from the two really strong and opposite entrenchments facing each other today.

Prof. Gotshalk deals with liberalism from several viewpoints. He wastes no time wondering how the life of the liberal may be made easier, his position less vulnerable to attack, but proposes, rather, that what modern liberalism needs is a new "metaphysic," which means, specifically, "a theory of the general nature of the human being and his world." This has long been a contention of MANAS. Through the centuries, the philosophic foundations of liberalism have grown sandy and unstable. The vigorous liberalism of today is a liberalism of *method*, and while this is much to be admired, the inspiration of any great movement, if it is to survive the various climates of opinion it passes through, must be periodically renewed.

Originally, the assumptions of liberalism were almost indistinguishable from the assumptions of humanism. In fact, we do not see why they should be distinguished at all, except for the reason that, under development, liberalism became a species of socio-political philosophy, while humanism remained a theory of human potentialities, rights, and duties. The metaphysical claim of both, however, arising during the Renaissance, was that "human beings come into this world endowed with certain inalienable natural rights, self-evident to reason." Among

these rights, as the authors of the Declaration of Independence contended, are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It was the further belief of the early liberals that "the human being is essentially a rational being who as a matter of fact always acts under the guidance of reason."

Here, Prof. Gotshalk tells us, is the metaphysic on which the doctrines of early liberalism were erected. This metaphysic has been under fire for several generations. Skeptical philosophers have whittled away at the doctrine of Natural Rights until the large-hearted enthusiasm of the Founding Fathers now seems to many to be a species of naïveté. The findings of the psychologists since Freud have cast grave doubts upon the interest of the average human being in following "the guidance of reason," and there are those inclined to insist that talk of "self-evident truths" is an appeal to slogans to which the intelligent man ought not to respond.

This wearing away of liberal assumptions was accompanied by great changes in the political interpretation of liberal objectives. At the outset, liberalism contended for the removal of government regulation in behalf of a favored few. Herbert Spencer is the eminent historian of this phase of liberalism, which he describes in the essay, *Man versus the State*. In the twentieth century, however, liberals became the impassioned advocates of regulation in behalf of the many. It was the liberal, both in America and abroad, who "has inaugurated and carried through a large program of social legislation."

Today, with the turning of the idea of "social legislation" into the more systematic conception of the Welfare State, and even into the extreme theory of the Communist State, many liberals have begun to wonder whether the unqualified reversal of the political ends of the nineteenth century was altogether a good thing. Where do programs of social welfare go wrong, becoming totalitarian tyranny?

It is questions of this sort which prompt liberals like Prof. Gotshalk to review the history of

liberalism, to formulate its aims, to examine its philosophic underpinnings, and to invite contributions to a new metaphysic for liberalism.

Liberalism without metaphysics (or with only rudimentary and implicit metaphysics) is said to be "a faith in critical intelligence or reason as the most suitable and humane method of solving human difficulties." This, obviously, is rather a mood than a doctrine about human nature and human potentialities. It is found in men who, for some reason or other, are born that way. Great scientists have it, and all men to whom the disciplines of the mind appeal as containing the highest qualities of life. Contrary to popular interpretation, this sort of liberalism is not the slavish worship of "reason," as the source of all useful solutions. The role of reason is rather that of critic and reviewer. The constructive thoughts of men may "originate where they will, in intuition, imagination, or wherever. The doctrine is merely that the judicious scrutiny of ideas, however originated, in relation to the evidence recommending them, is the most suitable way to develop ideas into valuable and humane plans of action."

What else is there? Prof. Gotshalk sets forth the ethical content of liberalism with great clarity:

Perhaps the cardinal tenet of ethical liberalism is its claim that the free and harmonious development of the individual human being—all individual human beings—is a supreme good, a good in its own right. Its view is that the individual human being is, so to speak, the finest thing on earth, and each one of them should be given a chance to develop as fully as he can in a rational manner.

This tenet has two implications of far-reaching importance. First, it means that oppression, inconsiderateness, and brutality, but no less injustice, deprivation, and insecurity, whether arising from action by government, individuals, or other social units, are intolerable in a truly liberal society. They strike at the fountainhead of all liberal values, viz. individuals and their development in a rational manner. Second, it also means that the institutional apparatus of a society, including the governmental apparatus, is not an end or a good in its own right, but primarily a means to the development of

individuals. Institutions count, but they count because and insofar as they are instruments of growth for the individuals participating in them. This has been the meaning of modern ethical liberalism from Spinoza and Locke to Mill, and from Mill to Whitehead, Dewey and Russell.

It is also, we might add, the central theme of Lyman Bryson's book, *The Next America*, which ought to be carefully read by all those who find themselves in sympathy with ethical liberalism as here defined.

Having staked out the meaning of liberalism in these terms, Prof. Gotshalk now turns to what might be called the internal problem of liberalism. He asks several questions which amount to saying, "These are all very fine things, but how do you know that the liberal assumptions are, after all, *true*?" The practical need, he implies, is for a profound renewal of the liberal faith:

How can the method of liberalism cope with the basic irrationality of human nature? And regarding the aim of liberalism, its concern for the individual, what is meant precisely by the well-being of human individuals? What are the specific ends of individual existence? What indeed is the good from the individual's point of view?

. . . Liberalism needs a new metaphysics, and it needs a new program. These needs are not unrelated to its method and goals. Liberalism needs a fresh and more complex grasp of human nature, of the subtle and massive irrationalities of human nature, and of the position of the human being in Nature, in order that it may have a fresh underpinning of fact on the basis of which to employ its procedures and to re-project its ideas of ends or values. Also, it needs a new program in order that its methods and ends can be given new and compelling forms. . . . Only by a sharp and picturesque redefinition of proposals, especially in our power-hungry world, can the perennial elements of liberalism remain as significant in our times as theoretically they are.

People look about for encouraging signs, these days. What could be more encouraging than to find spokesmen for liberalism—the historic outlook from which most of modern progress has developed—calling for fresh inspiration! The trouble with the liberal movement during its

excessively economic phase was that it had lost the power of wonderment and daring speculation: the liberals thought they *knew* exactly what should be done.

Liberalism now seems to be at the beginning of a new cycle of endeavor, or at least in preparation for one. The world has become something of a mystery again, and liberals are ready to become learners themselves, instead of assured instructors of others. From this, perhaps, they will find that a great many people prefer learners to instructors for their teachers; that the best teachers are those who remain unsure about a great many things. Is it not a terrible certainty on the part of men who claim to have the final answers to the questions raised by Prof. Gotshalk which now threatens to drench the world in further bloodshed?

This article has an interesting conclusion:

The liberal of the past has often assumed that the human being can be made rational by logic. The fact is that he cannot be made rational without logic, but also, he cannot be made rational without conviction. Logic is too thin an instrument to effect rationality as a trait of the whole person. Too often in the past the liberal has also thought that his doctrine required him to cede the power of the passions to the agents of hate and oppression. But there is no reason why this enormous power should not be turned to rational ends and serve to bulwark these ends with energy and conviction.

We are not altogether sure about the role of the passions in the service of liberalism, but enthusiasm and conviction are certainly indispensable. How do you get conviction? You get it, we think, from two places—the heart and the mind. The heart gives birth to conviction and the mind nurtures it and makes it strong. It is here that metaphysics becomes important. By means of metaphysics—a general theory of the nature of things—the mind adds depth and dimensions to intuitions.