

THE INADEQUACY OF FEAR

EDWARD GIBBON WAKEFIELD wrote his memorable pamphlet, *The Hangman and the Judge*, in 1833. He had served a prison sentence and knew even more than his cousin, Elizabeth Fry, about the mind of the criminal. Among other brilliant deductions he said of savage laws: "You mean to frighten people and you frighten them overmuch. You want them to think of the punishment, which is so dreadful that they will not think of it."

Paradoxical though this may have appeared at the time, facts had long been accumulating to warrant this conclusion. With regard to the death penalty, of which Wakefield was then writing, even the record of English hangmen was enough to have made any curious mind ponder. During the years 1718-1780 two English hangmen had been condemned to death for murder (one being reprieved), a third was condemned to death for looting (also reprieved) and a fourth would have been condemned to death for theft had not the Court reduced the value of the stolen goods so as to take him, by a bare twopence, beyond the reach of the gallows.

From the problem of capital punishment to that of the H-Bomb is not such a far step. It was, in fact, while reflecting on Wakefield's statement about fear that I began to query the method of reasoning employed by both sides in the controversy about the new weapons. One side is saying, in effect, "This thing is so horrible that no aggressor will dare to provoke its use. It makes war too frightful to be any longer possible." The other side, with equal assurance, is trying to achieve the exclusion of war, or at least of atomic weapons, by lurid descriptions of the holocaust we must avoid.

The common fallacy of both sides seems to me to be no less apparent than that of our

eighteenth century legislators, under whose wise governance criminals multiplied even more rapidly than capital crimes were added to the statutes. The defenders of the H-Bomb appear to ignore the *continued* existence and steady increase in the world's danger spots. As a deterrent to war, the threat of nuclear weapons being used seems no more effective than the threat of the gallows was to criminals—or to their executioners. On the other hand the pacifists and "Ban the Bomb" advocates are also unable to claim any startling success. Judging by the apathy with which this horror propaganda has been received by the general public, I am inclined to quote Wakefield: "It is so dreadful that they will not think of it." As my own sympathies are frankly and fully with these anti-bomb advocates, I am all the more concerned with their failure.

It seems clear that our register of fear, like our hearing capacity, is limited. Fears beyond our imagination are like sounds too high pitched for hearing. Tragic drama, which aims at the purging of pity and fear, never succeeds when it attempts to overwhelm by multiplicity or mere degree of horror. It is effective just in so far as it elicits sympathy and understanding; for only where these are present can we face fear. When they are paralysed by mere horror it is by a human instinct—perhaps an aspect of self-preservation—that we escape into disbelief. "It can't happen here" is still the answer, even if it is not consciously spoken, which people give to something too horrible to be visualised. The characteristic nostalgia of the present day may be of similar origin—struthious and evasive:

Defiling the meadows where yet
He dreams of daisy chains,
Unable to forget
His clockwork trains . . .

It is all part of the same pattern, surely. We are too much afraid of fear to face its reality and return to our toys, our world of make-believe.

One thing above all others strikes me about this situation. It is that man's equipment, biologically speaking, cannot have changed perceptibly, if at all, within historical times. With no better nerves or brains than his ancestors had, he faces problems from which they were spared. Human knowledge grows with the generations, but each individual is born with the same limited resources. Thus, while the load increases, the human system that must bear its weight becomes with each generation more pitifully inadequate by comparison. It may even be optimistic to say that the individual has the nerves of his ancestors. A hundred new strains have probably weakened them long before a major crisis arises to test them. It is as though one increased indefinitely the "load" on electric wires. I know nothing about electricity except that you can't do that.

Surely this is the true context of the ever-increasing emphasis on escape from reality. Communists used to quote Marx, and still do for all I know, that "Religion is the Opium of the People." When they really feel the need of drugs, however, the people don't turn to religion; it seems that they even turn deliberately away from it. The churches may make a poor showing, but fundamentally they are very much concerned with the problems of life and death; and nobody running away from these realities is likely to seek refuge even in the most sugar-coated religion.

I have posed a question rather than attempted the answer, but I should like to conclude with a few hints as to where I find the answer myself, because I do not take a defeatist attitude; far from it. But I am convinced that the appeal to fear must be abandoned. Even if it worked, it might work in the wrong direction. It is not fear for ourselves but pity for others that can save the world from destruction; and that assumes a beginning in perfect love which casts out fear. It

is a big thing to ask. It sounds "Utopian" and leads me to a final reflection.

In the April number of the *Hibbert Journal* there was an article by the late S. L. Frank on *The Utopian Heresy*. The writer defined Utopianism as "the design to bring about salvation by the compulsory power of law." It is an odd definition, but even more odd was that it was followed by an attack on Tolstoy as a "Utopian." Now, whatever mistakes Tolstoy made, he certainly never believed in "Salvation by the compulsory power of law." Quite on the contrary, he shocked the politicians no less than the theologians by rejecting the claims of the State and insisting on the practicability of Christ's teaching. His "Utopia" was one which began with God in Man. He was, in fact, concerned with the "load" and how it could be carried.

In the most inspired and characteristic of his didactic stories it is Ivan the Fool who, under divine guidance, shows the way through complex situations. "All the wise men left the Kingdom," Tolstoy wrote ironically; "only the fools remained." In a world where clever and practical people have failed so dismally the Utopian simplicity of Ivan's folly seems to have even more meaning than it did when Tolstoy wrote this social counterpart of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

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THE ARTS OF PEACE

ONE interesting thing about the present is the increasing daring of those who challenge contemporary assumptions about "peace" and "defense." The story of a group of Englishmen who have challenged the assumptions behind Britain's Civil Defense program begins with a giant eucalyptus tree which stood for centuries in the heart of the city of Hiroshima. The tree was of course killed and charred by the atom bomb, but the sturdy core of the trunk remained upright, as though in mutilated reproach. The city fathers of Hiroshima took the wood of the tree and made it into small crosses, to serve as symbols of the manmade catastrophe. One of these crosses was given by the Mayor of Hiroshima to Michael L. Howard, a British businessman.

The little wooden cross must have made a deep impression on Howard, for when the H-Bomb experiments began in the Pacific, he led a protesting poster walk around Eros Statue in Piccadilly Circus. About that time, the city of Coventry decided to disband its local Civil Defense Committee. With some friends, Howard wondered why. As no one seemed to know, they took their questions to the London office of Civil Defense, learning that Civil Defense against atom and hydrogen bombs is practically useless. Hundreds of thousands, they were told, would be killed, regardless of defense measures. Then Howard came out against the whole idea of Civil Defense. He said:

The real danger in Civil Defense lies in the illusion of security which it tries to foster, and in its acceptance of hydrogen bombs as a method of settling disputes. In consequence of this illusion and this acceptance, Civil Defense stands as a barrier, not between ourselves and an enemy, but between ourselves and a constructive approach to the problem of how the peoples of the world are to live together in the atomic age, through reconciliation of their differences.

Civil Defense induces people to accept the idea that the only answers to the H-Bomb are bigger bombs and deeper and longer shelters.

For some, the decision of Michael Howard will seem like a leap into an abyss. Never before have the common people of a country been able to imagine that *there is nothing they can do to defend themselves against attack*. So, the question is whether or not a reassuring deception is better than a frightening reality.

Another Englishman, William Douglas Home, made a similar if personally more far-reaching decision during the war. Home, now a successful playwright, has just published his autobiography, in which he tells why, while a British Army officer, he refused to obey an order, for which he was court-martialled, cashiered, and imprisoned. In September, 1944, the British force with which Home was connected was preparing to attack the French town of Le Havre. The German general commanding the occupying force asked for time to evacuate the French civilian population. The British commander denied his request, even though the attack was not to take place for three days. It was at this point that Home refused to obey orders in preparation for the attack. A few days later, the press reported very few casualties among the troops, but that the preliminary bombing by the Air Force killed 12,000 civilians. The comment of *Peace News* (July 2) is this:

We need reminders, such as this reference to the Le Havre incident, of the extent to which a military disregard for human life can be carried, even when the lives are those, not of enemies, but of a people who are being liberated.

If the Germans, instead of the Allies, had been sitting in trials for war criminality, they would presumably have found no difficulty in framing an indictment based on the happenings at Le Havre.

In a recent address before the All-India Writers' Conference, Vice President Radhakrishnan supplied the psychological basis for revolutionary change in human attitudes toward the issues of war, peace, and "defense." He said:

We live today on the edge of a precipice; the perils of atomic and hydrogen developments dominate our thoughts and trouble our consciences. We feel that their incalculable destructive power will act as a great deterrent to war. But by these threats of limitless horror, we are appealing to the baser instincts of human nature, fear, greed, and hate.

According to Indian thought, by the pursuit of *moha*, or delusion, man reaches death; by the pursuit of truth, he attains immortality. Of all the emotions, the least compatible with freedom and most degrading to man is fear. We are planting appalling fear in men's hearts. By so doing, we corrupt their morals and destroy their minds.

REVIEW

THE STRANGE HISTORY OF ASCETICISM

A FRIEND and subscriber in India has sent from Bombay a compact history of asceticism, *Indian Sadhus*, by G. S. Ghurye, suggesting that the author's critical discussion of W. Macneile Dixon imposes on the editors of MANAS something of an obligation to reply. Having praised Dixon's *Human Situation* on so many occasions, we can hardly demur, especially since, for all our admiration, we have regarded Dr. Dixon as excessively biased against Indian philosophers and religious teachers.

In his Preface, Dr. Ghurye explains the background for the debate about "worldly renunciation" into which Dixon entered with such enthusiasm. During the '30's, Albert Schweitzer's writings began to arouse the European cultural elite to curiosity about the "ascetic ideal," while at the same time S. Radhakrishnan was appointed to the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions at the University of Oxford, and courses in Indian philosophy were included in many other institutions. Once again—this had happened before—professional yogis and fakirs toured Europe and America and plied a lucrative trade, winning disciples for bizarre cults, yet, simultaneously, Indian philosophical thought won a greater measure of scholarly recognition. Considering that the general tone and orientation of Eastern thinking was strange to the Western mind, it is not surprising some partisanship resulted, and it is of this partisanship that Dr. Dixon stands accused:

W. Macneile Dixon's Gifford Lectures for 1935-1937 are clearly a reaction to the growing situation. These lectures in the form of the book styled *The Human Situation* have caught the imagination of the English-reading public. The book went into its seventh reprint by 1944. Dixon in charming style combats the theory of negation of life in favour of the prevailing positive attitude. In doing so, he has shown rather poor appreciation of the role and work of the monastic and ascetic orders of the West and the

East. Sometimes his desire for positivism has resulted in misrepresentation of ascetic life and practices. If this book should fall into the hands of some of the European elite who have imbibed Dixon's statements and thought, my labour would be more than adequately paid for.

It is not our purpose now to undertake a detailed defense of Dixon—who, even here, we think, may have some points in his favor—save to point out that the author of *The Human Situation* gave prolonged and approving attention to one of the root ideas of Indian philosophy—the theory of the rebirth on earth of the human soul after death. Dixon clearly felt that Western thinkers would be forever impoverished unless they gave the world-view suggested by the rebirth hypothesis full attention. His objection, then, was perhaps not so much to the content of Eastern thought as to what he regarded as an unnecessary and illogical corollary—passivity, withdrawal from life, negation of value in human happiness. Dixon, furthermore, did not pretend to summarize Eastern philosophy, but rather simply stated his own forceful opinions, and frankly as opinions. (Dr. Ghurye, we feel, incidentally, misuses the term "positivism," since, in the West, disciples of Dixon and the positivists have always been at complete loggerheads. For these reasons, we find it curious that one of the few eminent Westerners who has undertaken to defend transcendental metaphysics should be considered an "opponent" of the Eastern tradition in general!)

Yet it is true enough that those who have reasoned in the Dixon manner, thinking that "the voyage of the soul" may be a long and glorious adventure, lasting through an infinitude of lifetimes, have found little pause for reflection on austerity, self-denial, and ascetic practices in general. Radhakrishnan, however, once wrote that "those who tell us that asceticism is superfluous, that contemplation is perilous, and the precept 'be perfect' means 'make a success of life and attend if possible to the perishing moment,' do not understand the high destiny of man," and the world-renowned Aurobindo

presents the same case in even more positive terms by remarking that "there can be no great and complete culture without some element of asceticism in it, for asceticism means the self-denial and self-conquest by which man represses his lower impulses and rises to greater heights of his nature." The strange thing to us is that Westerners, who seem to be so strongly attached to earthly life, who go to any and all lengths to preserve it, have never made popular the speculation that many more lives may be in store for future enjoyment. Conversely, Easterners, to whom the doctrine of rebirth rather than that of an eternal heaven or hell is characteristic, have often been occupied with techniques for releasing themselves from bondage to recurring existence. Paradoxically, then, those who might easily *desire* to believe in rebirth do not so believe, and those who do believe do *not* appear to desire to so believe!

But all this is getting us off the track of Dr. Ghurye's contribution. He holds that there is a profound truth symbolized by ascetic practice, and that, with all the extremes represented in the history of the East taken into consideration, there remains a core of significant meaning in ascetic practice for both the individual and society. Ghurye believes, further, that the occasionally irrational asceticisms of the past are being replaced by a more mature outlook, without losing the underlying meaning of a great tradition. He writes:

The ascetic ideal type began by renouncing the world and withdrawing from among fellow-brethren. It has slowly but surely developed into an ideal type whose main business in this world is twofold, self-realization and spiritualization of the lay brethren representing the older, and selfless social service the newer, feature. Provision for spiritualization and social service through ascetic ideal type is a social experiment of high originality and great significance. As long as the urge to ascetic life continues to throb in a fair number of human hearts so long will the needs of the society, spiritual and social, receive selfless attention, and its members continue to be reminded of transcendental life. . . . Indian Sadhuism is thus seen to be a process of long evolution. It has

shown great vitality and readiness to adapt itself to changing circumstances without foregoing its fundamental principles. It has counted among its ranks a fairly large number of outstanding personalities. They have contributed very liberally to the spiritual, intellectual and social uplift of their lay brethren.

Does not every man, in his heart, long for the capacity to practice "austerity," just as, at other times, he longs for abandonment in sensuous pleasures? We are all of two minds in respect to the way of human fulfillment and, of course, as on other questions, it may be that until we understand how to blend or synthesize the "life abundant" with the "life ascetic," we shall experience alternations between two unnatural extremes. What is of greatest interest to us in *Indian Sadhus* is Dr. Ghurye's discussion of the type of synthesis between these extremes contained in the Eastern tradition—on a much less neurotic basis than the subdivision of so many Westerners into fanatical moralists or fanatical sensualists. Ever since the ninth century B.C., the theory of the four "asramas" or stages of life has been widely known in Hindu thought. This, apparently, is the major dimension omitted from consideration by Dr. Dixon. Ghurye explains:

The theory of the four 'asramas' or stages of life seems to have crystallized into a regular system sometime before Buddha and Mahvira. According to the 'asrama' theory every Hindu male is expected to devote the latter half of his life to religious pursuits leading to and ending in complete renunciation. The third stage of life may be described as qualified asceticism of social significance. It is the life of the hermit who may have his wife with him. Both of them devote themselves to the practice of austerities, the hermit himself, in addition, instructing those students who care to come under his tutelage. The last stage of life extends the content of asceticism.

The ideal end is salvation, and the ideal type is a person who prepares himself by systematic study, enters into and lives the full life of a householder, retires to the hermitage to practice austerities and finally selflessly wanders about as a mendicant friar, wholly absorbed in bodily mortification and spiritual contemplation.

Here, then, is an entirely different sort of "adventure" than that conceived by Dr. Dixon when he envisioned the life of the soul as a long series of bodily incarnations. Yet, to many Hindus, it is a worthy and worth-while "adventure" all the same. In the *Upanishads*, further, we see that the highest ideal was held to be embodied by one who *could* practice all possible austerities, who had disciplined his physical self and reached the state mentioned, but who subsequently chose to live a constructive household life among his fellows. Naciketas, for one, having obtained supreme enlightenment, "instead of renouncing the world, continued to carry on the entire duties of a householder's life. That a householder's life properly lived was an adequate spiritual preparation is an opinion voiced here and there in the *Upanishads*." Dr. Ghurye continues, presenting some of the subtleties of the ascetics' ideals not usually understood by those Westerners who judge appearances rather than motivations:

Bhagavadgita lays down the philosophical basis for the householder's life being considered the most appropriate spiritual preparation for future life. Living the householder's life, doing all its ordained duties in the spirit of renunciation and in devotion to God, is proclaimed as the most desirable and proper form of life. A person living such a life is declared to be a Yogi. But he is not a yogi of the ordinary run. He is significantly called a "niskamakarmayogi," that is one who performs one's duties without any thought of consequences to oneself. Disinterested and dispassionate householder is thence an ideal type. In actual living, though not theoretically, it supplants the older type represented by the life of four stages.

All in all, and throughout the history of Indian asceticism, it appears that the Indian has been well aware that asceticism and monastic practices are merely crutches to help the student of "self" on his way, and if we had to choose between Christian monasticism and Indian, our selection would certainly be the latter. For one thing, Christians apparently got into the habit of thinking that no one could restrain his own evil impulses without some kind of authoritative organization to help him. The Indian monastics, on the other hand,

were never particularly inclined toward punishing one another for transgressions, nor were they fascinated by "evil" and "sin." Men of like mind simply joined with one another to engage in trials of self-discipline.

Dr. Ghurye, as a sociologist, makes an effort to show that asceticism has a considerable social significance and has played a part in the evolution in Indian culture generally. Here we feel the author to be on his least defensible ground, for in none of the ascetic practices discussed in detail do we find any appeal for revolutionary social change.

COMMENTARY

WHAT'S WRONG WITH DUALISM?

THE burden of Roland Walker's complaint against Dr. Rhine (see *Frontiers*) is that the latter is a "dualist." But what is wrong with being a dualist? True, dualism has been unpopular in philosophy for generations. The only serious defense of dualism, until very recently, in the literature of science has been William McDougall's *Body and Mind*. Most scientific thinkers have been uniformly *monists*, more or less in the pattern of Cohen's definition of materialism, or they have been *pluralists*, proposing, after William James, that the phenomena of existence are produced by a variety of independent causes.

To be candid, we have never understood why there should be so much fuss about dualism. While the human mind seems naturally to hunger for simplicity of explanation, we see no reason why an *ultimate* monism need be contradicted by the idea of a dual reality in active life. It is, after all, a matter of primary experience that man has a *dual* nature: he is a moral being; he does have higher and lower impulses or motives and tendencies. To ignore the dualism in human life is to shut out the most obvious realities.

Then, in so far as the various sciences are concerned, it would be foolish not to admit the necessity of a pluralistic point of view. Chemistry is not physics, biology is not chemistry, and psychology is not glorified physiology.

Thus we may be monists in philosophy, dualists in psychology, and pluralists in respect to all the wide diversities of life. Any other view, it seems to us, would be to try to force the facts of experience into a straight-jacket of doctrinal simplicity.

There may be, as the ancient philosophers have said, an all-containing absolute spirit, or spirit-matter, but in life we encounter the endless polarities of spirit *and* matter. The idea of spirit or soul need not be an uncontrollable anarchist notion, so far as the sciences are concerned. The

scientists fear dualism because they suspect that "soul" will introduce a "wild" factor into their calculations, abolishing the discipline of science. But the wisest dualists—the great philosophers and religious teachers—have not lacked rigor of mind. On the contrary, they have taught that acquaintance with spiritual reality is not possible without discipline of the highest sort. It seems to us that scientific critics like Mr. Walker have not given the dualist philosophers sufficient serious attention.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

WE are naturally pleased to find a truly informed substantiation of the central thesis of "Fratricide Among Educators," lead article in *MANAS* for April 21 Yale's President, A. Whitney Griswold, brings a rich background of educational philosophy to bear on "liberal education" in "What We Don't Know Will Hurt Us," in *Harper's* for July.

Dr. Griswold entirely avoids polemics and champions neither the "traditionalists" nor the "anti-traditionalists," but from what is very apparently a non-partisan position he throws considerable light upon both persuasions.

His most impressive citation, however, is from Francis Bacon, who, 350 years ago and some twenty-five years before the founding of the first American University, defined the ideal and necessary function of liberal arts. We agree with Dr. Griswold that "no one since Bacon has improved upon his statement of the case"—which reads:

First, therefore, amongst so many great foundations of colleges in Europe I find it strange that they are all dedicated to professions, and none left free to arts and sciences at large. For if men judge that learning should be referred to action, they judge well, but in this they fall into the error described in the ancient fable, in which the other parts of the body did suppose the stomach had been idle, because it neither performed the office of motion, as the limbs do, nor of sense, as the head doth, but yet notwithstanding it is the stomach that digested and distributeth to all the rest. So if any man think philosophy and universality to be idle studies, he doth not consider that all professions are from thence served and supplied. And this I take to be a great cause that hath hindered the progression of learning, because these fundamental knowledges have been studied but in passage. For if you will have a tree bear more fruit than it hath used to do, it is not any thing you can do to the boughs, but it is the stirring of the earth and putting new mould about the roots that must work it.

While the selection of this quotation and Griswold's own view that "the liberal arts have constituted the basic studies from which all phases of the educational process—general, vocational, professional; elementary, secondary, and higher—draw nourishment and without which they languish and fail," seem to place the Yale President as a Hutchins-Barr partisan, a thorough reading of the article demonstrates that he is principally concerned with defining issues and clarifying the relationship between vocational and philosophical learning. For instance:

I leave for the moment the relative merits of these two educational philosophies. Liberal education has periodically dried up in formalism and is never proof against illiberal teaching. Bacon himself takes certain contemporary Cambridge professors to task for teaching "words and not matter." Form without substance, polish without purpose, have always been a "distemper of learning" to the liberal arts. If we think of utilitarian education in the sense of occupational training we will find that it has always had a respectable place in society; it had such a place in the medieval Guild system; it has it in our secondary schools today.

If, on the other hand, we think of it in the sense of instrumentalism, this too has made useful contributions to the educational process, especially at the level of elementary education. My point here, however, is not the respective merits of liberal and utilitarian education but their common antiquity. Once this is appreciated the present dispute assumes its true character. It is not a dispute between Ancients and Moderns, or tradition and invention. It is a dispute between two Ancients which has been going on a long time.

Dr. Griswold shows that from 1910 to 1940, a "huge new educational population" was created—very largely the progeny of people who had no idea what "liberal education" might be and who were primarily concerned with securing better job opportunities for their children. "Is it any wonder," he asks, "that in this suddenly expanded realm of secondary education, where from time immemorial the liberal arts have had to prove themselves in competition with utilitarian education of all kinds—where they have always had to make a case for themselves or give

ground—they gave ground? They did not give it in an objective test of merit or by decision of policy. They gave it by default. No matter how or why the ground was given, it was a serious setback to education in general." Further:

The entire country has been the loser and the entire country is responsible for its own loss. The educational process is indivisible. Each part of it depends upon every other part. If we single out the universities as standard-bearers we must not forget that these standards, too, require the support of parents—a cultural base of comprehension and sympathy—or they cannot be maintained. If the truth be told, there was little comprehension of the power of the liberal arts in American society because American society was incurious and inarticulate concerning its own political and social philosophy. Not since the great days of the Federal Convention, the Federalist Papers, the writings and teachings of Adams and Jefferson, and the seminal decisions of John Marshall had we bothered to inquire much into the meaning of our democracy and the vital part of it represented by liberal education. The glow of that early enlightenment soon faded in the American sky and while we remained furiously awake in business and politics, in philosophy we went to sleep. We were not really roused from this sleep and impelled to re-examine first principles until economic collapse, followed by the threat of Fascist and then of Communist totalitarianism, forced us to look into the meaning of many things we had taken for granted. Then and only then (and I speak of the last two decades) did we begin to discover the meaning that liberal education held for Plato and Aristotle and Adams and Jefferson.

In conclusion, Dr. Griswold makes excellent use of the example of Abraham Lincoln, who turned to the realm of liberal education for "truly pragmatic" reasons. Lincoln needed to understand and to communicate with a larger world than that of the Illinois backwoods, and thus was drawn with zeal and appreciation to the arts. It is, indeed, only in terms of "liberal education" that men can see beyond their emotional involvements in local issues, acquire a background which establishes a necessary dignity for an opponent's position, and, above all, learn to contrast and compare the different points of emphasis in politics, religion and social doctrine,

out of which each must forge his own convictions. In respect to Lincoln, Griswold writes:

Without this education he might have continued to represent those ideals and aspirations in the back woods of Illinois. With the help of a liberal education he represented them, and not only represented but advanced and strengthened them, for the world. What liberal education offered Lincoln in his time a proper diffusion of its power through our educational system offers us all today. We neglect this knowledge at our peril.

On the basis of recent reading, we assume that the debate about the ends and aims of education will be going on for a long time to come. The *Nation* (June 26), for instance, contains a defense of "our public schools" by James C. Bay, a Columbia Education Professor and public school administrator. Dr. Bay, however, like many who view attempts to revive liberal education as an attack upon John Dewey or "Progressivism," seems incapable of understanding the central arguments put forth by Robert M. Hutchins. In the context of Dr. Bay's article, however, one can easily see why a man like Hutchins inclines towards such dramatic statements of the case for the liberal arts; the "intelligentsia" often need to hear extremely challenging arguments to make them even sit up and argue, let alone be aware that something important is at stake. In any case, the Hutchins' thesis is supplemented, in non-argumentative fashion, by Dr. Griswold's lucidly written historical survey.

FRONTIERS "Retreat" to Philosophy

THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY, as any regular reader would probably testify, is very nearly the official organ of conservative scientific opinion. Now in its seventy-ninth volume, it has been published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science since 1915 and may be said to represent the serious thinking of its members in the quest for general scientific truth. The editors do not have to worry about producing a profit for the publishers, so that the content of the magazine may be fairly regarded as the honest expression of institutional science, unaffected by commercial motives.

It is natural enough for such a magazine to have a "conservative" character. Sad experience has taught the scientific fraternity to be wary of premature conclusions, and the conception of scientific method itself is a solid bastion against any tendency to sudden innovation. Thus, with conservatism always at a premium in the sciences, the enthusiasts, the original thinkers and pioneers sometimes risk professional isolation, and it often happens that that man who does creative work in some field of science is not recognized until long after he has died.

Those who take what may be called "the larger view" of the role of science in society will probably argue that this is proper—that the protection of the painfully accumulated body of knowledge named science is more important than the unhappiness and frustrations of a few individuals. Time will tell, and science ought anyhow to be regarded as an impersonal achievement of mankind.

This is the case for conservatism in science. We shall not argue against it, but simply invite readers to look at such books as David Lindsay Watson's *Scientists Are Human* or E. Douglas Hume's *Béchamp or Pasteur?* for another view. Here, we are interested in what is apparently a moment of *change* in the conservative viewpoint

in respect to psychology. In the *Scientific Monthly* for July, Roland Walker, a biologist who teaches at Rensselaer Institute, writes on "Parapsychology and Dualism," and, unlike most if not all previous discussions of Extra Sensory Perception in *SM*, starts out with the assumption that the supernormal (*psi*) phenomena dealt with by Dr. Rhine of Duke University and other workers in parapsychological research are genuine. As Walker puts it:

Although some careful skeptics are still not satisfied with some of the experiments, for the present it is assumed that, under adequate experimental control, there is a considerable body of valid phenomena of the kind referred to by Rhine's school as *psi* phenomena.

Let us say, at the outset, that Mr. Walker manifests considerable effort to be "fair"—or, to use the more scientific adjective, "impartial"—in his analysis of Dr. Rhine's books and articles. Beyond the admission of *psi* phenomena as facts, however, he is not especially sympathetic toward Dr. Rhine. Even so, it seems likely that this discussion represents a definite change of "front" in the controversy over ESP. The facts are no longer questioned, although the philosophical views deduced from or said to be implied by the facts are rejected. (Walker finds that Rhine is "an enthusiast," and that in Rhine's writings a "yearning for evidence of immortality is expressed again and again, together with faith in the demonstrability of free will by means of *psi*.")

In other words, if Mr. Walker may be taken to be speaking for conventional scientific opinion—and this is at least partially justified by the fact that the *Scientific Monthly* publishes his article in the lead position—Dr. Rhine has won his long fight. The issue is now the question of what the facts of telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., *mean*, not whether they exist at all. The opposition, in short, has retreated to philosophy.

We are not going to "argue" with Mr. Walker about his interpretation of the facts, but try to make clear where he stands. Briefly, he is against

"Dualism." He is against the idea of the mind or soul as a separate agency or entity in the human being, responsible for ESP phenomena. He declares himself a Mechanist who believes that all the phenomena of human experience including ESP phenomena—can be explained by a single system of causal relationships. Man, he would probably say, is body-mind, not body *and* mind. He cites disapprovingly from Rhine the statement: "*What other scientific basis [than psi phenomena] is there for challenging materialism?*"

Since Walker's article is hardly replete with succinct definitions, it should be useful to insert here the definition of Materialism which seems appropriate to his argument. We cannot be sure, but we hope that it is one that he would accept. Taken from Chapman Cohen's *Materialism Restated*, it is this:

... the essence of the Materialistic conception is that all the changes in this world of ours, physical, chemical, biological 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 phenomena in terms of the composition of forces. That is the principle for which Materialism has always stood. By that principle it stands or falls.

We think this definition serves well enough, for the dualistic interpretation of ESP obviously supplies some variety of "controlling and directing intelligence" over and above as well as involved in and limited by "the cosmic process" and "the composition of forces."

Whether or not Mr. Walker is successful in disposing of psi phenomena as the result of "mechanistic" causes we leave to readers to determine for themselves, by reference to his *Scientific Monthly* article. But we should like to

note that the idea of a distinct and in some measure independent intelligence operating in and through the body does not *necessarily* offend against the scientific method in the way that past "primitive anthropomorphic conceptions" have offended. The Jehovah of the Old Testament could easily butcher all hopes of scientific progress, but this is hardly true of the extremely tentative notion of "soul" or independent mind implied by the theories of workers in parapsychology. Jehovah was characterized by his utter disregard of natural or orderly processes—that is the meaning of "miracle." Has Rhine made any such suggestion respecting a supposed "soul"? What rational opposition can be offered to the idea that a psychic system of reality may interpenetrate the better known physical system of reality, and that the psychic system has laws and phenomena peculiarly its own?

One interesting thing about Mr. Walker's article is the way he presents his case. He doesn't give any particular reason for implying that Rhine's interest in immortality is somehow a point against parapsychological research, or interpretations of it, but simply calls attention to this interest, as though that were enough to clinch his criticism. This is the "nuff said" method of disposing of metaphysics. It seems fair to say that it has no place in serious discussion. After all, the fact that scientific inquiry has never interested itself in metaphysical questions may mean, not that metaphysical questions are unimportant, but that scientific inquiry is seriously limited with respect to the most profound issues of human life. And from this it might be concluded that the somewhat rhetorical mood of Mr. Walker's article, in dealing with Rhine's anticipations of where parapsychological research may lead, is more of a boomerang than anything else. The times and the interests of men are changing. It is even possible that the informed opinion of the future will regard more highly a consideration of immortality and the arguments in its behalf than any attempt to preserve the "purity" of scientific method according to nineteenth-century canons. Those

canons once had a very important purpose: to protect the practice of science from invasion by the irrational "will of God" and such-like interference. *But there is no justifiable reason for applying those canons against concepts of law and phenomena which do not have an irrational origin.* In the case of the implications of ESP theory and phenomena, metaphysics is the logical tool with which to test concepts of law and phenomena for rationality.

There is another way of regarding the differences between Dr. Rhine and Mr. Walker—a way which may help to make us a little less "the children of our time." One of the great historians of the nineteenth century, W. E. H. Lecky, in the introduction to his *Rationalism in Europe*, gives considerable attention to great changes in opinion. While Lecky is above all a rationalist, himself, and his subject is the growth of the rational spirit in Europe, he is obliged by the facts to recognize that many other factors play a part in the transition from one climate of opinion to another. Speaking of the period which began at the close of the eighteenth century, he said:

It was observed that every great change of belief had been preceded by a great change in the intellectual condition of Europe, that the success of any opinion depended much less upon the force of its arguments, or upon the ability of its advocates, than upon the predisposition of society to receive it, and that that predisposition resulted from the intellectual type of the age. As men advance from an imperfect to a higher civilization, they gradually sublimate and refine their creed. Their imaginations insensibly detach themselves from those grosser conceptions and doctrines that were formerly most powerful, and they sooner or later reduce all their opinions into conformity with the moral and intellectual standards which the new civilization produces. . . . The pressure of the general intellectual influences of the time determines the predispositions which ultimately regulate details of belief; and though all men do not yield to that pressure with the same facility, all large bodies are at last controlled. A change of speculative opinions does not imply an increase of the data upon which those opinions rest, but a change of the habits of thought and mind which they reflect. Definite

arguments are the symptoms and pretexts, but seldom the causes of the change. . . .

When an opinion that is opposed to the age is incapable of modification and is an obstacle to progress, it will at last be openly repudiated; and if it is identified with any existing interests, or associated with some eternal truth, its rejection will be accompanied by paroxysms of painful agitation. But much more frequently civilization makes opinions that are opposed to it simply obsolete. They perish by indifference, not by controversy. . . .

The number of persons who have a rational basis for their belief is probably infinitesimal; for illegitimate influences not only determine the convictions of those who do not examine, but usually give a dominating bias to the reasonings of those who do. But it would be manifestly absurd to conclude from this, that reason has no part or function in the formation of opinions. No mind, it is true, was ever altogether free from distorting influences, but in the struggle between the reason and the affection which leads to truth, as in the struggle between the will and the desires which leads to virtue, every effort is crowned with a measure of success, and innumerable gradations of progress are manifested. All that we can rightly infer is, that the process of reasoning is much more difficult than is commonly supposed; and that to those who would study the causes of existing opinions, the study of predispositions is much more important than the study of arguments.

Since these remarks by Lecky possess the symmetry of thorough reflection, we have quoted them at length. What seems particularly pertinent, here, is that the acceptance of a point of view depends more upon a general predisposition than upon "argument," and that opposing opinions "perish by indifference, not by controversy." The point is that the predisposition of the age reveals a profound interest in dualism. Nor is there any longer a sound libertarian reason for arguing against it. The dualism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not become unpopular for scientific reasons. The dogmas of religion won the just and extreme suspicion of freedom-loving men because of the use to which they had been put by bigots and tyrants, religious and political. Materialism, as Bertrand Russell pointed out more than a quarter of a century ago, was a weapon, not a gospel valuable in itself; and today, the war

in which that weapon was useful is over. The strife between science and religion is no longer a world-shaking issue.

The physical scientists and the scientifically-minded have had the initiative in shaping the thought for the world for some two or three hundred years. That is, the "world-machine" of Galileo and Newton throughout this period formed the basic assumptions of practically all the branches of science. Now, however, with the work of Dr. Rhine and some others coming to the fore, the Monists and the Materialists and the Mechanists have the role of conservatives, they are innovators no longer. And since they now lack the moral strength of the great social movement which once brought them a popularity far beyond normal expectation of the recognition of scientific discovery, it is probable that the initiative will pass into other hands. The predispositions of men have changed. Human longings are now for other things.

For those who are persuaded that the general body of scientific fact and theory has made an end to fluctuations of human opinion, these observations will appear to be nonsense. There is that not inconsiderable school of thought which holds that Philosophy has lost its pre-eminence, having had to yield its position to the discoverers of scientific laws and facts. We take the view, however, that Philosophy is well on the way to regaining her former role as interpreter and evaluator of the facts submitted by every field of human inquiry. We suggest, further, that this renewal of independent thinking and the faith in the capacities of mind is the new predisposition of the age, acceptable to reason, and generated by the aspirations of men for a higher life.