

SOCIAL "MYSTERIES"

ONE way of trying to extract from Michael Polanyi's *Science, Faith, and Society* (University of Chicago Press, \$1.50) as much as possible of the import of this essay would be to declare that in all human associations, formed for whatever purpose, there is an element of "mystery" which, depending upon how it is regarded, determines the kind of good—or bad—that the association produces. This is a way of arguing that since there is an incommensurable element in human beings, enterprises which collect the energies of a number of people must take incommensurable reality into account. A way must be found to give this reality its proper play under the conditions of organization, or the joint efforts of these people will have an inhuman result.

Basically, what Mr. Polanyi does in this essay is to restore to the practice of science its metaphysical foundation in classical humanist assumptions regarding the quest for truth. By carefully developed argument he shows that there can be no science without these assumptions, and, by a parity of reasoning, no free society without them. What we have termed "mystery," which could also be identified as the area of uncertainty, Mr. Polanyi regards as the field for the activity of *conscience*. As he puts it:

In the wide fields of public argument each participant has to interpret day by day the existing custom in the light of his own conscience. These innumerable independent decisions would result in chaos but for the essential harmony prevailing between the individual consciences in the community. This consensus of consciences is usually described as showing the presence of a democratic spirit among the people. . . .

Fairness in discussion has been defined as an attempt at objectivity, *i.e.*, preference for truth even at the expense of losing in force or argument. Nobody can practice this unless he believes that truth exists. One may, of course, believe in truth and yet be too biased to practice objectivity; indeed there are a

hundred ways of falling short of objectivity while believing in truth. But there can be no way of aiming at the truth unless you believe in it. And furthermore there is no purpose in arguing with others unless you believe in the truth and are seeking it. Only in the supposition that most people are disposed toward truth essentially as you are yourself is there any sense in opening yourself up to them in fairness and tolerance.

A community which effectively practices free discussion is therefore dedicated to the fourfold proposition (1) that there is such a thing as truth; (2) that all members love it; (3) that they feel obliged and (4) are in fact capable of pursuing it. Clearly these are large assumptions, the more so since they are of the kind which can be invalidated by the mere process of doubting them. If people begin to lose confidence in their fellow citizens' love of truth, they may well cease to feel obliged to pursue it at a cost to themselves. Considering how weak we are at all times in resisting temptation to untruthfulness and how imperfect our love of truth is at best, it is the more surprising that there should exist communities in which mutual confidence in the sincerity of all should be upheld to the extent shown by their practice of objectivity and tolerance among themselves.

The love of truth and confidence in their fellows' truthfulness are not effectively embraced by people in the form of a theory. They hardly even form the articles of any professed faith, but are embodied mainly in the practice of an art. . . .

It is not too much to suggest that very nearly all the "secrets" of a good society are displayed here in, so to say, operational form; and also, other things being equal, the sources of all its problems. It goes without saying that we are all imperfect practitioners of the art spoken of by Mr. Polanyi, so that we remain discouraged and pessimistic until we recognize that the most important part of the practice lies in learning how to tolerate our own and others' imperfections and to sustain ourselves through great difficulties by the attractive strength of the unrealized ideal. So

far as the good life is concerned, we are still in a learning situation.

It is also evident that people vary in their realization of this. Because of these differences in attitude, two broad classes of human beings emerge—(1) those who have only what may be called a "learning" psychology—who are involved in their own advances and discoveries, and who tend, therefore, to compare themselves with others on some personally established scale of progress; and (2) those who become teachers as well as learners, and are therefore more concerned with the general success of the learning process for everyone than with their own growth.

Dialogue between these two classes is often very difficult. Those in the first class have a tendency to say, "I know this; he doesn't," while the teacher-learner asks the question, "What are you both learning, of yourselves and from each other?" The teacher knows that the disparities in learning capacity which separate people are of little value in the good society, since they tend to make assent to Mr. Polanyi's "fourfold proposition" practically impossible. They are continually at pains to explain that the statement, "We are really too far ahead of these people to be understood by them," is, for the purposes of the good society, an unqualified contradiction in terms. There is hardly a single argument about foreign policy, or international relations, anywhere in the world, that cannot be reduced to defiantly useless confrontation of this sort.

Thus there are manifest difficulties for those who undertake the role of teachers. And let us say, here, that the purpose of the teacher is to attempt to explain the *learning* rules of the good society, not to claim the possession of all knowledge. Good men take this position because they find that somebody *has* to—not because they feel themselves eminently fit to be teachers. But in doing the work of teachers they often become extremely well fitted for it.

What are the difficulties of teachers? Well, one of their problems, teachers soon discover, is

the inutility of ethical absolutes which are presented without profound educational understanding. In fact, any kind of "absolute," save at the level of the highest metaphysics, is a poor educational tool. Thomas Merton has an illuminating passage on this point in his new book, *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (New Directions). Comparing, in his introduction, the thought of Chuang Tzu with that of Mo Ti, Mr. Merton says:

The abstract theory of "universal love" preached by Mo Ti was shrewdly seen by Chuang Tzu to be false precisely because of the inhumanity of its consequences. In theory, Mo Ti held that all men should be loved with an equal love, that the individual should find his own greatest good in loving the common good of all, that universal love was rewarded by the tranquility, peace, and good order of all, and the happiness of the individual. But this "universal love" will be found upon examination (like most other utopian projects) to make such severe demands upon human nature that it cannot be realized and indeed, even if it could be realized it would in fact cramp and distort man, eventually ruining both him and his society. Not because love is not good and natural to man, but because a system constructed on a theoretical and abstract principle of love ignores certain fundamental and mysterious realities, of which we cannot be fully conscious, and the price we pay for this inattention is that our "love" in fact becomes hate.

The real argument of this passage (which is hardly against "universal love") has a clear relation to Mr. Polanyi's fourfold assumption on which the good society rests. For it concerns the difficulty which many men experience when they are asked to "love" other men, not for what they now are, or seem to be, but for their *potentialities*. The universal love advocated by Mo Ti will depend upon development of the human capacity to recognize the lovable element in men who may be behaving in very unlovable ways; and this love that is invited, moreover, will have to gain expression in a form which arouses the lovable potentiality, yet does not condone or indulge unlovable behavior—obviously a kind of love which is much more than undifferentiated emotional response. It must be a love which comprehends differences and fosters growth, and

it may require endless patience. People instructed only in ethical absolutes are quite incompetent to express this kind of love, and so, as Mr. Merton remarks, it turns to hate.

Exactly the same kind of incapacity defeats the efforts of those who embrace a revelatory theory of knowledge, neglecting the slow and often painful processes of learning. For such people, "knowing" is not a matter of degrees, but a righteous stance, and people who have a different stance are thrust into the outer darkness. No doubt we need absolutes in our abstract philosophizing, but if we fail to recognize the role of relativities in life and education, our absolutes turn into unreasoning bludgeons and finally negate themselves.

These are the well known lessons of European history which lie behind the scientific theory of knowledge and our justification of the relativism of modern thought. The misuse of absolutes and of coercive authority in their behalf is perhaps the most obvious mistake—leading to anti-human crimes—of our historical past, and rebellion against it became the dynamic not only of the new idea of truth, but of our political arrangements as well. Mr. Polanyi has a summarizing passage on the great historical transition which put an end to absolute theological authority:

The struggles which finally led to its general destruction have lasted up to our own times. They have produced our liberal forms of public life based on the assumption of the reality of truth and of the efficacy of reasoned argument. The medieval system founded on one specific text as interpreted by one central authority was replaced by a society founded on general principles interpreted by public opinion.

The new spirit of independence had been practiced already for many years and in a variety of forms—artistic, political, religious, and scientific—before a resolute attempt was made to incorporate its premises into a system of philosophy. Cartesian doubt and Locke's empiricism became then the two powerful levers of further liberation from established authority. These philosophies and those of their disciples had the purpose of demonstrating that truth

could be established and a rich and satisfying doctrine of man and the universe built up on the foundations of critical reason alone. Self-evident propositions or the testimony of the senses, or else a combination of the two, would suffice. Both Descartes and Locke maintained their belief in the revealed Christian doctrine. And though the later rationalists succeeding them tended towards deism or atheism they remained firm in their conviction that the critical faculties of man unaided by any powers of belief could establish the truth of science and the canons of fairness, decency, and freedom. Thinkers like Wells and John Dewey, and the whole generation of minds they reflect, still profess it today, and so do even those most extreme empiricists who profess the philosophy of logical positivism. They are all convinced that our main troubles come from our having not altogether rid ourselves of all traditional beliefs and continue to set their hopes on further applications of the method of radical skepticism and empiricism.

It seems clear, however, that this method does not represent truly the process by which liberal intellectual life was in fact established. It is true that there was a time when the sheer destruction of authority did progressively release new discoveries in every field of inquiry. But none of these discoveries--not even those of science--were based on the experience of our senses aided only by self-evident propositions. Underlying the assent to science and the pursuit of discovery in science is the belief in scientific premises to which the adherents and cultivators of science must unquestioningly assent. The method of disbelieving every proposition which cannot be verified by definitely prescribed operations would destroy all belief in natural science. And it would, destroy, in fact, belief in truth and in the love of truth itself which is the condition of all free thought. The method leads to complete metaphysical nihilism and thus denies the basis for any universally significant manifestation of the human mind.

Now the point here, quite plainly, is that Relativism, when made into an absolute, is just as subversive of the rational order and of hope of the good life as any of the old authorities. What path, then, must we follow? Shall we say that there isn't any, or rather, that there isn't any one path that can be plainly marked? The secret of the good life and of the rational order of society lies locked in what Mr. Polanyi termed the "consensus of consciences," and this, whatever else you may say of it, is not something that can be generalized

into a formula. It has to do with the harmony, but not the identity, of insights among men who share in the fourfold proposition about the good society, and who refuse to be disillusioned by its occasional failures to prove out in practice. It is as though they say, paraphrasing Buckle, if this proposition be untrue, "it matters little whether anything else be true or not."

The heart of the matter, then, is made up of the way in which the best men of a society use and try to apply the fourfold proposition. Let us repeat it:

(1) That there is such a thing as truth; (2) that all members love it; (3) that they feel obliged and (4) are in fact capable of pursuing it.

These are the assumptions of the social community, but, before that, they are the assumptions of the educational community. They are the assumptions of the kindergartner as well as of the university professor; they are the origin of the "manners" of all successful dialogue and they shape the form of every rational discourse.

However, the way in which these assumptions become operative in human relations must vary widely according to countless variations in both conditions and men. The social community, for example, provides a series of working definitions of how human beings, in daily life, may be expected to relate their strivings to the circumstances of the world around them. These definitions are embodied in the institutions of the society. As Laurens van der Post has put it:

No human being or society, however self-sufficient and rational it may appear, can live without institutions that deal with those aspects of life which cannot be explained rationally. No community can be left indefinitely outside in the night of the human spirit in the beat-infested jungle which lies beyond the conscious fortifications which civilization raises for us in life.

This is the other side of the picture. The enormous area of the "unknown," called "the beast-infested jungle" by van der Post, represents the raw material of human development, to which

people gain access in the doses which their social institutions attempt to regulate or prescribe. The "social" side of philosophy embodies the judgments of men concerning how the encounters with the unknown ought to be managed. But one of the more desperate secrets of society is that the encounters cannot *really* be managed at all, although the appearance of *some* management, obviously, is absolutely necessary. In traditional, hierarchical societies, this appearance of management is in the hands of the elders of the community—persons who, by initiation into the ancestral wisdom of the group, are deemed competent to regulate the processes of maturation of all the rest. You could say that the idea of initiation amounts to a socially agreed-upon recognition that the candidates have reached a point where they are ready to think about a more direct encounter with the unknown. A fully initiated member of the society is a man equipped with the best knowledge that society possesses concerning the world and how its challenges may be met. For the immature, community institutions provide mediated versions (acted-out rehearsals) of the encounter, in the form of trials and ordeals which only *simulate* the more ultimate confrontations to be faced by the adult—or, in another vocabulary, by the *hero*, who represents the apex of human capacity and development.

It is here, in this idea of progressive stages of the preparation of the youth to meet his human destiny, no longer shielded by protective restrictions, that we find the ancient form of respect for individuality. All the high religions take note of this release of the individual from conformity and custom, when he is deemed ready to stand alone. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Arjuna is told by the teacher, Krishna, of that time when he will be able to rely wholly on himself:

When thy heart shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then wilt thou attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught. When thy mind once liberated from the Vedas shall be fixed

immovably in contemplation, then shalt thou attain devotion.

This is paralleled in the New Testament when Jesus explains to his disciples that while he speaks to the multitude only in parables, to them he reveals mysteries. And Polanyi, in the context of the practice of science, remarks: "As he approaches maturity the student will rely for his beliefs less and less on authority and more and more on his own judgment. His own intuition and conscience will take over responsibility in the measure in which authority is eclipsed."

What we term the "social problem" may be briefly described as the problem of deciding how to shelter the immature from avoidable dangers of life and how to order their preparation to meet these encounters at an adult level, while at the same time safeguarding the people from those buses of authority which the claim of sheltering and ordering so easily permits. There is simply no way to avoid the dilemmas which result when either of these social obligations, (1) preparation, and (2) protection, is mechanized into some kind of formula. Statistical solutions based upon past experience are always bent in a utilitarian direction, and this produces neglect of individuality and discounts entirely the heroic aspect of human development. The tendency to make a formula of the balance between preparation and protection reflects the desire to avoid the crucial responsibility of making educational instead of political decisions about human good. The politicalization of these decisions is the vulgarization of the highest spiritual reality in human experience and the externalization of what is and indeed must remain a "mystery"—the uncoerced intuitions and conscientious determinations of those who try to perform, as well as they can, the role of the teachers of men.

REVIEW

GOD AND PLENTY

CONTEMPORARY furor among professors of theology, developing partly from the brash young men of their own fraternity who have established the "God-is-dead" school of Christian polemics, is the outgrowth of many forces. The persisting influence of Paul Tillich, who felt that Christianity could never embody the inspiration of Jesus so long as God was regarded as a personalized, authoritarian figure, has played a not inconsiderable role. Giving attention to the sensational "death of God" arguments, the *New York Times* recently summarized this trend:

The 19th-century German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche shocked the philosophical world with his famous cry, "God is dead." Today that same cry is being heard in theological circles as well. [The "the death of God" theologians] say that the word "God" is meaningless and that even if there once was a God, He no longer speaks to man. True Christianity, they say, is an affirmation of the secular world in the style of the man Jesus, and has no relation to traditional church practices such as worship, the sacraments and prayer.

Dr. Hamilton spelled out this theme in a recent article in *The Christian Scholar*: "It used to be possible to say: We cannot know God but He has made himself known to us," and at that point analogies from the world of personal relations would enter the scene and help us out. But somehow, the situation has deteriorated: as before, we cannot know, but now it seems that He does not make himself known, even as enemy."

The strongest attraction to the death-of-God position comes from the thought of the German pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed by the Nazis during World War II. Bonhoeffer declared that a mature Christianity would accomplish the "secularization" of the message of Christ; instead of the traditional separation of religion from economic and political life, there must be unification. God is no longer viable in his older form—the "Supreme Power" who could intercede to achieve our salvation, *i.e.*, a rescue from the trials and sufferings of a world governed by earthly coercion. The "Heavenly City" is not in the future, a millennial hope, or a happy place to

be reached after death, but rather an organization of society here and now.

Harvey Cox, a professor at Harvard University divinity school, and author of *The Secular City*, proposes that "secularism can have a new meaning." Writing in the *Christian Century* for Jan. 5, Dr. Cox suggests that the power of God (or ultimate goodness) must be internalized. Men, he says, must learn to think of themselves not as sinners in need of supernatural aid, but as beings for whom the realization of spiritual values is "natural." Dr. Cox writes:

We need as our theological starting point a Jesus who is neither the ecclesiastical nor the existentialist Jesus, but the Jewish Jesus. Not the Jesus toward whom the church has developed a downright proprietary attitude, but the Jesus who destroys the temple. Our Christology must begin with the Jew who makes it possible for us to share the hope of Israel, the hope for a kingdom of Shalom. Christians, as Krister Stendahl rightly says, are really only honorary Jews. All Jesus does for Israel's hope is to universalize it, to make it available even to us goyim. But the church has betrayed his gift. Instead of universalizing the hope, we have etherialized it. It has become "religious," a fond wish for something after, beyond or above this earth, or for something within the self. In Christianity the hope of Israel has almost ceased to be a lively hope for the *world*.

Cut off from a universal dimension, the hope of Israel itself, although it is still worldly, has become provincial and sometimes even nationalistic. Only when the hope of Israel and the church are fused does a hope which is both universal and secular appear. . .

But we also live in a second schism which also distorts our theology. The failure of our theology to nurture a hope for this world led to the schism now separating the church from movements devoted to social change and human justice. Whereas the first schism makes it hard for theology to give up *religion*, either ecclesiastical or existentialist, the second schism prevents us from coming to terms with *revolution*. This is extremely ironic, for revolution, as Rosenstock-Huessy has shown, is a Western phenomenon with its roots in biblical faith. Yet, because of the church's proclivity for alliances with the establishments, the great revolutions of the West, beginning with the peasants' revolt and climaxing with the Russian revolution, have become progressively more anti-Christian. Finding little hospitality within the church, this hope for a new world which originated with the gospel, as the Marxist Ernst Bloch has documented, migrated out into secular

revolutionary movements. They are its legitimate heirs, cut off from the criticism and support of the church.

Just as the separation of the church from Israel blurs the vision of both, thus deforming theological thinking, so this second schism vitiates the health and distorts the perception of both Christians and revolutionaries alike. The ruination of revolutionary movements is that, short of truly universal scope, they degenerate into narrow vendettas exploited by cynical elite groups.

We need a prophetic stance in theology. We need to focus the vision of the biblical tradition not on the sycophantic "He's dead—he isn't" stalemate but on those secular epiphanies where the new man and the new society are bursting forth in the thick of today's sexual, literary, racial and economic transformations. We need a prophecy, and therefore a theology that is political in this grandly inclusive sense, *i.e.*, focusing on the *polis*, the milieu when man becomes a man. How do we start making up our minds in a political rather than in a religious context?

Another factor in these developments may be the emergence of the affluent society, the end-result of the industrial revolution. If God once symbolized the hope of the poor for a life beyond the heart-breaking struggle to achieve a decent living, the affluent society poses problems of an entirely different nature. The prospects of a guaranteed income in a not-too-distant future suggests that there may soon be few *tangible* obstacles to pursuit of the "spiritual life." Writing in the *Nation* (Dec. 6, 1965) on the "psychology of a Guaranteed Income," Erich Fromm says:

Until now, man's freedom to act has been limited by two factors: the use of force on the part of the rulers (essentially their capacity to kill the dissenters); and, more important, the threat of starvation against all who were unwilling to accept the imposed conditions of work.

Whoever rebelled against these conditions, even if no other force was used against him, was confronted with hunger. The principle prevailing throughout most of human history (in capitalism as well as in the Soviet Union) is: "He who does not work shall not eat." This threat forced man not only to *act* in accordance with what was demanded of him, but also to *think* and to *feel* in such a way that he would not even be tempted to act differently.

The reason that past history is based on the threat of starvation has its source in the fact that, with the exception of certain primitive societies, man has lived at

a level of scarcity. There were never sufficient material goods to satisfy the needs of all; usually a small group of "directors" took for themselves all that their hearts desired, and the many who could not sit at the table were told it was God's or Nature's law that this should be so. But it must be noted that the main factor in this was not the greed of the "directors" but the low level of material productivity.

A guaranteed income, which becomes possible in the era of economic abundance could for the first time free man from the threat of starvation and thus make him truly free and independent economically and psychologically. Nobody would have to accept conditions of work merely because he feared hunger; a talented or ambitious man or woman could learn new skills in preparation for a different kind of occupation. A woman could leave her husband, an adolescent his family. People would not longer learn to be afraid, if they did not have to fear for their bread.

A guaranteed income would not only establish freedom as a reality rather than a slogan; it would also establish a principle deeply rooted in Western religious and humanist traditions: man has the right to live, regardless! This right to live—to have food, shelter, medical care, education, etc.—is an intrinsic human right that cannot be restricted by any condition, not even the one that the individual must be socially "useful."

The problem of the future, then, may well be entirely internalized or psychological—how to make constructive use of vast leisure time. The Protestant work-ethic led to the assumption that leisure is for "play"—and perhaps the expression in play of a little natural sinfulness. But people whose affluence has abolished the traditional challenges of work in order to raise and educate a family will find, in Dr. Fromm's opinion, that they cannot live without challenge of some sort, except in what Viktor Frankl calls "an existential vacuum."

No wonder God is being redefined—and his "salvation" no longer accepted as ballast for the woes of economic want.

COMMENTARY

A POET'S TESTIMONY

ONE of the more serious delusions of a society endlessly preoccupied by "facts" is the belief that responsible citizens should have prepared opinions on all its "problems." Only the artist, usually, has the courage to resist this claim. Answering a question put to him by an interviewer, Saul Bellow recently remarked (*Paris Review*, Winter, 1966).

The volume of judgments one is called upon to make depends upon the receptivity of the observer, and if one is very receptive, one has a terrifying number of opinions to render—"What do you think about this, about that, about Vietnam, about city planning, about expressways, or garbage disposal, or democracy, or Plato, or Pop Art, or welfare states, or literacy in a mass society"? I wonder whether there will ever be enough tranquility under modern circumstances to allow our contemporary Wordsworth to recollect anything. I feel that art has something to do with the achievement of stillness in the midst of chaos. . . .

This quotation seemed a good way to introduce our belated appreciation of the paperback (1962) edition of Peter Viereck's *The Unadjusted Man* (Beacon), neglected until, a few weeks ago, we began quoting some of its striking passages. Mr. Viereck is a poet (Pulitzer winner in 1949) who writes about social and political problems from the viewpoint of a man with an inner life. His book is one illustration of the kind of intelligence it takes to apply serious thinking to current affairs—an intelligence often so involuted as to turn into persuasive evidence that any kind of "good society" of the future will become good only by finding out how to simplify issues. Meanwhile, here is Mr. Viereck's basic position:

Liberal materialists and social idealist often argue: even after basic economic needs are satisfied, social progress ought still to continue full speed ahead because it releases tremendous mass energies; supposedly these can be harnessed to cultural creativity as readily as electric power can be switched from one dynamo to another. What falsifies that analogy is the fact that culture requires not only

energy but sensibility. Sensibility is released by inner spiritual freedom but is often inhibited or coarsened by outer social progress. [See *Frontiers*.] Thereby social progress, if continued past the indispensable point where basic needs are satisfied, often becomes the enemy of cultural freedom. Social progress concentrates on collective satisfaction for the masses. Cultural freedom concentrates on personal integrity for the individual.

Despite its extreme sophistication—often too much, for our uses and understanding—*The Unadjusted Man* is a book which adds greatly to the exploration of public issues in American life pursued by Lyman Bryson in *The Next America*.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

"CONSTITUTIONAL" RELIGION

[Last week we began reprinting here portions of papers submitted by students in connection with the "Man's Religious Quest" lecture series of the University of California in Santa Barbara. This week we continue with further extracts. The work of these students—mostly adults working in some professional capacity—provides abundant evidence of the kind of religious study a university can and ought to sponsor: Study which arouses a sense of justice and the feeling of fair play toward the ideas of others, whether man, woman or child, regardless of what one believes personally. For it is by such means that we come to appreciation of the larger meaning of the Bill of Rights.—Ed.]

I will try to express my reason for taking the course and its catalytic reaction upon my thinking.

I had just lost my mother, who brought me up in an institutional type of religion. After her death, I felt that I, myself, did not truly have a clear-cut, satisfying image of religion. When you are told how you should think and feel, it is pretty hard not to turn to rebellion, and although I knew she was right about many things, I did not feel that religion should be something forced upon someone else. No, I am not Catholic, but Presbyterian. You see, the church follows the thinking of the local "fathers," especially in a small town.

The first lecture after my entrance, "The New Morality," was quite a shock to me and made me much more receptive to my mother's type of religion. *But*, it also stirred by thinking "To thine own self be true" in the deepest sense seems to be very much involved in the real "new morality," and certainly it is involved with the theory of ultimate concern.

The new moralists have passed from the moral stage of development to the ethical stage where the anxiety is concentrated in a need to feel that life is ultimately meaningful. The new moralist is a self-actualizing person who

compromises less with his own morality than do most people, and therefore, is not remotely related to the new immorality which tries to hang its hat on the same peg. I think it is a very good sign of improvement that religion and psychology are moving toward each other.

Pleasure and possession-seeking is not the answer, and has not been in the past. Ten percent of the people working so that ninety percent of the people will have leisure time will make a lot of very unhappy people, I believe.

Down through the ages we have found that self-denial is not the answer for most people either.

Concern with our fellow man and with leading a life that is ultimately meaningful seems to me to be the best path to take. Along this path, we cannot overlook the theory of Karma. I find that it is a part of my developing personal religion. I believe in individual responsibility, and I believe that every decision and action must have a determinant consequence. I agree with Dr. Fingarette that "if we feel Karma is not literally true, we discount the world we live in and other lives."

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I had majored in child psychology and been a teacher; so this was enlightening to find our two fields—psychology and religion—meeting. Here was a basis for intellectual communication Some of the questions that hit me out of the mass of raw material thrown at us these past few months are these:

1. Is meaning reached through collective participation and *involvement*, or must man take a *path alone*? Is there a middle ground? Which comes first if they both exist, or can one make the approach from either end?

2. Should we emphasize how man is alike or his uniqueness?

3. Do we find meaning in quiet, alone with God, *or* can it be found amidst the clamor and fast pace, tensions and demands of today?

4. Must all new forms be found for expression or can we preserve some of the old forms? Perhaps with a new look at them?

5. Are religion and politics opposite ends of a pole? Religion and science? Are they in conflict? Do they need clarifying and separating, especially in matters of politics?

6. What of the work-ethic vs. automation, leisure, and the "service-ethic"?

7. Can we express deepest meanings through word, symbol, art, film, or is ultimate reality beyond expression and therefore not worth trying to express?

8. Do we accept his world as concrete, real, to be dealt with and good found in it, or is this world illusion, to be reached beyond?

9. Is there one ultimate time in life when one reaches enlightenment and realizes reality, or does it come in a series of what Maslow would call peak-experiences, or through living many lives and accepting them as Fingarette would propose?

Perhaps the universal aspects of man are not too much in conflict with his uniqueness.

Wienpahl went all the way to Kyoto to withdraw from the world in a Zen monastery for six months, and, in so doing, found new dimensions. Christ and Buddha both withdrew, but, as pointed out, returned to become involved. What I see of this in our churches today is the use of a daily quiet time to start the day.

My feeling is that man is constructed for a series of peak experiences or enlightenment as he matures and his mind and spirit stretch. This ties in with Fingarette's theory of our living many lives. It ties in, too, with my own experience. We do seem to be constantly being reborn, reassembled, then pulled apart and regrouped.

This course has opened many doors. At this point, almost too many and too quickly. But I feel that there will be time, having been exposed now along a broad spectrum, to make choices and explore in depth.

* * *

Although man appears to have lost his desires for dependency on religion or association with its phenomena, he nevertheless attempts to rid himself of the terrible anxiety of meaninglessness. Yet today's man focuses his energies on the activism of fun and money and very little in the activism and discipline of his mind. The process itself, this desire for material gain, has succeeded in depersonalizing man. As this "vicious" circle widens, man becomes more and more dependent on the only "true" knowledge of science with a growing distrust of religion and philosophy.

It may appear that science and technology are the culprits in man's search for himself. In reality, science does not threaten spiritual values. Spiritual values are hard to come by, and humans, who need spiritual values whether it is the scientific age or not, have to work for them.

The attainment of spiritual values need not be through a traditional religious experience. It may not be the familiar, from man to a God-up-there relationship. It can involve a new and meaningful man to God-out-there relationship. As expressed by John A. T. Robinson in his book *Honest to God*, "the translation from the God 'up there' to the God 'out there,' represented no more than a change of direction of spatial symbolism." Bonhoeffer said that God was "the beyond in the midst of our life, a depth of reality reached not on the borders of life but at its center." Kierkegaard expressed his idea in phrase form by saying "a deeper immersion in existence." Finally, Robinson in a more complete thought says that "the word God denotes the ultimate depth of all our being, the creative ground and meaning of all our existence."

Since it is hard to relate traditional religion with man's needs of today, it is suggested that religion does not have to involve the traditional spiritual commitment with God. Religious experience can and does take place when we are alone or even with others. This experience takes place between men, where man works, and where he plays. This implies a need for interdependence among men and in reality there is a call for mutuality in human relationships. Once man has learned to find and experience human presence and mutual understanding then and only then will man be on the road to finding divine presence and a meaning to life.

Meaning and attainment of a self-identity come from a willingness to be involved and become vulnerable. When this involvement reaps a bad harvest, it is important that one accept this fact and not try to avoid it, change it, or ignore it. Then, as one becomes more able to react in this way, he becomes less vulnerable, but he is just as involved. He has reached a point where he accepts the world as it is.

FRONTIERS

Art, Man, Machines and Etc.

WHEN I was twenty-one years old, in the middle of a small mid-western town, I met an art teacher from Europe. He was teaching humanities at a Methodist college in town. We frequently had discussions about art since that was the field I was most interested in, in between taking care of a baby daughter and a husband.

At that time I had never seen an old master's painting except the Blue Boy by Gainsborough, which after being built up tremendously (the immense cost of the painting) I was left totally flat upon seeing it. I simply couldn't reconcile \$100,000 and that blue insipid boy.

This humanities teacher asked if I didn't think looking at reproductions was only a token response to seeing a real painting. I argued (since I had never seen much else) reproductions were just as good.

One thing I knew was, that I didn't like Bonnard or Vermeer in reproductions. Years later in New York City I wandered in to the Museum of Modern Art and on to the top floor I ran into a sea of iridescent Bonnards. All the dabs of paint and flecks of white canvas showing through, gave one the sensation of being bathed in alternating cool breezes and floods of reflected sunlight.

Another day I ran into a very small Vermeer in the Metropolitan Museum . . . its jewel-like quality of quiet splendor lit up a corner where it hung. Last year in the Ruyk Museum in Amsterdam I got to see a few more precious Vermeers. When I say precious I don't mean monetary worth, but rather the rare moment and privilege of seeing these quiet masterpieces.

Another time in Scotland in a small museum I found a beautiful gesso-like Fra Filippo Lippi that was round. I had never before had any personal response at seeing reproductions of his work.

I tried an experiment in a couple of museums (European). For the most part their collections had not been reproduced in the books I had previously seen in libraries or in art school. I was not familiar

with these paintings of great masters. I would wander around the museum from room to room—in each new room I would stand in the center and look all around me. I would go to the first picture that moved me for some reason or another. I would then look to see who had painted it. Since I had never seen any of these paintings in reproduction, I had nothing to go by. I was not near enough to see the techniques used in painting. Without exception, each one I chose turned out to be by a great artist. Whatever staying power this artist had, which was individual, had come through. The second rate stuff was second rate and filled in the walls between the wonderful masters.

No quality of reproduction can give off the warmth of paint quality, intensity of color—or subtlety of colors, for that matter—of the original. The post cards one could buy at each museum only returned home with me as reminders of the original sensation.

What I am getting at is that all the mechanical devices so available to modern man, in reproduction, lighting, restoring, can't but approximate the real painting, sculpture, natural light, and most of all the personal feeling one might have on that particular day . . . which would adjust the nuances of perception.

I have for example a half dozen reproductions of the mosaics in Ravenna. Not one has the same degree of coloring. I have not seen these mosaics, but I have seen Roman mosaics in off-beat churches that had no funds for electric lighting and had to rely on available light. You have to wait until your eyes adjust to the darkness, seeing first only the bare outlines of the mosaics. Within minutes all the mystery of the mosaics comes into focus, a passing cloud outside or a sudden rain-shower might cause this or that to disappear or come into sight.

I have seen the electrical wonder of St. Peter's aglow when the Pope is brought in for an audience. However, I would prefer to see it in the light cast by the hidden windows that Michelangelo designed. The audience might have to wait longer for the full pitch of intensity to occur, naturally, but that, too, would be worth something. I saw the altar gradually

lit up by electricity. The Pope was surrounded by a blaze of gold. I also saw a ladder high up to one side of the main arch, in preparation to changing a burnt-out light bulb.

Then I had a non-electrical experience outside the walls of Rome. It was late afternoon . . . after most of the tourists had left their sightseeing. I opened the door onto an immensely long rectangular room. All that appeared in the later afternoon darkness were two lines of huge stone pillars to each side of the room. They disappeared to support a flat, hanging ceiling of extremely intricate gold-leafed carving. This goldness was aglow from small round windows above the pillars and near the outsides of the ceiling. They were not glassed, but the window casements contained some sort of amber colored stone, cut very thin. The light which forced its way through the amber stone was warm and gave life to the gold ceiling.

At the very distant end of the church was a pit of sorts with a cupola over it . . . light from brass lamps lightened up that particular spot. A white-laced priest walked around this pit and at one point incensed smoke puffed and rose at intervals from what he was holding. In retrospect this visual experience will stay with me longer than the electrical circus I saw in St. Peter's. The only real warmth of St. Peter's was the profound pleasure Pope John had when a bunch of small schoolboys threw their hats into the air and cheered when their group was announced to the whole audience. John touched his small red cap, smiled, and nodded to the boys. This response had been touched off with human enthusiasm, not a mechanical device.

All this rambling I have been doing got started when last night I read some comments on abstract art, motion, teaching machines and all manner of information concerning man's not so silent mechanical partner. I may be obstinate toward change, but most of these discussions of the merits of machines leave me cold. I come easily to the question, "Why not get rid of them?" "Who says you can't throw a TV out the window? What's the loss, except money?" "Who says, when we have more students, we need mechanical teachers? Why not more human teachers?"

I've known a couple of machine-taught kids. True, they may have been guinea-pigs of an idea and not true examples, but they seemed to be devoid of any fluctuations of response. There was a blank blandness which in four years of ordinary teaching I never felt I had got through to reach the child. The school used a machine to speed reading. A couple of students learned how to cheat the machine!

I'm absolutely opposed to the supposition, "We have to accept the condition of our time if we are to reach the real present." (Georgy Kepes.) What's wrong with doing a bit of heaving out of what we don't really like? I don't think we can see the present, there is so much clutter around that we accept.

TV's ok, they say . . . only the programming is bad. Mr. Skinner's teaching machines are ok . . . if the wrong mixture doesn't get tossed in and the child becomes brainwashed. Science seems to think each tiniest, tiniest little discovery is precious like a diamond. That's about it . . . we don't really need diamonds and we don't need useless discoveries. I say heave it out if we don't like it!

If we all had the guts and perception to pick and choose, we'd do a lot of heaving. We'd toss out the damn bomb. We wouldn't have second thoughts about nuclear energy and its wastes; we'd heave it out and try for some other, more positive way to get energy.

We've got an awful lot of problems to solve if we continue living on this earth. There isn't time to go lovingly over all the good little side points of a machine versus a MAN. The machines have us by the necks and we, who invented them, are chewing our own tails. Our machines are choking out air, stinking up our water, mesmerizing our optical responses, and inviting all manner of ultimate catastrophes . . . and still we hang on for dear life and make excuses for the bloody damn machine.

It is not hard to see that, once you start heaving out, some things make sense and some don't. Nobody minds a washing machine . . . but they could be made to waste less water. Nobody minds a car, but they could be made to give off no exhaust pollution, take up less space, and be used for more

practical purposes. Electric lights are here to stay, but it's nice to turn them off and look at the sky some evenings. They say nuclear power is cheap. Cheap how? A lot of unused uranium lying around and it *needs* to be put to work? Well who's going to solve the problem of disposing of nuclear waste?

Who needs an electric hair dryer? For curls? Who needs curls? Who needs an electric tooth brush? Has everybody lost his elbow grease?

How about a few nice sunsets? There aren't many in our big cities any more. The smog cuts off visibility.

How about a noiseless sky? NO jets, no army planes, JUST PLAIN OLD QUIET SKY and a few twittering birds thrown in.

How many people could stay on five acres of land for a year and not yell HELP! What's so horrible about that thought? Too quiet? What do you do for amusement? Terrible thought! Time, time, time!

What's important and what's not . . . what can we heave out? What do we want to keep?

Our problem is, we have mechanized perceptions!

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