

## THE POWER BY WHICH MEN LIVE

THE present is a time when Psychology—whether or not it can be called a "science"—affords more light on the human situation than any other branch of inquiry. One reason for this is that psychology represents the area to which more and more people are drawn for a solution to their questions and problems. Not that psychology has coherently unified answers—it is rather a field of controversy and polemics—but that it "stands for" investigation of human nature, of the mind, and even the "self," and as Carl Jung noted as long ago as 1933 (in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*), "The rapid and world-wide growth of a 'psychological' interest over the last two decades shows unmistakably that modern man has to some extent turned his attention from material things to his own subjective processes." Should we, he asks, "call this mere curiosity?"

Jung continues:

This "psychological" interest of the present time shows that man expects something from psychic life which he has not received from the outer world: something which our religions, doubtless, ought to contain but no longer do contain. . . . He is vouchsafed no revelation of a spirit that is not of this world; but he tries on a number of religions and convictions as if they were Sunday attire, only to lay them aside again like worn-out clothes.

Jung, as we know, became far more than a psychologist. He was a lifelong student of the role of symbols in man's psychic life, and, along with the work of Ernst Cassirer, turned the attention of the world of thought to the springs of human action and behavior in values represented by symbols and tradition rich in symbolic meanings.

The serious psychologist, one could say, is invariably led to become a social and moral philosopher, whatever the masks of his language. Erich Fromm is an example of this, and another is

Trigant Burrow, who studied with Adolph Meyer and Jung, and after entering practice in 1910 concluded that "we who are psychoanalysts are ourselves theorists . . . very largely misled by an unconscious that is social." We, too, "are neurotic," he said.

In 1993 Burrow began with some associates a series of researches which led to radical conclusions. He became convinced that psychological disorders have their roots in stereotyped social attitudes. Hearing of his work, Freud asked: "Does Burrow think he is going to cure the world?" Burrow's answer was yes. If we can identify the neurosis of society, he said, then "the individual neurosis will be reached and remedied." This became the direction of research for Burrow and his associates. When Burrow died in 1950, he was virtually unknown. Why? We have something of an answer in Nathan Ackerman's foreword to one of Burrow's posthumous books (*The Preconscious Foundations of Human Experience*, 1964). Ackerman asks:

How could this giant figure have remained so obscure and for so many years? . . . Burrow, dismissed from his university appointment, excommunicated from the American Psychoanalytical Association, and then a virtual taboo placed on his name? Burrow, a dedicated researcher in human behavior, tossed into scientific exile! . . . I could explain it in only one way.

A generation ago, Burrow's theories were far in advance of his time. They were too radical, too threatening to conventional systems of thought. By Burrow's own admission even he felt threatened by his discoveries concerning the pathology of normality—his ideas must have been felt a danger to the then-popular concepts of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. . . . the implications of his theories for a revolution in established social forms were possibly such as to impel what amounted to mass

avoidance, an unconscious complicity in protest and denial.

To show the "revolutionary" character of Burrow's position Ackerman sketches by brief quotation from him these principal ideas:

The neurosis of society is primary, the neurosis of the individual, secondary. . . . Cooperation and joining in human relations rest on a more fundamental principle than do competitiveness, separateness, and destructive exploitation. The progressive misuse of image and language in human development is linked with the distortion of biosocial union. The "I"-persona emerges as a false expression of individuality. . . .

Individual discord is but a symptom of social discord. The reactions of the neurotic are the direct issue of our so-called normal society.

The widespread perversion of the human spirit . . . has caused the hideous distortion of values embodied in the repressive subterfuge and untruth of our so-called moral codes and conventions.

Of course, "I"-personae do get together socially. They pool their affects and prejudices in the formation of families, working groups, communities, political parties, nations, etc. But no matter how large the social extension, the amalgamation is not a true integration. . . . The inflexible core of "rightness" and all-might determines the behavior of the individual. It results in the assumption of a type of difference and hostility for which there are no biologically valid grounds.

The heart of the matter for Burrow is the idea of the self, what is good or bad for the self, and what is right and wrong. This is what he means by the "I"-persona—the mask of the misconceived self. In a paper on crime in relation to ideas of right and wrong, Burrow asked:

What then *is* this sensation of right that is so prevalent among us socially? Could it be that the sensation of right about which we hear so much and which is the basis of our education, of religion, of law, of our ethics, economics, sociology and philosophy—could it be that this sensation of right, as we now experience it, is after all merely one's private economic advantage, that my sense of right is one with and inseparable from my sense of gain? . . . .

Indeed it is not too harsh to say that the reason people cherish above all things this external symbol

or formulation called morality is because this symbol or formulation called morality is of all things the most readily alterable according to each individual's private right or gain.

In a paper published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* (November, 1937), Charles B. Thompson, a psychiatrist attached to the Court of General Sessions in New York City, and a close associate of Dr. Burrow, presents the conclusions of a study of 1380 recidivists (repeaters) in evidence of Burrow's view that in our society "every individual, normal or neurotic, great or small, is preoccupied with thoughts of himself and his advantage."

It is obsessive with us. Each one becomes so conditioned that his thought automatically is "how will what is going on in this moment cause me gain or loss?" Normal individuals then are conditioned to a self-preoccupation—egocentricity—and to self-acquisitiveness. . . . It is sufficient for our purposes in the moment that this conditioned, separative "I" image represents a common denominator for the compulsive, egocentric acquisitiveness of man throughout the species, including the reaction of the non-criminals as well as the criminals. Civilization's outstanding characteristic and its fundamental anomaly is its systematic training of each individual to get for himself at the expense of others. . . .

We might well keep in mind that society has its own crimes which, however, are not recognized as such because they are committed on so large a scale. Society has its mass-homicides called wars, its mass robberies called invasions, its wholesale larcenies called empire-building. As long as the individual's behavior fits in with the mass-reaction it is considered "good" behavior. As long as he does not question by word or deed the validity of the mass-behavior he may be called a "good citizen."

Thompson concludes with two paragraphs that ought to be required reading for all those who concern themselves with problems of prison reform:

Whenever the repeater is able to put his feeling into words, it is to express a justifiable defense of his action—his right—since he feels that what he has done is in accordance with his own standards and rights. For the most part, even with the intelligent offenders, their behavior is automatic—because it is

reflex—whether in revolting against a normal job, or in perpetrating an unlawful job. They act automatically as a direct symptom of society as a whole. In this broader setting, the egocentricity of the overtly antisocial or criminal individual appears in a different perspective. Criminals present merely an exaggerated form of the ego-preoccupation that characterizes the individuals of our "normal" society, and, in our attempt to deal with them, we are confronted with a problem in community behavior.

In the absence of a clear accounting of this community problem, we can only expect the supply of antisocial individuals to continue to pour into our courts and prisons, and we cannot hope that our present legal and correctional procedure will fundamentally alter the behavior reaction of the individuals whom we have called repeater criminals. Our responsibility, then, is to reckon broadly with those factors within ourselves which determine antisocial trends throughout society and of which the behavior of the recidivist is but one aspect.

One has no difficulty in understanding why Burrow and his colleagues have been ignored. As anyone can see, they told the truth about the fundamental psychological ills of our society, and it was a wholly unpalatable truth. To join with Burrow in his diagnosis would be to become virtual "enemy of society," as commonly understood; or as Ackerman put it, to call out "mass avoidance" in an "unconscious complicity in protest and denial."

Yet today we are not so sure about our "way of life." Its critics are more outspoken and more numerous, and practical confirmation of much of what they say is a part of everyday experience. Meanwhile, the psychologists continue to give evidence that they—some of them, that is—may be the wisest among us. Psychologists such as Karen Horney, A. H. Maslow, Carl Rogers, Rollo May, and some others often expand what they have learned in clinical practice to the scope of social criticism. And psychology, moreover, since Maslow's immeasurable contribution, has become a positive discipline founded on health and human excellence, instead of developing out of the pathological categories of the psychology of only a generation ago.

A current contribution of importance is the article by Bruno Bettelheim in *Harper's* for October, in which this eminent psychiatrist writes about the basic cultural needs of American civilization. He says in one place:

What our society suffers from most today is the absence of consensus about what it and life in it ought to be. Such consensus cannot be gained from society's present stage, or from fantasies about what it ought to be. For that, the present is too close and too diversified, and the future too uncertain, to make believable claims about it. A consensus in the present hence can be achieved only through a shared understanding of the past, as Homer's epics informed those who lived centuries later what it meant to be Greek, and by what images and ideals they were to live their lives and organize their societies.

This seems clear enough. Dr. Bettelheim is speaking of the characterological structure of the people of past societies, shaped in part—who knows how much?—by the tales, legends, epics, and songs which formed the intellectual and emotional environment of the young. He is speaking of the process of total "conditioning" described by Burrow and Thompson, from which present Americans learn that the "sensation of right, as we now experience it, is after all merely one's private economic advantage, that my sense of right is one with and inseparable from my sense of gain." Or of the similar characterization of American attitudes given by John Schaar in a recent paper: "We have no mainstream political or moral teaching that tells men they must remain bound to each other even one step beyond the point where those bonds are a drag and a burden on one's personal desires. Americans have always been dedicated to 'getting ahead'; and getting ahead has always meant leaving others behind."

How can such widespread attitudes be altered? This is the ultimate question confronting psychologists who take seriously their commitment to the healing of minds and culture. Bettelheim defines the problem:

Most societies derive consensus from a long history, a language all their own, a common religion, common ancestry. The myths by which they live are

based on all of these. But the United States is a country of immigrants, coming from a great variety of nations. Lately, it has been emphasized that an asocial, narcissistic personality has become characteristic of Americans, and that it is this type of personality that makes for the malaise, because it prevents us from achieving a consensus that would counteract a tendency to withdraw into private worlds. . . .

Americans believe in the value of diversity, but just because ours is a society based on individual diversity, it needs consensus about some over-arching ideas more than societies based on the uniform origin of their citizens. Hence, if we are to have consensus, it must be based on a myth—a vision—about a common experience, as the myth about the conquest of Troy formed the Greeks. Only a common myth can offer relief from the fear that life is without meaning or purpose. Myths permit us to examine our place in the world by comparing it to a shared idea. Myths are shared fantasies that form the tie that binds the individual to other members of his group. Such myths help to ward off feelings of isolation, guilt, anxiety, and purposelessness—in short, they combat isolation and anomie.

We have used up almost entirely the myths that sustained us for a while—the vision of the Founding Fathers (in which too few participated in any realizing sense), and the myth of the Westerner no longer serves, since the frontier is gone—its challenge exhausted. Dr. Bettelheim hopes that the movies may serve to foster a new mythic inspiration, since movies are a popular art that affect the feeling and thinking of millions, but he finds most of the current films—he names some splendid exceptions—wholly inadequate:

. . . sugar-sweet movies fail to take seriously the world of the child—the immense problems with which the child grows up, to make himself free from the bonds that tie him to his parents, and to test his own strength. Instead of helping the child, who wants to understand the difficulties ahead, these shows talk down to him, insult his intelligence, and lower his aspirations.

"Fairy tales," Bettelheim says, "used to fill this need, and they would still do so, if we would take them seriously." He speaks also of epics as literature having mythic dimensions, but the question is: where shall we get our epics? Must

we borrow them from India and the Greeks? Or can we evolve our own? The fact is that we lack the genius required to produce authentic epics—works of both reality and the imagination which can lift whole cultures to an ardently aspiring state of mind. Our situation recalls an observation of Elizabeth Seeger in her Introduction to her young people's version of the Mahabharata, *The Five Brothers*, in which she said:

. . . the great epics came out of the dawn of the world, when everything was new; before man wrote or read, when intuition and experience were the only sources of his knowledge; when, amazed and stirred by the cosmic drama in the midst of which he found himself, he tried to find his part in it, his relation to the earth and its creatures, to the heavenly bodies and to his fellow men. He searched his memory to find a cause and a beginning and cast his vision far ahead to seek a purpose and an end. His findings were infinitely important to him and to all who have come after him. In order to record them he put them into stories that caught the rhythm of the turning earth. There is no better way to remember and to make others remember than to make a story and to put it into rhythmic speech.

Because the epics were composed before writing was known or before it was widely used in the country of their origin, they were not individual works but collective, for they were told by teacher to disciple, by parent to child, by storyteller to storyteller, each generation, each unusual person adding something until the story grew, like a Gothic cathedral, including many centuries in its final form. And like a Gothic cathedral, it gathered in its growth the history, the beliefs and customs, the economy and the arts of the times it passed through, and preserved them for us.

Readers who remember reading, what Walt Whitman said about the inspiration for *Leaves of Grass* (MANAS, Sept. 30) will recognize that he felt in himself an epic state of mind, but Whitmans are rare indeed! A beginning, perhaps, in generating this mood and condition might be found in absorbing Greek and Indian myths, and fairy tales, while maintaining touch, if we can, with the inner meaning of the time in which we live. What sort of dawn is now upon us, or close upon us in this darkness which comes before?

And we should remember that Whitman said that without the horror of the three or four years during which he lived in the army camps of the Civil War, " 'Leaves of Grass' would not now be existing." A reading of Harry Slochower's *Mythopoesis* (1970) might be of use. The mythopoeists are writers who give great myths new life. He says in his Preface:

The myth addresses itself to the problem of identity, asking "who am I?" And it proceeds to examine three questions that are organically related: "Where do I come from?" "Where am I bound?", and "What must I do to get there?" In mythic language, the problems deal with Creation, with Destiny and with the Quest. . . .

The myth is a power by which men live. . . . Every epoch has its own myth which provides the center of its life, gives the tone, manner and rhythm to its existence, permeates its institutions and thought, its art, science, religion, politics its psychology and its folkways—that is, *the myth organizes the values of its epoch.*

Elizabeth Seeger said epics and myths are collective works in which we all may take part. If our time is to be the beginning of something new, our attention to the three great questions may teach us to be participating authors of the myth of an age to come. The present seems practically a lost cause.

## *REVIEW*

### SOME INDIAN WISDOM

THE final section of Lafcadio Hearn's *Kwaidan* (Tuttle, Rutland, Vt., 1971, paperback) has essays on insects, the third and last being concerned with ants. Hearn was a literary man, a poet in prose, but a conscientious one who looked up ants in scientific writers, although remaining uninhibited as a poet. This makes a problem—the contrast between the entomologist's precision and the poet's imaginative wonderings. Hearn proposes attention to both, yet the comparison of the two is worth drawing.

As Hearn has twenty-five pages on the subject, we can give only a sketch of his ideas. He begins with a Chinese fairy tale about a pious man to whom appeared one day the goddess of his devotions. This lovely lady in a yellow robe asked him if he knew the language of ants. When he said that he did not, she produced a little box containing an ointment with which she anointed his ears, urging him to listen carefully to ant talk. Whereupon—

The man immediately went out to look for some Ants. He had scarcely crossed the threshold of his door when he perceived two Ants upon a stone supporting one of the house pillars. He stooped over them, and listened; and he was astonished to find that he could hear them talking, and could understand what they said. "Let us try to find a warmer place," proposed one of the Ants. "Why a warmer place?" asked the other;—"what is the matter with this place?" "It is too cold and damp below," said the first Ant, "there is a big treasure buried here; and the sunshine cannot warm the ground about it." Then the two Ants went away together, and the listener ran for a spade.

By digging in the neighborhood of the pillar, he soon found a number of large jars full of gold coin. The discovery of this treasure made him a very rich man.

Afterwards he often tried to listen to the conversation of Ants. But he was never able to hear them speak. The ointment of the goddess had opened his ears to their mysterious language for only a single day.

Almost certainly, Hearn begins with this story because he is going to look for treasure—human treasure—in knowledge of ants. He goes to the scientists, relates what they say about the habits, intelligence, and "morality" of ants, and quotes the following from David Sharp (in the *Cambridge Natural History*):

. . . the conditions of ant-society that most deserve our attention are the ethical conditions; and these are beyond human criticism, since they realize that ideal of moral evolution described by Mr. Spencer as "a state in which egoism and altruism are so conciliated that the one merges into the other." That is to say, a state in which the only possible pleasure is the pleasure of unselfish action. Or again to quote Mr. Spencer, the activities of the insect society are "activities which postpone individual well-being so completely to the well-being of the community that individual life seems attended to only just so far as is necessary to make possible due attention to social life . . . the individual taking only just such food and just such rest as are needful to maintain its vigor."

After an extensive account of the customs and biological peculiarities of ants—doubtless the most "advanced" of them—Hearn speaks of the difficulty of imagining "a form of social existence in which selfishness would be *naturally* impossible," and proposes that the Evolutionist—

finds himself obliged to face the question whether a world without moral notions might not be morally better than a world in which conduct is regulated by such notions. He must even ask himself whether the existence of religious commandments, moral laws, and ethical standards among ourselves does not prove us still in a very primitive stage of social evolution. And these questions naturally lead up to another: Will humanity ever be able, on this planet, to reach an ethical condition beyond all its ideals,—a condition in which everything that we now call evil will have been atrophied out of existence, and everything we call virtue have been transmuted into instinct,—a state of altruism in which ethical concepts and codes will have become as useless as they would be, even now, in societies of the higher ants.

The idea makes one uncomfortable. What good to *consciousness*—apart from the general welfare—is virtue that was not striven for, and

then transcended after it had been earned? Or shall we claim this for the ants? Hearn puts his own inference in the final paragraph:

But while the facts of insect-biology suggest so much in regard to the future course of evolution, do they not also suggest something of the largest significance concerning the relation of ethics to cosmic law? Apparently, the highest evolution will not be permitted to creatures capable of what human moral experience has in all eras condemned. Apparently, the highest possible strength is the strength of unselfishness; and power supreme never will be accorded to cruelty or to lust. There may be no gods; but the forces that shape and dissolve all forms of being would seem to be much more exacting than gods. To prove a "dramatic tendency" in the ways of the stars is not possible; but the cosmic process seems nevertheless to affirm the worth of every human system of ethics fundamentally opposed to human egoism.

What we have been leading up to with these quotations is the idea that such material ought to find a place in books like Edward O. Wilson's *Sociobiology*, which is filled with evidence of tendencies in insect and animal species that suggest to biologists the existence of "altruistic genes"—a term that has become somewhat current in recent years. Why not put Hearn and other poets and essayists—who wrote such speculations—in an appendix at the back of these scientific books, so that, in time, we can evolve a science more hospitable to the flights of the schooled poetic imagination?

Such a section in scientific books would naturally include at least a portion of Robert Frost's "Departmental," perhaps the following:

Ants are a curious race;  
 One crossing with hurried tread  
 The body of one of their dead  
 Isn't given a moment's arrest—  
 Seems not even impressed.  
 But he no doubt reports to any  
 With whom he crosses antennae  
 And they no doubt report  
 To the higher up at court.  
 Then word goes forth in Formic:  
 "Death's come to Jerry McCormic,  
 Our selfless forager Jerry.

Will the special Janizary  
 Whose office is to bury  
 The dead of the commissary  
 Go bring him home to his people  
 Lay him in state on a sepal.  
 Wrap him for shroud in a petal.  
 Embalm him with ichor of nettle.  
 This is the word of your Queen."  
 And presently on the scene  
 Appears a solemn mortician;  
 And taking formal position  
 With feelers calmly atwiddle,  
 Seizes the dead by the middle  
 And heaving him high in the air,  
 Carries him out of there.  
 No one stands round to stare.  
 It is nobody else's affair.  
  
 It couldn't be called ungentle.  
 But how thoroughly departmental.

Are there, one wonders, Ant Poets? At any rate, this is the uncomfortable feeling we spoke of. Can ethics be totally departmental? In justification of the appearance of these vague and perhaps irresponsible thoughts, we turn to an essay, "Nature and the Poets," by John Burroughs, found in *Pepacton* (Houghton, Mifflin, 1895), which begins:

I have said on a former occasion that "the true poet knows more about Nature than the naturalist, because he carries her open secrets in his heart. Eckermann could instruct Goethe in ornithology, but could not Goethe instruct Eckermann in the meaning and mystery of the bird?"

The rest of the essay is devoted to reproving careless poets for their biological inaccuracies, such as calling the humming bird's eggs blue, when they are white. Why? For the sake of a rhyme! Burroughs does not, however, expect such foibles of the *great* poet: "I doubt if you can catch Shakespeare transgressing the law in this respect, except where he followed the superstition, and the imperfect knowledge of his time, as in his treatment of the honeybee. His allusions to nature are always incidental to his main purpose, but they reveal a careful and loving observer."

Burroughs ends this essay by quoting the line of "Soothsayer" in *Antony and Cleopatra*—"In

Nature's infinite book of secrecy a little do I read."—and then saying:

This is science bowed and reverent, and speaking through a great poet. The poet himself does not so much read in Nature's book—though he does this, too—as write his own thoughts there; Nature reads him, she is the page and he the type, and she takes the impression he gives. Of course the poet uses the truths of nature also, and he establishes his right to them by bringing them home to us with a new and peculiar force—a quickening or kindling force. What science gives is melted in the fervent heat of the poet's passion, and comes back to us supplemented by his quality and genius. He gives more than he takes, always.

For our final "authority" on this unsettled question we go to Henry David Thoreau, who was both naturalist and poet. At the end of his paper on the Natural History of Massachusetts (1842), which he wrote at the request of his native state, he said:

The true man of science will know nature better by his finer organization; he will smell, taste, see, hear, feel, better than other men. His will be a deeper and finer experience. We do not learn by inference and deduction, and the application of mathematics to philosophy, but by direct intercourse and sympathy. It is with science as with ethics,—we cannot know the truth by contrivance and method; the Baconian is as false as any other, and with all the helps of machinery and the arts, the most scientific will still be the healthiest and friendliest man, and possesses a more perfect Indian wisdom.



## *COMMENTARY* A HARD QUESTION

WE have a letter from a reader which begins:

Both Robert Engler and the comment by MANAS in "A Private World Government" (Frontiers, Oct. 14) say that big oil men are not evil even though they are using a *caveat emptor* morality to distribute pesticides in third-world countries where people have little or no protection against them through regulation, literacy, and enlightened working conditions.

Do the writers mean to distinguish between the individual and his actions—that the individual may be good or neutral even though his actions may be evil or have evil consequences?

If so, how about motivation which seems to be a part of the individual? Can we separate motives from the individual, as we separate, or claim to separate, his actions and consequences to him? . . . .

This is no easy question to answer. We cannot speak for Mr. Engler, but would suggest consideration of two sources of ideas bearing on the subject in this issue of MANAS—the quotations from Trigant Burrow in the lead article, and Lawrence Kohlberg's analysis of moral development, which occurs, he says, in stages (page 6).

It seems evident that the definition of "evil," as, like good, a relative value, will vary with each of Dr. Kohlberg's stages. In this sense, "society," which sets the norms, must bear a large share of responsibility for the moral quality of typical behavior. We might define a really "evil" man as one who seems to have no operative conscience at *any* level—what we call a psychopathic state of mind. There is no promise of change or growth in his attitudes and behavior.

The question is complicated by the fact that there are always those whose morality is "ahead of the times"—who recognize the evil in what many others think of as "business as usual." We all know how often people will say, when a very bad consequence of something they've done is pointed out, "I didn't realize" or "I had no idea . . . ."

Others, even when revealing information is provided, may claim that it is "unreliable" because they have the strong support of the acquisitive standards of their time. But some of these people wake up and change their ways or means of livelihood, so it seems fair to say that they were morally ignorant, but not evil. This in no way diminishes the responsibility of the well-informed to make as objective as they can the evil consequences of low-grade but conventionally approved activity. At any rate, this was Gandhi's method.

Finally, people are not helped to change their ways by being called names. If, however, they begin to call *themselves* names, that is another matter—salutary, perhaps, for others whose time has come to move to a higher level.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves FOR CHILDREN OF LIGHT

THESE are days of controversy and side-taking, therefore a time when it may be more important to consider how to take productive part in controversy than to train oneself in arguments pro or con. Thinking about this, a reader sent us two paragraphs from Richard Henry Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926), a book deserving of frequent attention, by a man born a hundred and one years ago. Tawney expresses ideas which need to be grasped by both young and old, so we print some of them here.

The certainties of one age are the problems of the next. Few will refuse their admiration to the magnificent conception of a community penetrated from apex to foundation by the moral law, which was the inspiration of the great reformers, not less than of the better minds of the Middle Ages. But, in order to subdue the tough world of material interests, it is necessary to have at least so much sympathy with its tortuous ways as is needed to understand them. The Prince of Darkness has a right to a courteous hearing and a fair trial, and those who will not give him his due are wont to find that, in the long run, he turns the table by taking his due and something over. The paroxysms of virtuous fury with which the children of light denounced each new victory of economic enterprise as yet another stratagem of Mammon, disabled them for the staff-work of their campaign, which needs a cool head as well as a stout heart. Their obstinate refusal to revise old formulae in the light of new facts exposed them helpless to counter-attack, in which the whole fabric of their philosophy, truth and fantasy alike was overwhelmed altogether. They despised knowledge, and knowledge destroyed them.

Agreement as to ends implies acceptance of a standard of values, by which the position to be assigned to different objects may be determined. In a world of limited resources where nature yields a return only to prolonged and systematic effort, such a standard must obviously take account of economic possibilities. But it cannot itself be merely economic since the comparative importance of economic and of other interests—the sacrifice, for example, of material goods worth incurring in order to extend leisure, or

develop education or humanize toil—is precisely the point on which it is needed to throw light. It must be based on some conception of the requirements of human nature as a whole, to which the satisfaction of economic needs is evidently vital; but which demands the satisfaction of other needs as well, and which can organize its activities on a rational system only in so far as it has a clear apprehension of their relative significance. "Whatever the world thinks," wrote Bishop Berkeley, "he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind and the *Summum bonum* may possibly make a thriving earthworm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman."

Today dozens of fine books are making this appeal. The best known is E. F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful*, and a good recent one is Hazel Henderson's *The Politics of the Solar Age—Alternatives to Economics* (Doubleday, 1982). A relevant if light-hearted comment on the pertinence of such studies would be Heywood Broun's "The children of light have to be at least half as smart as the children of darkness," giving full symmetry to the meaning of "smart."

Turning to another pioneer—one among the greatest of all—we find the following in C. N. Vakil's preface to the book, *Gandhian Economic Thought*, by J. C. Kumarappa (Vora, Bombay, 1951):

It is obvious that as in other spheres, Gandhiji's ideas have had a marked influence in the economic sphere. . . . It is true that we do not have any definite scheme of economic thought evolved by Gandhi himself, which can be described as Gandhian Economic Thought. His economic ideas are part of his general philosophy of life; they are reflected in his writings and speeches, mixed up with other related topics; they have to be discerned more in his actions, which must be viewed in their entirety, not merely in an isolated way. In other words, one has to interpret Gandhiji's economic ideas and build up what may be described as Gandhian Economic Thought from what he did and said in this connection.

This is precisely the content of J. C. Kumarappa's small volume, and no one was better qualified for the task. No doubt we need exposition and criticism of this sort, in order to become *able* to adopt "alternatives" to economics

Yet the goal to keep in mind may be the evolution of the sort of society which has hardly any need for a separate "discipline" called economics! If the best men of all found no need for it, why should we? The matter is of course arguable, and along the way a reading of Karl Polanyi's collected essays, *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies* (Beacon, 1968), would aid in the discussion.

Meanwhile, to show the tendency in this direction of quite practical thinkers in the present, we borrow from a review by Thomas Johnson of a recent book, *Schmalenbach and After: A Study of the Evolution of German Business Economics*, by David Forrester. Schmalenbach (who died in 1955), the reviewer says in the March (1981) *Journal of Accountancy*, "had a tremendous impact on German accounting practice and theory." There is this quotation from the book, followed by the reviewer's comment:

"Schmalenbach recoiled from an identification of profits with earnings per share or with returns to the owner. The search for efficiency, economy and profits could not be of purely sectional interest. The business economist should not be the lackey of the owner or the capitalist but must seek and measure social efficiency."

This concern to "seek and measure efficiency" indicates Schmalenbach's conviction that the accountant's task must rest on an ethical foundation. Unfortunately, this conviction does not seem to be shared by most modern accountants. Apparently unmindful of the ethical implications of their work accountants today pursue decision-useful information; they seem content to provide value-free information which is useful only to one particular type of decision-maker—the investor/creditor. For Schmalenbach, it was not enough to value accounting information solely as an instrument to achieve efficient transfer of capital. Accounting information must also be sought as a means of evaluating what the economic stewards ought to achieve with society's resources.

The reviewer concludes:

This biography of Schmalenbach will interest and may inspire many modern accountants. The book is intriguing because it portrays a man of great

courage, enormous talent and "astonishing conservatism and respect for tradition." Schmalenbach recognized that totalitarian plans are potentially dehumanizing. He perceived that strategies designed exclusively to achieve a theoretical optimum may threaten man's well-being. Championing policies that encourage the exercise of free will and emphasize behavior proper to man, Schmalenbach is allied with such thinkers as George Orwell, the poet-historian Peter Viereck and E. F. Schumacher.

Peter Viereck may be unknown to many readers. He said in his Foreword to *The Unadjusted Man* (Beacon, 1969):

The fight is for the private life; abstract ideologies are Saharas. The Overadjusted Man knows only the public life. Three of the differing modes of creativity—religious, aesthetic, intellectual—have this in common: they are what the individual does with his loneliness. In an impersonal machine-age, the fight is to preserve the concrete, the intimate, the inefficiently wayward; to preserve the inner life, whether as the creatively alone or simply as the playfully private, the unapologetic exhilaration of play. . . .

On the other hand, in certain moral crises the fight is not only for the private life but also for the publicly-embattled right to have a private life. All mechanized societies are over-adjusted but not equally so; therefore, the right to the private life has the corresponding duty to partly forego itself, in its own partly free society, in order better to preserve itself against the total tyranny next door.

There is this in Viereck's first chapter:

When a mechanized society makes the individual part of the mass, it does not thereby increase his sense of organic belongingness but replaces it with two things: first the mutually isolating cash-nexus; second, the synthetic, mechanical, inorganic belongingness of external stereotypes, mass-produced by the entertainment industry or by statist social engineers. It is a liberal oversimplification to see the contrast as the free individual versus the shackles of traditional unity. The real contrast is between an archetypal, organic unity of individuals and a stereotyped, mechanical unity of masses.

## *FRONTIERS*

### A Long Road

THE great question now before the modern world is whether or not the natural laws which govern human affairs are grounded in ethical principles. Can such principles be "real"? After about a thousand years of the abuse of moral conceptions by the powerful theological institutions of the West, the emancipated men of the eighteenth century decided to settle the question for all time. Nature, they declared, needs no guidance from "God," and morality is no more than human invention. We can do what we think best, they said, and we have science as arbiter and guide.

This outlook was consolidated during the nineteenth century. In the 1930's, Bertrand Russell briefly characterized the results:

Pragmatists explained that Truth is what it pays to believe. Historians of morals reduced the Good to a matter of tribal custom. Beauty was abolished by the artists in a revolt against the insipidities of a philistine epoch and in a mood of fury in which satisfaction is to be derived only from what hurts. And so the world was swept clear not only of God as a person but of God's essence as an ideal to which man owed an ideal allegiance, while the individual, as a result of a crude and uncritical interpretation of sound doctrines, was left without any inner defense against social pressure. (*Nation*, Jan. 9, 1937.)

Today, scores of thoughtful writers and thinkers are pointing out that we can't stand living in a civilization which ignores the moral foundations of human life. (Ecology, after all, is a forerunning species of moral science.) People are saying this in dozens of ways, some vociferously, some cautiously and with due respect for the intellectually liberating influence of the scientific movement, and for its services as critic of religious foible, invention, and tyranny. Yet they are saying it, whether on intuitive, rational, or historical grounds. So the question becomes: Is it possible to have a science which is not "demoralized"?

There are always other questions behind such inquiries. In this case, one asks: Is a non-authoritarian morality a contradiction in terms? Or, Would a non-coercive morality accomplish anything? Memories of the torture chambers and the stake of the Holy Inquisition haunt the thoughtful advocate of moral philosophy, while recollections of the Moscow Trials give pause to the erstwhile admirers of materialist ideology and its social goals.

Yet changes in fundamental outlook are slowly becoming manifest. The Existentialist philosophers of France and Germany began a somewhat bleakly stoic move in the direction of secular moral philosophy. In this country, the notable change has been in psychological theory, admittedly the most "materialistic" of the sciences. William McDougall was a pioneer; Erich Fromm was followed by A. H. Maslow, whose work provided a psychology founded on health and good human behavior. In the present, the educational psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg (Harvard), starting in 1958, has pursued researches which in his view demonstrate that there is a natural sequence of moral development in all human beings, involving six stages of "progress." In his latest book, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (Harper & Row), Kohlberg proposes a climactic seventh stage—"religious and pantheistic in substance." A reviewer in *Psychology Today* (August) says:

. . . Kohlberg sees his effort as pointing toward some kind of universal natural law of moral development. He envisions a world in which morality and psychology are integrated. In that world we would be able to move beyond an outdated cultural and ethical relativism, which renders moral education nothing more than indoctrination into prevailing mores, and into a mode of education that is universal in its ethical content and rooted in a respect for justice and individual human dignity.

Kohlberg's initial work and the basis of his theory was a study of seventy-five boys, aged at the beginning from ten to sixteen. He traced the development of their moral ideas and attitudes until they were from twenty-two to twenty-eight.

In one brief statement of his conclusions he gives the stages of moral growth:

1. Orientation to punishment and reward, and to physical and material power.
2. Hedonistic orientation with an instrumental view of human relations. Beginning notions of reciprocity, but with an emphasis on exchange of favors—"You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours."
3. "Good boy" orientation; seeking to maintain expectations and win approval of one's immediate group, morality defined by individual ties of relationship.
4. Orientation to authority, law, and duty, to maintaining a fixed order, whether social or religious, which is assumed as a primary value.
5. Social contract orientation, with emphasis on equality and mutual obligation within a democratically established order; for example, the morality of the American Constitution.
6. Morality of individual principles of conscience that have logical comprehensiveness and universality. Highest value placed on human life, equality, and dignity.

#### Kohlberg comments:

The stages are not defined by particular opinions or judgments, but by ways of thinking about moral matters. . . . The group-oriented Stages 3 and 4 are the "conventional" ones at which most of the adult population operates. The final "principled" stages are characteristic of 20 to 25 per cent of the adult population, with perhaps 5 to 10 per cent arriving at Stage 6.

This is psychological theory, widely influential among teachers, who respond to these ideas to fill a vacuum in modern thought in the West. Meanwhile, in the East, India in particular—where there was no religious dogmatism comparable to Roman Catholicism (Brahmanical tyranny was subtler)—there is now a strenuous effort to throw off the cultural imperialism of Europe on the part of the followers of Gandhi.

Is there a "moral" economics? Should economics be founded on moral and metaphysical conceptions instead of the dog-eat-dog ideas of

business-as-usual in the West? Gandhi, following the inspiration of ancient Indian thought, also his own spontaneous feelings, and profoundly stirred by John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, maintained that all human relations, including the economic, are subordinate to the moral realities of human development. There are two articles in the April *Gandhi Marg*, published in New Delhi, which elucidate what is termed Gandhian Economics. One is by Romesh Diwan, who shows the economic morality implicit in Gandhi's emphasis on *Swadeshi*, or Self-Reliance. This is an inferential system, since Gandhi did not really write about "economics" as a separate "discipline," but the writer's conclusions seem obviously just. The other article is by James W. Gould, who teaches political science at Scripps College, Claremont, Calif. His title is "Altruistic World Economics: Gandhi's Anticipation of a New International Economic Order." These materials reveal the moral strength of the effort in the East to free India from the moral indifference of Western economic ideas, and to restore the philosophic conceptions of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and of the Buddha as the foundation of social and economic life. The always small number of such reformers is to be contrasted with the power and ethical appeal of Gandhi's ideas, which are slowly taking hold, as inspiration and leaven, throughout the world.