

THE BRAZEN IMAGES

MANAS continues to receive letters concerning recent articles on unilateral disarmament, in particular, "A Question of Consequences" (MANAS, March 1), and "The Issue Is Disarmament" (March 15). This correspondence is breeding editorial uncertainty as to the best way to go on with discussion of the subject. One way, of course, is to print letters of comment and criticism when they come in, adding whatever perspectives suggest themselves at the time. But while an element of "side-taking" is inevitable in any such discussion, one thing we should like to avoid is its degeneration into a simple, for-and-against argument about unilateral disarmament. This argument is of course going on, and has its uses, but it is at least equally important to recognize the factors of human decision which tend to be left out of account in controversy of this sort.

Take for example one view of how the issues of the argument about disarmament are shaped. The defense of a nation is traditionally a military responsibility. Military men are specialists who are handed the problem of protecting their country from the dangers of armed attack. They are not charged with problems and moral issues of statesmanship and national policy. War, as Clausewitz said, is the continuation of policy by other means, and the soldier is in charge of the "other means." This is a technical problem. The scope of the problem varies with the changing possibilities of attack by an enemy. The soldier must consider *all* those possibilities. He is expected to anticipate the very worst that he thinks can happen, and plan for that, along with all the other possibilities. It follows that, in military calculations, the hypothetical "enemy" appears as an impersonal force for evil guided by no other purpose than an unqualified will to conquer or destroy. This "enemy" is an abstraction, yet an

abstraction which on occasion becomes a concrete reality when war occurs. The extent to which the soldier's plans and projects, in anticipation of what the hypothetical enemy will do, actually help to *create* the real enemy—or at least, shape his character and behavior—is a philosophical and psychological question to which the soldier gives no attention. He is like an engineer who builds a dam. The engineer builds the dam to retain waters produced by extreme flood conditions. He doesn't guess. He looks up the historical records of rainfall and streamflow to determine what the height and the strength of the dam should be. He anticipates the worst flood that might come and builds to control its strength. He would be a very bad engineer if he did anything else.

The soldier, by institutional definition, is in a like position. He is a military engineer with similar obligations in the anticipation of war. In the present, however, the problems of the military engineer have grown beyond the scope of the education of the typical military strategist. The evolution of military techniques, climaxed by the invention of the atom bomb, and brought to undreamed-of "perfection" by the nuclear scientists, has led to the extension of military engineering into the most recondite realms of theoretical physics. The planning for military operations anticipated to be necessary for national defense is now, in part, in the hands of civilian military specialists who are trained in this and related fields. These men, some of them of considerable intellectual stature, have had to adopt the military stereotype of the enemy, with the consequence that what was once a methodological abstraction of a war college staff has been expanded into an image given its character by acute scientific intelligence. Further, these scientific specialists who now serve the nation in the context of military assumptions are articulate

men who write articles and books about their work and its problems. The articles and books are read by critics and essayists and by substantial minorities in the general public, with the result that, imperceptibly, the categories of military thinking tend to be adopted by the civilian population. The professional assumption of the soldier, that the political or ideological opponent must be expected to do his military worst, becomes the starting-point of ordinary thinking. Thus, to the military abstraction and the technological stereotype is added the substance of a "popular" image until, for many people, this hypothetical "enemy" may have far more reality than the actual human beings of whose supposed behavior it is a model, constructed for the purposes of theoretical strategy.

If it is asked, "What else can we do but think this way?", the reply may be that few people will consider alternatives until there is a full realization of the consequences of the present attitude. One obvious consequence is a feeling of absolute distrust toward the Soviet Union. This does not raise the question of whether the Soviets can be "trusted." It is only recognition of the fact that, by military hypothesis, we will not trust them at all.

Now if it be admitted that peace-making is an activity which involves some measure of trust, then it is fair to say that the popularization of the military image of the "enemy" has created an absolute dilemma for national policy. Either the peace-making or the image of the enemy will have to go. The advocates of unilateral disarmament have decided that it is time to dispense with the image of the enemy.

In argument, however, it is possible for the defender of unilateral disarmament to retain something of the military image of the enemy, as a means of pressing his point. W. H. Ferry, for example, accepts "the most drastic consequences that anyone can think of." He allows the possibility that a unilaterally disarmed America might be taken over by "functionaries from the

Kremlin," with "Communism replacing democracy as the American way of life." He goes on to say that he does not believe this would happen, but he admits the possibility as a condition of his argument. (*Disarm To Parley*, American Friends Service Committee pamphlet.) To do even justice to the contestants in this debate, it should be noted that the most eminent defenders of "peace through balance of terror" concede similarly dire possibilities in the case of war. Herman Kahn, for example, admits that anywhere from 40,000,000 to 80,000,000 Americans might be killed in a few hours, in the event of nuclear attack.

Mr. Ferry is admitting the potential capacity of men to be ruthless tyrants and brutes. Mr. Kahn is admitting the capacity of nuclear weapons to devastate and kill. Mr. Ferry believes recovery of freedom and peace to be more likely after unilateral disarmament. Mr. Kahn thinks that, under the worst imaginable circumstances of nuclear war, with, say, 160 million dead in the United States, it would take a hundred years for the economic status quo ante bellum to be regained.

What is the difference in the "images" of the enemy held by Mr. Ferry and Mr. Kahn? Mr. Kahn's image is not his own, but the image created by his specialty, or the military specialty. In his field, deliberations begin with the stipulation that the enemy will do his worst. Initially, Mr. Ferry's image is one he has borrowed for the purposes of his argument. "All right," he says. "Suppose the Russians do perform according to the stereotype and 'take over' a militarily defenseless United States. I think that even in this extreme situation the qualities of democracy—love of freedom, devotion to justice—would in the long run be able to transform that stereotype into something else." (These are not Mr. Ferry's words, but an implication of what he says.) Surely, this optimism in behalf of the "staying power" of the principles of democracy is no more of a wild assumption than Mr. Kahn's expectation of the recovery of the country from almost absolute

destruction in a brief hundred years. Ferry is betting on human resources, Kahn on technological resources, and both start out with the worst possible consequences of the position each one has assumed.

You could say that Mr. Ferry remains in the context of the military assumption about the enemy only long enough to engage the attention of his audience. He then moves into a humanist context, as the only place where rational discourse can be conducted, and defends a view of man that began in the West with Socrates and Plato.

The most important consideration in this general problem, it seems to us, is awareness of the context in which it is being discussed. There is practically no hope at all for either peace or survival if we remain in the context of military assumption, since it has been expanded from a technical postulate to a broad judgment about the nature of man—*Soviet* man. We may still have to make judgments about the Soviets, but it is a gross and perhaps fatal mistake to accept the military technical judgment as though it were a civilized opinion. At this point, the need is to find out why we think as we do, and whether or not it can be humanly justified.

There is a strong tendency today, growing out of the prestige of scientific achievement in technology and invention, to accept scientific judgments on national defense as though they were beyond intelligent questioning. How wrong this may be is disclosed by P.M.S. Blackett, professor of physics at London University, and author of books on the political implications of nuclear weapons. Prof. Blackett points out that since "no large-scale nuclear war has ever occurred, there is no body of operational data on real events on which to base a common-sense analysis." For this reason scientific military analysts are obliged to use "some type of theoretical approach, in which the vast complexities of the real world are at first set aside and an attempt is made to construct a simplified model which will represent the real problem in as

many essentials as possible." Then, with this model before them, the technical advisers use either verbal or mathematical arguments "to deduce conclusions of practical importance." On this general procedure, Prof. Blackett comments:

The essential difficulty of this method is to know whether the model which has been constructed is sufficiently like the real events which it purports to represent to allow conclusions which have much relevance to executive action. When a highly simplified model has to be used, any prediction by its use is likely to be so uncertain that it is essential to check it against conclusions reached in a more intuitive manner by attempting to envisage the situation as a whole. . . .

In the present world of nuclear plenty, when both Western and Soviet blocs have the power to destroy each other many times over, it is clear that, to a degree never before equalled in history, there can be no military policy independent of both home and foreign policy. Thus any purely military analysis will almost certainly leave out of account some vital factors and so can lead to fallacious results. Again, just because the life of a nation is involved, any military analysis which leads to definite recommendations for decisions must be readily intelligible to the political and military leaders who have the responsibility for executive action. It would be almost true to say that in the field of major strategy, as opposed to weapons design and tactics, the only good arguments are simple arguments. If they are not simple, they will not be generally understood and so no action should be taken on them.

In this article, which appears in the April *Encounter*, Prof. Blackett examines the conclusions of the "balance of terror" experts, such as Albert Wohlstetter, Oscar Morgenstern, and Herman Kahn. His analysis cannot be summarized here, although his own conclusion, put in a few words, is of general interest. He writes:

If I personally believed that the present balance of nuclear terror was as unstable as these writers seem to think, I would in all seriousness conclude that the safest possibility for Great Britain, and ultimately for the world, would be for Britain to opt out completely from the nuclear arms race. Moreover, I myself would give up the arduous labour of studying the

intricate arguments of these writers and devote myself to campaigning to achieve this.

A final observation in Prof. Blackett's article concerns what seems to him a kind of morbid "death-wish" on the part of some of these highly intellectual civilian strategists. "I feel," he says, "a strain of deep social pessimism combined sometimes strangely with an almost neurotic contemplation of destruction." Taking Oscar Morgenstern's statement that "war preparations are necessary in order to justify the deepest human desire for knowledge," Blackett comments:

Here Morgenstern gives a non-military justification for armaments and one, which if followed literally, would lead to an endless arms race unrelated to real military needs. It would follow that disarmament would be a scientific disaster. Would he have President Kennedy tell Mr. Khrushchev that unfortunately America cannot reduce her armaments because this would mean falling behind in pure science? Some deep emotional factor must lie behind such absurdity.

We do not know anything about Mr. Wohlstetter and have not read his book, but it is at least possible that prolonged preoccupation with the military abstraction of the "enemy," as a force which is by definition committed to total destruction, might have such an effect upon human thinking. In other areas of the practice of science, this making of a "model" is no doubt a necessary and useful procedure, but when it comes to the classification of human beings, the consequence of abstraction may be disastrous. The point is that while soldiers begin their deliberation *after* all other means of dealing with the possibility of conflict have been given up, thus justifying the military abstraction of the enemy, in the present situation civilian thinkers and strategists have accepted the military abstraction as though it provided the *only* way of thinking of the Soviet nation.

You could even say that the scientific method of abstracting from total reality in order to obtain a workable model for technical calculations and predictions, actually *caters* to the latent "death-

wish" in the general population. It sets up the problem with the emotional simplicity of absolutes and produces, on the whole, a far more simplistic distortion of the complex world situation than anything which the nuclear pacifists and the advocates of unilateral disarmament have dreamed of.

We turn now to the letter of a reader, who writes:

For years I have been intellectually and emotionally convinced that unilateral disarmament was (in the absence of multilateral agreement) the only moral and rational course open to our nation. It seems to me that such an action, taken in full view of the world, could not fail to dissolve the blocking fears that now prevent rational approaches to our mutual problems of human growth and development. Yet, when I reduce the issue to the simplest terms, I know that I would employ the most lethal means at my command to annihilate anyone who criminally invaded my home.

I would assume that such an intruder would be emotionally pathological and therefore inaccessible to a rational approach. I am inclined to believe that a non-violent method of conflict-solving must presuppose some degree of congruence in the value systems of the opposing parties, based on rationality. Non-violence, in and of itself, does not appear to provide solutions to conflict. The non-violent opposition of millions of Jews to capture, torture and death did not seem to deter an irrational power. On the other hand, India's political use of non-violence appears to account, at least in part, for the eventual liberation of that country from England's domination.

Is it possible to continue to attribute rationality to the motives of a nation that is attempting to scuttle the United Nations? With all its faults, and granting the Western nations' many sins of omission and commission, is it not "our last best hope on earth"? In view of this continued efforts to reach common definitions of "peaceful coexistence" and mutual agreements to disarm multilaterally would appear to be the sanest course open to us.

Let us begin by noting the likelihood that every unilateralist was once a multilateralist. Why did they change? They changed because they began to feel that it would be impossible to reach common definitions of "peaceful coexistence" so

long as the military image of the "enemy" is allowed to dominate all important national decisions. They began to believe that there would be no hope at all for peace until that stereotype had been eliminated and some other image, more human in aspect, put in its place. Unilateral disarmament has implications which supply a human image instead of a diabolical image of "the enemy." As Mr. Wohlstetter remarks in an article in *Foreign Affairs* for April:

A good many people today favor unilateral steps toward disarmament, even at great risk, in the hope that this will lead the Russians to take similar actions.

That hope is based upon the assumption that the Russians are human beings, like ourselves.

Well, then, what about our correspondent's challenge: What can we do when confronted by an *irrational* power?

This idea of an "irrational power" needs some examination. Is the nation in question always and absolutely an "irrational power"? We remember that during World War II, the head of the D.A.R. spoke glowingly of Stalin as a strong, silent man with a college education. Britain, and no doubt the United States, have had their irrational moments. The Amritsar Massacre of 1919 must have seemed quite irrational to the Indian participants in a religious festival who were mowed down by British machine-gun fire. The Filipino soldiers subjected to the "water-cure" by American officers during the Spanish-American war could not have felt much congruence in their value systems and ours. It is fair to say that the "irrationalism" of a nation whose population is counted by millions is at least a relative thing. Today, irrationality is being cured with increasing frequency by psychiatrists who do not include nuclear weapons in their medical armamentarium.

But these people, it will be exclaimed, will not submit to treatment! Just so; which is why we have a problem. But therapists occasionally encounter similar difficulties. They do not thereupon call out the Marines—nor, to bring the image up to date, press the panic button which

sends the destruction borne by SAC on its terrible and irreversible errand. Not at all. What they do is study the *history* of the patient. They try to find the cause of the irrationality, in the hope of removing it.

So far as we know, no one who has urged the irrationality of an "enemy" as a reason for planning his violent destruction has ever pursued the question of *why* he is irrational, and dispassionately assembled at least hypothetical causes for his present behavior.

This, as we understand it, would be normal scientific procedure. But it is not followed, today, for the reason that the scientific procedure of our plans for national defense enters the picture after the military abstraction of the enemy has been completed. *Then* we become intensely scientific, with all the resources of technology at our command.

It seems quite obvious that proposals for unilateral disarmament are essentially humanitarian protests against the madness which refuses to apply any treatment to "mad" nations except the weapons which are themselves symptoms of the disease.

REVIEW

"CULTURAL CRITICISM" IN RECENT NOVELS

HANK SEARL'S *The Crowded Sky* (Dell paperback) is primarily a study of the factors which presently make mid-air collisions occasionally unavoidable. There are too many planes in the sky, and competitive schedules for crowded liners in the air-lanes create conditions which ultimately invite disaster. This is a well-written and instructive novel, but we are here principally interested in an aside in which the author exposes the aimless leisure available to the specialists who fly planes. These men know how to do only one thing, but, ironically enough, they are not *allowed* to spend even a reasonable proportion of their hours in doing it:

The trouble with flying, Mike thought, was that it didn't keep you busy. Even in Korea, with the predawn briefings and the pressure for combat time, days hung heavily on the airman. There were only a certain number of hours you could fly in a month, or you cracked. And when you weren't flying, what did you do? . . . So there you were again at the bar with your friend.

Some worked on the side. It was usually an exercise in futility. Pilots and copilots were always starting up little businesses, selling cars, insurance, working deals in their spare time. Or buying things—boats, light planes, skin-diving equipment they'd tire of.

The businesses got dropped because essentially you didn't need the money. You tired of the boats and the light planes—you flew enough anyway—and you tired of the other toys too.

Some of the boys had started a "corporation." They did not really incorporate but they rented a tiny shop with a plate-glass front, got a desk and had a phone put in, had gold lettering put on the door. The lettering read. "The Corporation," and under it: "Hours 9 A.M. to 5 P.M."

They had stationery made. The letterhead read: "The Corporation."

They bought a typewriter and hired a girl. She was a very pretty girl, even though she did not type

well, and she lent the slightly dingy place a touch, as they put it, of hominess.

And if she could not type, that was all right, because there was no typing to do.

They listed themselves in the phone book as "The Corporation." Only in the white section, not the yellow business section, because there was no business to list themselves under.

It was just "The Corporation," and though for a while they kept business hours religiously, and meticulous records of business losses for tax purposes, no work was ever done there, nor was any intended. They would lie back in their denims on their swivel chairs in front of the plateglass window, sandaled feet on their roll-top desks, drinking beer and gazing out at the startled passers-by.

They had even been investigated for making book, and they had never been able to write off their tax losses, for there was no income. And finally, when the girl herself had decided that the place was a front for some underworld scheme, they had grown tired of the game and sold out.

The whole pucky idea had tickled Mike at the time.

Tonight he thought of it as a signpost on a bleak and futile road.

Moving down the scale from this aristocracy of experts, we encounter a poignant passage in Harvey Swados' memorable novel of automobile assembly, *On the Line*. Kevin, one of the men on the production line, has come from Ireland to make his fortune in Detroit. At first he is thrilled with the money, easy to make and easy to save, so that even the monotony of the unthinking and unpleasant labor takes on a certain glamor. It is almost too much for him to discover that he can buy a new convertible on time, and he enjoys a rare excitement in working and saving until he achieves the goal. Shortly thereafter, however, he decides to return to the poverty of Ireland. He has finally become "Americanized," but senses in time that he is beginning to lose himself:

What *is* this? Kevin asked himself suddenly. Is this the excitement and the adventure that I sought? He bumped his kneecap painfully against a steel dolly and to his astonishment felt a stream of foul words, meaningless factory curses that he would never have

dreamed of using back home, rushing up into his throat as palpably as vomit. As soon as he uttered them, he experienced a feeling of release so startling that he stopped work, shocked into immobility. Now that he had learned how to swear like the others, learned what it meant to have something to curse at, maybe *now* he was a proper American at last.

For he had gained what he so dearly wanted, and he saw with bitter clarity that he would be chained to the line for years, chained to the drudgery, the monotony, the grinding labor—all of which lost their novelty and certainly their glamor when you had won your prize—literally until the prize itself had become valueless and demanded that you replace it with another, shinier one.

The day was the longest he had ever worked. Even after lunch the hours dragged interminably; by the time he had punched out and gotten his windbreaker from his locker, his feet, rested from the week end's driving, were swollen and burning. But he walked as fast as he could to the lot, where his automobile was waiting with those of all his fellow workers to carry him swiftly away from the factory.

In the middle of the lot he paused, looked around, and then realized that he could not remember where he had parked his car. There were ten rows, each row with nearly a hundred automobiles toed up to the white stripe, and in the smoky light of the waning afternoon it was very hard to tell them apart. Almost all were the same make, almost all were recent models, and all were streaked and spotted with the drying remnants of the day's rain. When at last he found his own car, in the middle of a long line that he had already circled twice, each time with increasing weariness and contempt for his own stupidity, Kevin saw that it too was not merely specked with dirt, but was caked with dried mud at the wheels and hubcaps. And was it possible, was there already a spot of rust on the front bumper? There was something there, the color and texture of dried blood. Kevin could not bring himself to bend down and look.

He squeezed in stiffly behind the wheel and drove off slowly thinking for the first time in many days of LeRoy's terrible accident and of the blood that had spurted from his neck onto the steel body of the passing car as he fell. He shuddered, and as he did so he remembered how LeRoy, no longer singing had turned sadly away from him and how desperately Walter had looked up at him this very morning with the droplets of sweat clinging to his eyebrows and dripping onto the metal that he filed. Kevin had

gotten the colors he wanted for his automobile, but now it bore another stigma that he had never envisioned.

Kevin, at least, was able to make a decision before he was hopelessly engulfed by the ceaseless bombardment of propaganda which equated happiness with money and possessions. And this really is the point: is it possible that the vast grinding process of production and consumption in a highly technical society can be transcended by a different conception of purpose, which the "average man" can come to understand?

A passage from Douglas Angus' *The Ivy Trap* illustrates an interesting trend of optimistic metaphysics in this regard:

"What a piece of work is a man—" Allan declaimed. "—in action how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a God!"

"That," said Kramer, "is one of the most revealing passages Shakespeare ever wrote, because it shows that deep in his heart he was a true humanist and understood God as the ideal in man."

Lubinkoff looked up from his empty plate, wiping his mouth with his napkin. "The ideals of man, man reaching out for the beautiful, the good and the true, that is the groping foremost point of the great process of the universe. That is God struggling to be born—God becoming."

Allan leaned aside for his descending chop. "What process are you talking about?" he asked.

Lubinkoff stared at him. "You should be more in touch with science. This is the age of science, you know. You should know that something is happening in science of tremendous philosophical and even religious implications. You should know that science is beginning to move out of the age of analysis, beginning to grasp the whole of things, to see unity, even something like purpose in the universe and man's place in that purpose."

Allan held his knife and fork suspended over his plate, his eyes held by Lubinkoff's dark and glittering glance.

"We perceive now," Lubinkoff went on, "signs that a single vast process moves through all phenomena. . . . In spite of all deviations, all lost causes and ends, the general trend is always from the simple to the complex and so to consciousness, it is

no longer reasonable to see the universe as meaningless, or man as an insignificant accident. We stand in the forefront of the intent of the universe. In us nature has achieved a powerful concentration of her own laborious trial and error method of creating; for instead of new ideas being tried out in physical reality—a process requiring eons of time—in the human brain microscopic symbols of reality can be combined and shuffled at lightning speed. So that is what we are: powerful concentrations of the creative power inherent in matter. But"—Lubinkoff paused and clasped his hands—"we have a special significance in the scheme of things, for we are nature's effort to break out of a monotonous cycle.

"Over and over again among the billions of stars, the process will produce intelligence, and somewhere that intelligence will break through and the universe go on to realize its possibilities. Still, the important thing is that we have a chance at this wonderful destiny. That is the glorious and wonderful fact of our existence. We ought to make a religion out of that—that we have a chance to be God."

COMMENTARY
THE MODEL-MAKERS

PROFESSOR P. M. S. BLACKETT'S remarks concerning the need of scientific analysts to make a "model" of the thing or problem they are studying (see page 2) gives pertinence to a recent letter from a subscriber. He writes:

The secret of science, according to Prof. J. A. Butler, author of *Science and Human Life*, is "to isolate very simple phenomena, like the motion of a ball thrown into the air, and then to find simple models which would reproduce their main features." Of course, if the model is too simple, its inadequacy eventually becomes apparent. A good example of this inadequacy is the nineteenth-century model of matter as made up of indivisible particles—atoms—somewhat resembling billiard balls. In the twentieth century, this model was found to be unworkable. The new model of matter now in use is not even a physical analogy, but is made up of mathematical equations.

Some thinkers are already beginning to suspect that the nineteenth-century model of man—mechanistic, biological—is also inadequate. It is not impossible that some of the ancient models of man—old metaphysical conceptions, that is—would be more useful. As for example that found suggested in W. Macneile Dixon's *Human Situation*—based upon the idea of palingenesis, or rebirth—or some similar Platonic view. Models of this sort would at least take account of higher human longings and possibilities, and give these some scope in scientific theories.

This letter sharpens the concluding point of this week's lead article. The controlling models of man used by contemporary scientific military strategists reproduce only the "main features" of men *at war*, or men intent upon making war. They have no analogy at all with men intent upon making peace—or, more sensibly, with men who are ambivalent about peace and war, men like ourselves.

Why not make some models more representative of the Soviet people as human beings, and then work out theoretical approaches for getting through to them for a practical settlement of the issues dividing the modern world into armed camps?

More than one model, of course, would be needed. One model will not do for 200,000,000 human beings, any more than one model would do for the United States. Fortunately, some observers are already working on this. Take for example Erich Fromm's article in the Fall, 1960 *Dædalus*. Here is a paragraph with a "model" of possible Soviet action if the United States should disarm:

Would the Soviet Union use her military superiority to try to occupy the United States or Western Europe? Aside from the fact that it would be exceedingly difficult, to say the least, for the Soviet Union's agents to run the economic and political machines of the United States or Western Europe, and aside from the fact that there is no vital need for Russia to conquer these territories, it would be most inconvenient to try to do so—and for a reason which is generally not sufficiently appreciated. Even the pro-Communist workers in the West have no idea of the degree of coercion to which they would have to submit under a Soviet system. They, as well as non-Communist workers, would oppose the new authorities, who would be forced to use tanks and machine guns against the protesting workers. This would encourage revolutionary tendencies in the satellite states, or even within the Soviet Union, and be most undesirable to the Soviet rulers, it would especially endanger Khrushchev's policy of liberalization, and hence his whole political position.

This is an unfamiliar sort of "model"—but probably closer to the fact than some of those with which Americans are familiar.

Dr. Fromm's *Dædalus* article has lately been made available in pamphlet form by Acts for Peace, 1730 Grove Street, Berkeley 9, Calif. The price is 25 cents.

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

DYNAMICS OF ADOLESCENT GROWTH

ROBERT E. NIXON, who has served Vassar College as a psychiatrist for ten years, writes in the February issue of *Psychiatry* on a theme that will hardly be unfamiliar to MANAS readers or to those acquainted with the work of Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, and A. H. Maslow. Dr. Nixon's particular emphasis is upon the advent of "self-cognition" in the normal youngster during late adolescence, using material drawn from a series of interviews with "six hundred female college students." He begins by suggesting that very much of an open field exists for such studies:

The dynamics of normal growth in middle to late adolescence constitutes a hiatus in the growing body of knowledge concerning man's psychology. In view of the "openness" and the articulateness of the person in this portion of the life span—not to mention the transparency of his overt behavior—the hiatus is surprising and embarrassing. Two explanations for its presence suggest themselves: First, under the impact of Freud's emphasis of psychosexual development, psychiatrists have viewed the physiological maturation of the genitosexual complex as the last organic step in the growth of the organism, perhaps overlooking other equally important, equally organic, and sequentially later developmental stages prior to the final achievement of adulthood.

In a case reported in detail, Dr. Nixon relates a typical break-through toward "self-cognition." "Sue" had been wondering about a possible abnormality of mind because of many sleepless hours spent in reflection:

Asked what she thought about while lying in bed awake she said she was trying to get some plan to her life; she was thinking about the future and recalling images and episodes of her past. The therapist commented that perhaps a constructive element was present in her nocturnal introspection, and she countered with the petulant remark that it was a "damned nuisance." After a brief pause in which she seemed lost in pre-occupation, she suddenly brightened and said, "Oh—I see! I've

developed the third eye, the one you see *yourself* with! Well—maybe it's a good thing."

Dr. Nixon has concerned himself with encouraging the Vassar students to see that the struggles with introspection, the doubts, and continually-changing evaluations which *naturally* appear in late adolescence are a necessary part of human growth. The least normal students, in Dr. Nixon's opinion, were those who steadfastly denied experiencing any such crises. He continues:

The crisis of self-discovery has to do with revelations, usually sudden, of aspects of self-identity which had previously lain unseen, most often in the areas of feelings toward parents, peers, siblings, or self; of sexuality; and of interests and motivations. Interestingly, those students who avoid formal exposure to the college psychiatrist, but whom the psychiatrist encounters in other settings on the campus, appear to deny awareness of these same crises with a specificity which is remarkable. The logical conclusion is inescapable that the crises probably exist in all these young people; it is merely recognition of the crises which varies.

If these normative crises are indeed normative, and are inherently characteristic of adolescence, then—as has already been implied—their conscious recognition is a manifestation of psychological normality in adolescence. And if the crises consistently appear when they seem to, then they are probably manifestations of some underlying process, perhaps one of development or growth. By combining these two possibilities into a single hypothesis, I suggest that *an organic developmental step, which might be referred to as the advent of self-cognition, occurs during midadolescence*. Sue refers to this step as the development of "the third eye, the one you see yourself with." Others among this group have also referred to it directly: "When I began to think, about two years ago"; "It wasn't until I was 15 that I really began to *know* anything"; "That's when I became *cognitive* for the first time" (interestingly, not from a psychology major); "I didn't think about how I thought until I was a junior in high school."

This lengthy article—the full title is "An Approach to the Dynamics of Growth in Adolescence"—is worth careful reading, making the February issue of *Psychiatry* a good permanent addition to any MANAS-reading

parent's or teacher's library. Dr. Nixon is very much aware of the increasing agreement among psychologists and sociologists who sense that the human being is a great deal more than a complex of conditioned reflexes, that there is a true "inner self," capable, as it were, of lifting itself by its own bootstraps. Dr. Nixon indicates the importance of seeking better definitions of the dynamics of self-realization:

There is much semantic confusion concerning the word *self*, arising from views of the self during its earlier development, prior to its maturity, and also from views of the self partially concealed, modified, or disfigured by its specific vicissitudes. However, some current usages appear to have much in common, at least implicitly, with the concept offered here such as Riesman's *autonomous man*, Fromm's *ethical man*, Maslow's *self-actualizer*, Rado's *biocultural acting self*, Murphy's *fusion of the three natures of man*, Erikson's concept of *ego-identity*, May's *conscious self*, and Allport's *proprium*. The definition of self presented here leaves much to be desired, primarily because it raises more questions than it answers. But in a youthful science perhaps that is the mark of a good, if temporary, definition.

There is little doubt that Socrates and Plato, Thoreau, Emerson and Whitman would agree with the implications of Dr. Nixon's concluding paragraph:

Deliberate introspection and self-referral, when taken out of the context of college psychotherapy and transposed into the context of the everyday world, arouse admiration. People who possess these characteristics try to rid themselves of misconceptions and blind spots concerning themselves and their actions in society, they have the capacity to face the unknown with courage, they have the strength of their own convictions, and they have the humility to seek objective appraisal of those convictions. They seem to be idealized figures, unreal, too good to be true; and yet they exist. Perhaps they embody the realization of everyman's dream, of everyman's potentiality. If it is their use of self-cognition which makes the dream come true, then perhaps the psychiatrist can learn from them enough to help others accept the same potentiality in themselves and to use it, so that their growth toward adulthood may be less haphazard, less painful, less wasteful than it is now.

For many years, the efforts of psychotherapists to obtain working knowledge of human nature have been based upon studies of abnormal psychology, with a great deal of attention to case histories of the mentally and emotionally ill. The tendency of the work described by Dr. Nixon goes in an opposite direction—involving the study of the gifted, the intellectually and morally distinguished—and may in time show that these individuals deviate from the norm or hypothetical "average" man as much as the sick. This sort of research may open up a new world of thinking about man and his nature.

FRONTIERS

The Idea Of Invitation

EVERYONE is familiar with the distinction between *asking* and *telling*. It is embodied in the belligerent assertion, "I'm not asking you, I'm telling you." The purpose of the following paragraphs is to explore an idea that is on the *asking* side of this dichotomy. This is the *idea of invitation*.

Invitation is one of a number of relations that involve some sort of polarity. For example, stimulus and response, cause and effect, question and answer, action and reaction, attack and defense, thesis and antithesis. In some of these relations there is a tight connection between the poles. The stimulus determines the response, the cause necessitates the effect. They are like a *command performance*.

This notion of command performance provides a good way to get into our topic. If you issue a *command*, what you get is a performance—unless, of course, your command is violated, in which case you have a problem of disobedience on your hands. Disobedience is something that responsible commanders usually feel they have to do something about. They feel this way because their authority is being challenged. But there are areas of conduct in which we don't want a performance in response to our actions. We want a free response rather than a required reaction. In these areas, invitation is the mode of relatedness. There is a looseness here that is essential to the relationship. An invitation does not guarantee a response; and if there is a response it may be either an acceptance or a refusal.

Where does the invitational mode find application? There are several areas of major concern in which invitation has an important role to play.

(1) We can consider *education as invitation*. Even such an authoritarian as Plato tells us that early education must attract the child as a kind of play or game, so that the child will freely involve himself. Enforced learning, he says, obtains no hold on the mind (*Republic VII*, 546). As education proceeds there are bound to be occasions for sternness, but there is much to suggest that the sternness that is

creative is the sternness that is sought out by students who have responded to an invitation to learn. The further one goes with education, the more the process becomes one of self-education, and the sternness is that of the student with himself. It is not necessary to insist that this is the whole story. The point to be made is that an invitational framework is essential for education. Within this framework, discipline has a place. Without this framework, discipline is useless so far as education is concerned. It is not an accident that "Never volunteer," is a stale cliché primarily associated with and addressed to persons within a framework that is non-invitational. Loss of invitational structure means that education has given way to indoctrination. Conversely, where indoctrination is the avowed purpose, rather than education, the structure of human relations is always coercive, nowadays subtly so, but coercive nonetheless.

(2) No one would want to say that morality is entirely a matter of invitation. Custom plays too important a role, and all of us are too much moulded by the culture we live in to permit such an interpretation. Yet, when the anthropologists and sociologists have said all they have to say, there is still left to be considered a fragile yet perhaps decisive area of morality. In this area morality is invitational. Here, an individual uncoerced or even opposed by his culture and its standards makes thoughtful decisions of his own. He responds to invitations that are beyond his conventional obligations and duties.

Immanuel Kant made a tremendous step forward in our understanding of morality when he pointed out that duty is self-imposed. He said this in several ways, always insisting that it is we ourselves who discover the moral law within us and impose it upon ourselves, thus achieving autonomy rather than heteronomy in our moral conduct. In saying this Kant comes very close to seeing morality as invitational. However, from start to finish he talks about morality in terms of obligation, and obligation in terms of obedience to moral law, and moral law in terms of command. This is no small contribution, but it falls short of illuminating the area of morality with which we are presently concerned.

The limitations of Kant's view of morality become apparent when one thinks of love and the way in which this value enters into human relations. Tradition speaks of a "great commandment" and of a second one like unto it (*Matt. 22: 37-39*). These are the love commandments, but love cannot be commanded. Love can be offered, and love can be invited; but there is no command performance of love, not even for God. Prior to this there were the Ten Commandments. The trouble with these commandments is not in what they propose but in their being *commandments*. God as commander is faced with an enormous and insoluble AWOL problem in the modern world. As Alfred North Whitehead has commented, "The presentation of God under the aspect of power awakens every modern instinct of critical reaction." (*Science and the Modern World*, Chapter 12.)

Does it not make more sense to consider the idea of love as an invitation that we are free to accept or reject? To hold this ideal before mankind is not to engage in a badgering operation predetermined to fail, but to extend an invitation, to describe a possibility that persons may take up or let alone. We see more and more clearly that a great deal depends upon how this invitation is received. The high stakes are the source of the temptation to enforce the invitation. But an enforced invitation is a contradiction of terms. At this point, morality is invitational or nothing.

(3) Our discussion of morality has touched upon religion. A word more about *religion as invitation* needs to be said. Consider the story of the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden. God has laid down a command. The serpent moves into this situation and invites Eve to disobey the command. The invitation is subtle: the serpent raises a question as to whether God has really issued the command. Learning from Eve that this is so, the serpent impugns God's honesty. In this context Eve takes a closer look at the forbidden fruit and succumbs to temptation. Later she reports, "The serpent beguiled me." Surely this could read, "The serpent invited me." Tradition has not dealt kindly with the serpent, nor did God; yet it was the serpent who operated in the invitational mode.

Subsequent relations all the way around, reptilian, human, and divine, might have been better if somebody had invited all three parties (Adam seems at best to have been an accomplice after the fact, who, when caught, blames Eve) to sit down and talk things over together. Are we to suppose that the serpent had been deprived of freedom of speech in the Garden of Eden? The no trespassing sign might not have been taken from the Tree, but an invitation to loyalty might have preceded the edict with beneficial results.

This account could be charged with one-sidedness. At any rate, there is a deep ambivalence in Christianity with respect to command and invitation. God is at once an all powerful commander and a forgiving source of the invitation to love. Perhaps the time is ripe to stress the idea of invitation in religion rather than the idea of command.

Where the old mode prevails, education is too much thrust and parry, morality is too much command and sullen obedience, and religion is too much meaningless worship and not enough sensitivity to high invitation. In all of this there is alienation. The student is alienated from the teacher. The moral agent is alienated from his ideals. The religious man is alienated from his God. The polarity is that of *victim* and *oppressor* in a sense as painful and debilitating as any economic polarity described by Karl Marx.

What is called for is a shift of emphasis. We are perishing from too much reliance upon an inadequate mode of relatedness. The mode of invitation should be extended by word and deed, but especially by deed, into areas of far greater importance than birthday parties and afternoon teas. The idea of invitation should become a category in educational, moral, and religious thought.

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