

THE CASE AGAINST THE DRUG CULTURE

[This article is adapted from a radio commentary by Henry Anderson, delivered over KPFA, Berkeley, June 17 and 18, 1966. Copyright, 1966, is held by Mr. Anderson.]

I: THE RACE FOR MIDDLE SPACE

I SUPPOSE I should say at the outset that I haven't been on any "trips"—other than those which come naturally. I am well aware that the tripsters will therefore write me off with the wheeze, "If you haven't tried it, don't knock it." I am unimpressed with that argument, if it can be called an argument. There are many things I have not tried, and feel that I am perfectly justified in "knocking" simply on the basis of being human, and having had certain basic human experiences and feelings. For example, there have been other kinds of hippies, at various times, in various places, who thought they found fulfillment in killing or torturing or being tortured. I am quite prepared to abjure Sade's recommendations for consciousness-expansion without ever having tried them, and with the intention of never trying them. And I have no apology whatever to make for my lack of "empiricism," for empiricism, like almost anything else, can become a vice.

Now, the proponents of LSD and marijuana and the like begin from a sound point of departure. They reject what they call the "false values" of our culture. So far, so good. Our society and culture have many false values, which should be rejected. The tripsters, for example, tend to be scornful of the "race for outer space," and, in my judgment, quite properly so. But it is not enough to reject unsound values. The question is, what values are substituted—if any?

The tripsters substitute a "race for inner space." They use artifices to propel them, as astronauts use mechanical devices to propel them into the other kind of space. By the way, I would like to see some double-blind tests, with placebos,

to find out how much the drugs really have to do with the results the tripsters claim they get, and how much is self-induced.

I have no invariable quarrel with these results. I am not a grim-lipped Puritan—at least, I flatter myself that I am not. I am not a foe of euphoria, transcendental and oceanic experiences, creativity, liberation from "hang-ups," and some of the other things the true believers claim they get from their drugs. Far from it. I have experimented with various non-pharmacologic ways of enhancing these qualities, and will comment on them in the second half of this discussion. The problem is a problem of proportion. "Consciousness expansion", is not *all* there is to living. I am in favor of many other things besides euphoria, and there are many situations in this life in which you cannot have everything. You have to make choices. This is one of those situations.

The "race for inner space," as surely as the "race for outer space," evades the problems of "middle space," if I may coin a phrase. That is, problems located neither in heaven nor hell, but right here in the everyday, common-sense, real-life, experiential world. The bright young people in grey flannel suits who are turning their talents toward the computer technology of the aerospace industry, and the bright young people in grey flannel sandals who are turning inward to their private visions, may think they have nothing in common, but, in practical effect, they are at one. If a very great many more bright young people don't turn their talents to solving the down-to-earth problems that are all around us, right here and now, there isn't going to be anybody's inner space left to explore; and outer space will still be there, but without anybody to explore it.

In June, 1966, in San Francisco, a big conference was held on LSD and the other

hallucinogens. Since people evidently find the subject titillating, the yellow press gave it more space than wars, revolutions, and other things that one might suppose were really more important. This conference was sponsored by the University of California, and, like almost everything else under the ægis of that institution, it seemed to me utterly to miss the essential point.

Not a single one of the experts flown in from all over the country seemed even to hint at this point: the big question with LSD, as with marijuana, peyote, mescaline, morning glory seeds, glue-sniffing, and all the similar devices, is not whether they are useful in treating alcoholism; whether they are addictive; whether they should be legalized or outlawed; whether people under their influence occasionally run amok, stab other people, commit suicide, and so forth. The big question is: are they a diversion, a distraction, a siphoning off of energies desperately needed elsewhere, a way of opting out which is heartlessly unfair to those who are left? I submit that they are.

To be sure, if everybody in the world—all the Communist and other ideologues, all the hungry agricultural workers of this nation and every other nation, all the Negroes in ghettos in this nation and the Union of South Africa and everywhere else—if *everybody* were to renounce his economic and political and other grievances, and take the LSD route, then the problem I am speaking of would not exist. Personally, I doubt that I could bear to live in such a world—that's a question we may have time to return to. But it's a very hypothetical question. Obviously, everyone is not going to agree to opt out. And short of that, those who take the psychedelic way out are, in effect, adding that much more to the burden of those who choose to stay in "middle space," and fight its evils and try to make it liveable and try to keep it going for the benefit of everybody—including those who are doing nothing to help, and, indeed, are known to jeer at hard-working reformers and call them square.

Among the other values at stake, besides transcendental experiences, is simple human justice. It seems to me damnably unjust for some people to be flying around on psychedelic trips, while other people are down below, stuck in dehumanizing kinds of employment, stuck in dehumanizing cities, being killed in wars.

What is needed is not more people blasted out of their minds. There are more than enough people out of their minds already. What is needed is more people in their minds—in their right minds. It is not really liberating, really humanizing, to have people hallucinating that everything is beautiful. Everything is *not* beautiful. What is needed is more people who can see what is really there: who know when a lake or a mountain or a forest is really beautiful, and who also know when it is threatened, and are prepared to fight the lumber barons, the Division of Highways, or whoever threatens it, and people who know that a dump or a ghetto is really ugly, and are prepared to fight to change the ugliness.

Some law-enforcement officials may be under the impression that the young hippies and the young activists are one and the same group. There is some overlapping, to be sure. But not, I think, very much. By and large, the seekers after psychedelic experiences, although they may at one time have been involved in some kind of wrestling match with the real world, have left the arena.

This is not merely my opinion. Let me read from a leaflet which was thrust on me the last time I visited the Berkeley campus. It was put out by a group of users who want to legalize marijuana by constitutional amendment. I quote:

Persons under the influence of marijuana are non-aggressive, amiable, easily pleased . . . As a tranquilizer, it is superior to most of the products prescribed by doctors. . . . Users are too content, too happy, too unambitious to please the custodians of public morality.

These enthusiasts of pot are dead wrong on at least two scores. They are dead wrong in their grasp of what pleases the custodians of public

morality Nothing really pleases the keepers of our political-economic zoo more than contented, amiable, unambitious inmates. Nothing displeases them more than critics who say and do something constructive about their discontents, rather than floating away on cloud nine. Aldous Huxley foretold this clearly in his devastating prophecy of *Brave New World*, and it is one of the ironies in this vale of ironies that Huxley himself became converted by his own enemy.

Secondly, the potniks are dead wrong, or so it seems to me, in their version of the good life. They obviously believe that Nirvana consists of placid people. I can imagine scarcely anything more terrifying. To pursue the pharmaceutical metaphor of the friends of marijuana, what this world needs is fewer tranquilizers, and more energizers: more genuine aliveness, and concern, and passion, and active support for the things which are good, and active indignation for the things which are not good.

You may have seen the story in the papers about Allen Ginsberg's recent appearance before a Congressional committee. Last fall, by his own account, Ginsberg made a stab at becoming socially involved, but then he got high on LSD and ended up on a beach somewhere, on his knees, wrapped in fantasies about seaweed and a newfound love for Lyndon Johnson. Ginsberg and his cohorts think this is the latest religion. I think it is the latest opium of the people, in a more literal and potentially more dangerous sense than anything envisaged by Karl Marx.

Here's another example of my point: last October 15, the novelist Ken Kesey was invited to speak at a so-called teach-in on Viet Nam. He showed up obviously "out of his gourd" on LSD or something of the sort, and his sole contribution (to the extent it was comprehensible at all) was to advise people not to care very much, about Viet Nam or anything else.

If the tripsters were frankly groping, stumbling, searching, seeking, growing, and eventually finding some way back to this world—

in short, if they were genuinely open—I would feel differently. But I'm sorry to say I do not see openness and authentic searching. I see a great deal of smugness. The average tripster seems quite satisfied that he has the answers; that he knows the secret of it all; that he, unlike poor squares like me, is sailing new, rich, exciting, radical, uncharted seas of experience.

There is little ground for such self-satisfaction. In fact, what the tripsters are doing is very old and not radical at all. It has been tried in many societies, in many times, in many places, and in many ways. Any good anthropology textbook mentions plenty of cultures which have institutionalized essentially what the tripsters are now asking: an escape from the dullnesses of ordinary existence, through visions, ecstasies, "mystical" experiences induced by drugs, driving rhythms, lights, dancing—precisely the same techniques used in "trip festivals" today. Sometimes the right to escape has been reserved to some priestly class. Sometimes it has been conferred upon everyone at intervals—the beginning of spring, the completion of the harvest, etc.

I am not aware of a scintilla of evidence that such devices have made any difference in the productivity, or happiness, or creativity of those cultures, or in their survival. I see no reason to believe these same old devices can play any useful part in helping our culture survive the atomic age.

The tripsters may say to me, "You can't put us down *that* way. We don't think your culture *deserves* to survive." Perhaps now we are getting down to the nitty-gritty—the gulf between assumptions which indeed divide us. I believe that people "drop out," as Leary puts it, to a culture of fantasies, the drug culture, for negative rather than positive reasons: not so much because they truly find their fantasies fulfilling, as because they are totally alienated (or, rather, like to think they are totally alienated) from any other culture which seems available. They do not see—or think they

do not see, which comes to the same thing—any legacies worth preserving in Western civilization.

I do see (or think I see) such legacies. *It is the things which are worthwhile in our culture which enable us to perceive the things which are wrong.*

Western civilization has been guilty of some of the greatest atrocities in the history of the human species—but it has also supplied a perspective of humanist values and ideals which make it possible for most of us to recognize those atrocities for what they were and are. They would have been taken for granted, viewed as fitting and proper, by most cultures of the past and many of the present. To illustrate: even the maddest of our warlords these days have to proclaim that they love peace. It has not often been this way before. During most of human history, peace has not been a part of the *mores*. Warlords have openly reveled in their bloodthirstiness, and have been acclaimed for it.

I am no apologist for our culture, to put it gently. But I know that there are many good things about Western civilization—including the concept of personal expansion and fulfillment and liberation, the very notion of the individual, which some of the tripsters seem to think they invented. They, and you, and I ought to be grateful to our culture for providing us with these good, humanist perspectives. I want to retain them; to build on them. I believe that if they are properly employed, they provide perhaps the best tools for constructive rebellion, the best framework man has yet developed within which to work on the things that are not good—all the cruelties, cloddishness, injustices, tyrannies. I do not think this is ethnocentrism; I think it is humanism.

I can assure the tripsters that if the H-Bombs start flying, they are not going to be selective in what they destroy and what they spare. They will destroy baby and bath water—and soap and towels, too. I do not want the species to be set back 10,000 years and have to work its way up to the present point all over again. And, in case the

tripsters are under any illusions on the nature of stone-age existence, it wouldn't be a bunch of happy savages sitting around in caves, eating peyote, at peace with themselves and the world, living off the fat of the land. People would be in thrall to despots, including those most ruthless despots, hunger and cold; and people would be clubbing each other's brains out in the competition for food and shelter; life would be "brutish, nasty, and short."

The very best that is in all of us is going to be none too much to keep that from happening. The odds, I fear, are not favorable. Everybody who says, "You knock yourself out if you want, man, I'm just going to take a far out trip," everybody who picks up his talents and goes home, lengthens the odds by that much. If they were just playing fast and loose with their own lives, that would be one thing. But, in a real sense, they are playing fast and loose with my life, too, and yours, whoever you are. And I don't like it.

I might say, finally, that for bona fide liberation, bona fide radicalism, there is a vision which may be matched more than favorably against that of the tripsters. What is really fresh, really revolutionary—perhaps the only really radical idea left, the only authentically twentieth-century revolution—is the hypothesis that it is possible for a person to live a whole, rounded, aware, productive, creative, responsible, self-realized life, personal yet interpersonal, with peak periods and periods of rest, on the strength of his own powers, his own insight into his needs for fulfillment and what it takes to meet those needs, his own will, his own effort, without leaning on some Freudian or Marxian or other dogma, or computer programming, or any other kind of crutch—including drugs. I want to discuss this vision, and how to bring it down to earth.

II: CRACKING THE CHRYSALIS

I have commented on LSD and the drug culture, from the standpoint of social responsibility. Now I should like to flesh out the

case against the drug culture with the individual rather than society as my referent.

For twenty-five years, I have thought of myself as an artist above everything else, and nothing is more important to me than the qualities of beauty, ecstasy, liberation. However, I think it is naïve, to say the least, to subscribe to anything and everything just because it invokes those hallowed words. The problem is to distinguish between the authentic qualities and their counterfeits. We are surrounded by all kinds of frauds and counterfeits. The drug culture, in my estimation, is one of them—no less than "socialist realism," Lady Bird Johnson's "beautification campaign," and the American Gothic of Ronald Reagan.

I will describe a few things some friends and I have been experimenting with, off and on for a year or so, which seem to me to represent an alternative path to "consciousness expansion." This path doesn't require medical supervision. It doesn't involve going out of your mind. It is available to anyone who really wants to "turn on" without artificial props and assistive devices.

Unstructured groups of from two to twenty of us have come together from time to time, and here are just a few of the things we've tried:

(1) Improvisatory scenes. Someone may start, for example, by saying: "This is a doctor's office. Somebody be the doctor; somebody be the nurse-receptionist; the rest of us will be patients. I'm an old man, waiting with not too much patience. . . ." Or someone may say, "I feel like being a politician running for office, about to go before the television cameras. Anybody care to be my opponent and debate me on the black-eyed pea issue?" Someone may take him up on it, and it goes from there until it stops being fun. Sometimes it doesn't work, but sometimes it turns out to be more hilarious than anything I've seen professional improvisers do. Nothing is funnier than the humor you, yourself, create; more beautiful than the beauty you create; or more heartbreaking than your own tragedies.

(2) We've tried a lot of things to expand the uses of the voice, such as a kind of *a capella* choir in which everyone chooses a sound he considers right for him—for example, "boom, boom," for a bass; "twinkle twinkle, little star" for a soprano. One person volunteers as a conductor, and under his direction, we enter on cue, increase or diminish volume, accelerate or decelerate tempo, stop entirely, re-enter, and so forth. We often get remarkable effects.

(3) Free body movement to music. We've usually used classical music, but it's sometimes swing, rock 'n roll, or experimental. The movement is whatever the individual is moved by the music to do: involving any or all parts of the body; involving or not involving other people; with eyes open or eyes closed; whatever.

(4) Creative cookery. On one occasion, somebody supplied a wide variety of olives, tomatoes, lettuce, and other salad ingredients of different sizes, hues, and textures. Everyone constructed his own idea of a utopian salad. On another occasion, we were provided with a variety of ingredients for making soups—three hot soup bases, and twenty or more spices, condiments, and garnishes. On such occasions, we end by eating each other's handiwork—and there haven't yet been any fatalities.

(5) With a simple 8-millimeter Bell and Howell camera, some indoor film, and photoflood lights, we once made our own "high camp" movie, with a hero, masquerading as a dissolute playboy, locking wits and brawn with a mad scientist.

(6) We've had a lot of fun trying to assume the attributes and movements of familiar objects. For example, have you ever pretended you were an egg being broken, dropping into a pan, and frying? Or a vacuum cleaner, or an osterizer, or any number of other everyday things? One time, eight of us made up the component parts of an internal combustion engine, and it was the only machine I've ever felt any real enthusiasm for.

We've tried our hands at creating our own *musique concrete*, haiku, collages, clay modelling, finger painting, murals constructions of everything from IBM cards to the shoe on our feet. There are any number of uses of light, incense and other fragrances, the sense of touch, and so forth, the we've thought of but haven't had a chance to try yet.

We haven't spent any time sitting around intellectualizing. We've found the substance of liberation so exciting we haven't bothered with the theory. In my judgment, instead of finishing this article, you would do better to get up right now, move around, and start getting in touch with the space in the room, the textures of the walls, the floors, the drapes, all the things you've become deadened to and take for granted—most of all, yourself. But, in case anybody doesn't follow this precept, and is still reading, I'll violate my own advice and do some theorizing. I'm speaking only for myself, by the way, since my friends and I have not discussed these matters.

I think we've been proceeding on the assumption that in our compartmentalized, routinized lives, all of us have all kinds of capacities we've never used, and we've become afraid to even try to use them, for fear we'll "fail," or be laughed at. Timothy Leary, the high apostle of LSD, says most people go through life using perhaps five per cent of their potential consciousness, and I have no reason to doubt that he's quite right. That is the common kernel of truth from which Leary and his friends have been proceeding in one direction, and my friends and I in another altogether.

I and my friends, I think, have been assuming that the way authentically to expand the consciousness is to work on strengthening and developing the constituent elements which make up consciousness: the five basic senses; memory, imagination; the feeling for color, design, humor, and so forth and so on. The way you develop these things, I think, is to exercise them—to practice, very hard, the way a person, by working

hard enough, may eventually be able to run a mile in less than four minutes. I don't believe there is any short cut, any easy way, in one kind of human development any more than the other.

You may have heard this joke: one person says "Have you got color TV?" The other person says, "No, I take LSD and sit and watch the wallpaper instead." In a real sense, that joke illustrates the point I am trying to make. I don't believe anyone's potentialities are really expanded by any amount of sitting around watching TV, no matter how good the color, the acting, the direction, etc. And I do not believe anyone's potentialities are really expanded by any amount of hallucinating on LSD, no matter how good the color of those visions. There is no substitute, no way I know of to really start using that 95 per cent of unused potential other than doing it yourself: mixing and applying your own colors, to paper or canvas or whatever; writing your own scripts; moving your own body; using your own voice; and all the rest of it.

My friends and I have found, I think, that in an appropriate interpersonal setting, it is possible to do these things. It is possible to be unafraid, to let go, to start a veritable freshet of seeing things in new ways—and through it all to know that our consciousness expansion is real, and not a dream, because it is shared, observed, communicated, and can be built upon at any later time.

The interpersonal setting in which we have found all kinds of creative capacities can emerge and flower is characterized by certain qualities: it is essentially unstructured accepting, non-coercive, non-competitive, non-striving, non-judgmental, non-directive. There is no "purpose" in the usual sense. For example, we try not to let our gathering become psychotherapy sessions. This is not to say they are not psychotherapeutic. In lives which are lived at the five or ten per cent level, *any* experience which is liberating, humanizing, and authentic might legitimately be called psychotherapeutic. But that is a side-effect.

We have no leaders and no followers. We have no agendas. It is not necessary that everyone arrive at the same time, or leave at the same time. The closest thing we have to a rule, I suppose, is that no one shall laugh at anyone else. *With*, yes; but not *at*. The concepts of "success" and "failure" simply do not apply.

One of the articles of faith I have formulated in the course of this year is that bona fide liberation, although it is hard work, is fun, and it is contagious.

But many people never allow themselves to be exposed to this contagion. When we try to describe what we do, it sounds anarchic, it doesn't fit into any customary categories, and people tend to be terribly disquieted by that. If we worked out a credo, called ourselves an "Institute of Something-or-Other," met in a regular place at a regular time, charged a fee, and the like, our happenings would make sense to many more people and we might become a great "success." But then, I think, what we are doing would no longer be so liberating. The values at stake, it seems to me, are inherently non-organizational. You might prove me wrong in this, but it is my intuition at the moment. Getting in touch with one's individuality; learning to shuck off some of the shackles of time, purpose, language, biology, society, and culture; stretching, growing, cracking the chrysalis—these seem to be like so many butterflies of the human spirit. In time, perhaps, they can grow hardy, but for the moment, at least, they are very fragile.

To crack the chrysalis, as I have said, is not easy. It is very difficult to work our way out of the fear that we are going to be judged and found wanting if we step out of our narrow roles of housewife, or teacher, or whatever, and stretch our bodies, our minds, our voices, our talents in unaccustomed ways. But on the basis of my own experience, I can testify that it is possible. It's not mechanical. It's not something you work on all the time. You can put it aside, and take up later where you left off. But in the meantime, you

know that it's there, and that is a very wonderful, reassuring feeling. It's very reassuring to know that you did it yourself, with your own powers; to know that the supply can't be cut off, government can't outlaw it, no force in the world can take away from you your accomplishment, or your ability to go on from it to similar accomplishments.

How do I reconcile all this with the first part of this discussion? I said then, in so many words; that life is often grim and deadly earnest. I spoke of the rape of the countryside, people trapped in ghettos and brutalizing work, and the possibility of the destruction of all societies, all cultures. Those things are still true. I would still inveigh against any life-style which distracts from them completely. But I did not intend to suggest that everyone must man the barricades, stern of visage, sober of mien, intense, all the time, day and night. That would be as dehumanizing as total hedonism.

I like to believe that there is no discontinuity between the things my friends and I have done in seeking to enhance our creativity, spontaneity, and joy in life, and the things we may be doing in the social, political, economic arenas. I like to believe there is no inconsistency between social responsibility and one's responsibility to be one's self.

At the very least, I would say that the kinds of things we have been talking about here are refreshing, and to that extent make it possible to return with renewed effectiveness to grapple with the woes of the world. But I think there is more to it than that. I like to believe there is an organic and mutually reinforcing connection between the courage it takes to try a new kind of singing, dancing, painting, or play-acting, and the courage it takes to challenge an entrenched social institution. I like to believe there is a very real relationship between the kind of growth and liberation we are groping for in our own personalities and the kind of liberation all men deserve and all men are capable of.

It isn't enough to say, abstractly, that we are in favor of good things, like freedom and improving the quality of men's lives. The crackpot realists can and do correctly pronounce those shibboleths, even as they go about systematically destroying the existential qualities. And the old left, and the new left, and practically all the critics of the crackpot realists seem to think they are somehow going to change the scheme of things by mere exhortation, or by the mere acquisition of power.

Genuine changes in the quality of men's lives, in my estimation, require more than exhortation, and less than power: they require, among other things, that the people calling for changes demonstrate, in their own flesh-and-blood lives, the good qualities they are talking about—and demonstrate in that way, which strikes me as the only truly relevant way, that these good qualities are not, after all, beyond the grasp of other mortal men.

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REVIEW

THE ABOLITION OF WAR

THE opening editorial of a recent issue of *Gandhi Marg*, monthly journal of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, begins with this paragraph:

The tragedy in Vietnam is as complete as it can be before its final explosion towards a world war. We can continue to prevaricate over the terrible joint crime in Vietnam only if we are unconcerned with the truth and nothing but the truth. The American view is that the United States is pouring its blood and its money to prevent brutal Communist aggression against South Vietnam. North Vietnamese guerillas infiltrating into South Vietnam, armed, equipped and trained by China and Russia, is nothing but undeclared war against a peaceful Democracy. The other side holds there is no democracy worth the name in South Vietnam and there is within South Vietnam itself a powerful movement for liberation from misrule and oppression. The North Vietnamese guerillas represent forces of liberation collaborating with similar local forces. The perpetuation of the division of Vietnam into North and South, as in Korea, is the creation of American world strategy to keep a deep sphere of American influence in that part of Asia.

The ideological and political gap between the two viewpoints is wider and deeper than the Pacific Ocean. Russia and China, while quarrelling with each other, are competing to help North Vietnam through the back door. It is one of the imponderables of the present situation that these two mighty powers are still at the back door and not openly at war with the United States. If Russia and China were not checkmating each other, they would have by now combined to enter the war openly. If this happens, and it can happen any day, then we shall witness the matchstick thrown into the haystack to light the conflagration of the third world war.

Even if the reader feels that collaboration between Russia and China is far less of a possibility than seems implied here, and that these powers, should they become reconciled and allied, would "think twice" before contemplating an all-out war with the United States, there is still some importance in the above contrast of stereotypes of opposing opinion.

There are two approaches to this conflict of ideas and claims. One is to argue out in detail, with historical references and documentation, the mistakes and misconceptions in these stereotypes, as is now being done with great thoroughness and scholarship in the liberal and radical press of the United States, in behalf of American withdrawal from the war. The other approach is to try to isolate the roots of conflict and the susceptibility to justifications of war in the basic attitudes and thinking of the people in the modern world. It is in the pursuit of this task that the great value of a magazine such as *Gandhi Marg* may be recognized. (The address of the Gandhi Peace Foundation is 221 Rouse Avenue, New Delhi, India; annual subscription, \$2.50.)

Gandhi Marg (which means "Gandhi's Way") has Western as well as Asian contributors. In the issue at hand (for last July), Horace Alexander, an English Quaker and associate of Gandhi, writes on "The Power Struggle and the Human Community." Jerome D. Frank, who teaches psychiatry at Johns Hopkins, discusses "The Psychology of Nonviolence." Gene Sharp, a writer well known to students of nonviolence, assembles what are probably most of Gandhi's basic comparisons of violent with nonviolent methods, in "Gandhi's Defense Policy"—a study of obvious importance in these days of frequent misquotation and misrepresentation of Gandhi's views on this question. There is an informative review and justification of Gandhi's ideas about "Trusteeship" by Dayal Saran Verma, a view of "Gandhi as a Social Revolutionary" by Thomas Hyslop, an account of the "Metaphysical Foundation of Gandhi's Thought" by Surendra Verma, and other articles of like value.

Horace Alexander starts out by asking why it is that the people of modern nations have so little reluctance to put to use the terrible destructiveness of present-day weapons, as though the wisdom and inspiring moral counsels of sages and prophets "whose alleged followers are counted in hundreds of millions all round the world, and whose teachings have been disseminated in all languages for hundreds of thousands of years," had never been heard of. He

finds an explanation in the absorbing identification of people with the nation-state:

It is, of course, the strength of the nation-state, and the intense devotion that the nation-state receives from the great majority of its citizens, that retards the creation of a world community; but why is this such a powerful force? Surely, above all, because there is a deep longing in the human heart to differentiate between "us" and "them." We constantly seek to justify ourselves, perhaps to cover our own unconscious sense of limitation and failure, by assuring ourselves that at least "we" are better than "they." "We" belong to the elite, the righteous, the good, the enlightened; "they" are the ignorant, the perverse, the agents of evil, the bad. Therefore it becomes our duty to fight for right and truth and good against those who represent the forces of evil. This almost universal passion amongst men to uphold right and truth as represented by their nation, their system of values, is today the greatest menace to the future of man on this earth.

What might be considered here is that the ideal of the Brotherhood of Man, implicit in Horace Alexander's discussion, ought not to be "argued" about, but simply presented as a fundamental premise—a being-attitude natural and necessary to the health of the human species. World culture, if it is ever achieved, will not be debated into existence, but will come from a general cleaving to this view, which represents a stance high above the stereotypes which now divide the world into armed and conflicting camps. Not argument, but growing into new feelings and ideas about the nature of man, will bring all this conflict to an end. What is needed is the continuous exposure of people to literature, thought, art, dialogue, relationships and cultural interchange which are an expression and elaboration of the universal brotherhood of mankind, not merely because no other principle is worthy or workable, but because that brotherhood is, and not even subject to question. It was from this uncompromising outlook that Gandhi obtained his strength. As Horace Alexander concludes:

Most of us need a far greater sense of compassion, and a far greater imagination about the lives of other humans. It might be good for us to exercise our imagination regularly by saying to ourselves: "Now, how should I see these great issues if it had pleased fate to plant this human being at

birth in a family living in West China or in Arabia or in northern Nigeria or White Rhodesia or at any other place that is quite remote and foreign and opposite to the actual place of our birth? Are we not all, in nine tenths of our mental outlook, the slaves of our environment? To emancipate ourselves from this thralldom should be one of our first and most persistent undertakings.

In the spirit of a careful scientist, Jerome D. Frank shows that, whatever the limitations of nonviolent methods in conflict resolution, their success to *any* degree "opens up new areas for thought and experimentation that up to now were foreclosed by the assumption that nonviolence was contrary to human nature." Explorations in this direction, he points out, may do much to change conventional ideas about "courage" and "manliness." In his conclusion Dr. Frank observes:

Although the goal of a world without war is a long way off and may not be achievable, this analysis suggests some immediate steps toward this end.

Today we are teaching our children violent behavior through an educational system that glorifies wars and military heroes, through the excessive amount of violence displayed in our mass communication media—newspapers, television and motion pictures—and through the wide sale of war toys. We can try to combat this trend by emphasizing in our education peaceful instead of warlike achievements and dramatizing heroes of peace as we have dramatized those of war. We can continue to campaign against violence in our mass media. At the international level we can work to strengthen the sense of world community, thereby combating the dehumanization of one's opponent which seems to be a prerequisite to destroying him.

There is already a culture of committed internationalism, growing from an enlightened common ground of the human spirit. By helping this culture to spread, by contributing to it with one's own thinking, and by giving its arteries—in the form of such magazines as *Gandhi Marg*—a wider circulation, we may one day find that the positive strength of this culture is equal to the task of putting an end to war.

COMMENTARY **OPENINGS AND BIRTHS**

THE growth of the human spirit into something strong, wonderful, and free is the most exciting spectacle available to us, yet a process which often gets the least attention. For all its playfulness, the second portion of Mr. Anderson's article is devoted, at root, to this subject. He speaks of "cracking the chrysalis," of opening up to what is childlike and immediate, and we know without learned definition exactly what he means. We know, too, that he is right in saying that the "butterflies" which sometimes emerge are at the outset "fragile"—vulnerable to alien and repressive influences. In a sentence deleted for lack of space, he added:

They can turn to stone and fall to earth very easily—if, for example, a sociologist were to intrude with a questionnaire; or a psychiatrist with his ideological instruments; or a journalist looking for a story; or an organizer of any kind.

There are certain people whose work becomes essentially the nurture of these butterflies—the delicate growing-tips of what is fine and ennobling, and, in the end, strong, brave, and heroic in human beings. One thinks of the kindergartner who watches over little children in the mood of a fairy godmother, cherishing the first shy stirrings of a self that dares, for a moment or two, to be itself. Or of the therapist wrapped in awe at the time of awakening for a tortured soul. Or of a teacher who is the honored witness of the dawn of an original idea. When such things happen, the sensitive spectator may catch himself smiling with the high delight of a sun that melts away the mists of a cloudy day.

Why has our world become so silent about these interludes of loveliness, these wondrous transcendences which must, indeed, have given the word "magic" its original meaning, long before the manipulators of the past took over and petrified the idea with their cash-in claims.

Why have we become so deaf to gentle hintings from within, and ignored as "unreal" the nuance and play of those subtle-sighted perceptions which encircle a human's second birth like tendrils of the heart?

It must be some systematic mutilation we have both suffered and imposed which makes a mere chemical replacement—a sure-thing imitation with unearned delights—look so good. Mr. Anderson's article is a potent restorative of the proportions of human life.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves OLD MYTHS FOR NEW

THE September *Redbook* has an article by Rollo May, with Robert J. Levin, which makes an extraordinary use of the Sleeping Beauty myth—or fairy tale—in relation to the awakening of girls to womanhood. The discussion ought to be read in full, and we shall not attempt to summarize values which are generated through musing and thoughtful development. What may be noted, however, is the unique capacity of the myth to lend human dignity to almost any application of its meaning. Perhaps this is because the myths usually embody a heroic element.

The gradual restoration of the myth as a living current in modern thought has been due largely to the psychoanalytical movement. Myths are a source of archetypes of human experience. In ancient theologies they were backed with metaphysical interpretations by the philosophers, who used them to illustrate the confrontations of ultimate decision and the classic forms of suffering and frustration. Modern readings of the myth are more *ad hoc*, and intuitive-empirical, through skillful and varied use of analogy. Conceivably, in time, the elements of a new metaphysic will evolve from the protean utility of the myth in efforts toward self-understanding, being developed in response to the sheer necessity of a more complete philosophy of life.

Interestingly enough, the myth of Sisyphus holds a peculiar fascination for present-day man, and we owe to Camus recognition of the hidden sense of the heroic in this story of a man who is endlessly defeated in the project of rolling a rock up a hill. Behind the total frustration of the image of Sisyphus, one senses a secret hope that we dare not voice—a hope put more bravely by Shelley in the nineteenth century, when the feeling of doom did not weigh so heavily upon modern man—

To love and bear, to hope till hope creates,
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

It may be going too far to assert that Camus, like some of the dramatists of the Theatre of the Absurd, is really issuing a challenge, *Prove that it isn't so!*—yet the heroic spirit which persists against all odds, which cannot be suppressed even by total defeat, is always in some sense such a challenge. This is the more open logic of heroic endurance which comes out in the Prometheus myth. Is it conceivable that we should wonder if Sisyphus chose to push the wrong rock?—in the same sense that there seem to be certain lessons of experience that humanity learns with the utmost difficulty, despite the instruction we have had from the very beginning in the axioms of the wise?

What is evident, in relation to children, is the enormous importance of the Hero. Even when the culture offers no contemporary tradition of heroic roles, children irrepressibly *make them up*. The passage quoted in the editorial of two weeks ago (Nov. 2) from Ralph Ellison's book *Shadow and Act*, is exciting testimony to this fact. Speaking of his play with boyhood companions, he said: "I realize now that we were projecting archetypes, recreating folk figures, legendary heroes, monsters even, most of which violated all ideas of social hierarchy and order."

The point is that the growing young cannot do without this imagery. It is as necessary to their psychological development as breathing is to their bodies. Yet what happens to these dreams when the children enter adolescence? Is it not too often something like what Herbert Read says happens to the art of which they are capable:

The art of the child declines after the age of 11 because it is attacked in every direction—not merely squeezed out of the curriculum, but squeezed out of the mind by the logical activities which we call arithmetic and geometry, physics and chemistry, history and geography, and even literature as it is taught. The price we pay for this distortion of the adolescent mind is mounting up: a civilization of hideous objects and misshapen human beings, of sick minds and unhappy households, of divided societies armed with weapons of mass destruction.

The living myths of childhood are flattened out by the frankly utilitarian view of knowledge which takes over in high school, at the cost of any rounded intuitive feeling of the human self. Indeed, we should not let the words "logical activities" betray us into thinking that the heroic impulse is "irrational," or "illogical" or merely "visionary." Such definitions come out of a vocabulary created by technological rationalization—no more than the language of the machine turned against man. We have no obligation to submit to this. We have an obligation to be outraged at the very suggestion. The logic of *man* requires the heroic image as one of its prime axioms.

It is of some interest to consider what happens to the heroic impulse when it is denied natural scope by the thought of the times. We could say that in a society which sees all human good as a consequence of political manipulation, the heroic impulse, being ignored, goes "ape," turns fascist, that is, since in an essentially political society, we do not make demands of ourselves, *but of each other*. An angry impatience with the sluggish responses of human beings to a utopian program seems inevitably present at the beginning of a totalitarian movement. Given only manipulative, collectivist theories of human good, what else can a determined man do, besides attempting to force everyone to go with him on his "heroic" enterprise?

Toward the end of his discussion of the story of Sleeping Beauty, Rollo May has this passage on the self-destructive influence of another sort of myth:

American women today, obviously emancipated in many important ways, would seem better equipped to lead full, active, self-fulfilling lives than their grandmothers. Some are but many are not, and I believe the reason is clear. The basic passivity of women is reinforced by technology—more accurately by the *myth* of technology. I stress this as a myth because I am not making an attack on industrial science itself.

What I am attacking is the myth of technology, and the effect it has on our lives. Subconsciously and unconsciously we have faith in the magical power of industry to transform our lives, to meet all our needs, to change us without requiring effort on our part. Better television sets will entertain us more satisfyingly, and we need not budge from our chairs. New developments in medical science will banish pain and eliminate illness. Genetic research promises the ability to make human beings more perfect by manipulating chromosomes.

Atomic power will harness nature itself.

The myth of technology lures us into hoping that life will be—*can* be—forever happy and beautiful and without struggle. And this is a notion more likely to seduce women than men. It is not because men are less gullible than women. It is because even if men want to believe in this mirage, they are forced by the struggle for existence to experience life as it is, not as they want it to be. If a man just dreams about earning a living, instead of going out to earn one, eventually he will die, it is as elemental as that.

But unfortunately, in "going out to earn one," he becomes persuaded that he ought also to become a pillar of the "myth," its propagandist and willing servant, if not its slave. At any rate, the honors or dishonors seem equally divided between the sexes.

It is obvious enough that the old myths which celebrate the dignity and potentiality of man are better than the new ones. It is also obvious, in the light of the curious ways in which the heroic and the noble aspects of life are being found out, today, that the time has come to supply a new meaning for the word "superstition." For the present, we could hardly do better than to say that this meaning applies to what Rollo May calls the "technological myth."