

THE MEASURE OF PROGRESS

IF there really were some other planet to which modern man could emigrate, there would probably be an overwhelming number of applicants from the most advanced societies—from just those regions that are supposed to be most amply blessed by "progress." For in these societies the problems of existence are no longer "material"—the kind that practical men know how to solve—but have become inaccessible moral dilemmas. The motives which brought these societies to their present degree of power and affluence have plainly outreached themselves; now they are only neurotic drives to excess. And no alternatives to these drives can be seen save in terms of desperate and forlorn hopes. So the dread "realities" of the present continue to poison every dream, until some kind of inner emigration seems the only escape, and this, for men of the West, may lack even the diminished dignity of a quietist haven, becoming a flight into pathology.

We are shamed by our ancestors, those men who were confined to lowly material circumstances, and struggled against medieval systems of tyranny, yet acknowledged no boundaries for the ranging wonder of their minds. Lewis Herber, in his *Anarchy* article, spoke of that strange, intermediate zone, "an indefinable epoch," which followed the breakdown of feudal society, "when old institutions were clearly in decline and new ones had not yet arisen." It was a time, he said, when the human mind, freed from the burden of tradition, "acquired uncanny powers of generalization and imagination." One has only to read the new books which remind us of the liberation accomplished by the Enlightenment to see that Mr. Herber does not exaggerate when he adds:

Roaming freely and spontaneously over the entire realm of experience, it produced astonishing visions, often far transcending the material

limitations of the time. Entire sciences and schools of philosophy were founded in the sweep of an essay or a pamphlet. It was a time when new potentialities had replaced the old actualities, when the general, latent with new possibilities, had replaced the burdensome particulars of feudal society, when man, stripped of traditional fetters, had turned from a transfixed creature into a vital, searching being.

Ah yes, we say, with the melancholy of men still proud of the burdensome particulars of their own time—those old "realities" of the feudal regimes were made of tired superstition and blooded pretense, while *our* problems are *real*; we know from science and history that we are confronted by ugly facts of life. In this way the very disciplines of modern learning lend their egotism to the certainty of self-defeat. Not they, but we, are the truly "transfixed creatures." They had only to throw down a few decadent kings, expose some tired dogmas, and let the newborn energies of science and industry do the rest. What did our ancestors know of the paralyzing truths our progress has revealed?

Now it is just possible that this mind-reducing despair is the natural antidote to an adolescent conceit. Ralph Sarton, a wise historian of science, laid the basis for this judgment when he remarked that "there is perhaps too much boasting about the progress of knowledge, especially by those who are foreign to research and understand it least." (*The Life of Science*, Schuman, 1948.) The corrective for scientific arrogance is to return science to the Humanities whence it was born, and Sarton accomplishes this with no more than a little common sense:

Some simple-minded people exult because the universe of modern science is immeasurably larger than that of Ptolemy or even of Herschel, but it does not make such a great difference after all, if they continue to be such fools and humbugs. It is equally silly to disdain scientific endeavors or to overestimate them to the detriment of others, such as the creation

of beauty or justice. The best fruit of these endeavors is not any definite result, but a new attitude of mind: the appreciation of truth. . . . however deep and comprehensive our scientific knowledge may be, our scientific spirit is still very weak. The progress of veracity—which ought to be our measuring rod for the real scientific advance—is just as slow and precarious as social progress. Hence there is nothing much to boast about. It is clear that scientific enlightenment can purify life only to the extent that veracity favors its diffusion.

What if we are not anywhere near so conversant with "reality" as we imagine ourselves to be—in the sense that the prevailing account and definitions of nature and its laws, and of the needs, tendencies, and potentialities of men are narrow conceptions based upon external investigations, which could and probably will be replaced by quite other beliefs? The confident assumptions about modern knowledge arise mainly from a comparison of our attainments with those of other civilizations and of "primitive peoples"—a comparison compiled by a generation of scholars now dead. But if *veracity* be the measuring rod, how can we any longer support such self-serving estimates?

This question makes us stand in the dock as prejudiced partisans of ourselves, as late arrivals on the scene of history whose self-esteem is largely based upon a contemptuous dismissal of every civilization but our own. It is not that we must now put on sackcloth and ashes, bowing our heads at primitive shrines; there are already too many of those who, never having participated in the courage and vision of Western civilization, embrace defeat in a sickly humility; what is wanted is rather the rediscovery, without stupid condescension, of the confraternity of all men in their search for truth, in all times, for then we may have some hope of a better understanding of ourselves.

Curiously enough, it is the work of later scholars which calls us to look upon men of the distant past as subjects like ourselves, instead of as mere "objects," as not quite human predecessors whose chief contribution to mankind

has been to make us recognize our own superiority. We may take encouragement from the fact that the *veracity* which Sarton held to be the true spirit of science is behind the revelations of this new generation of explorers of our human past. For example, H. Frankfort, in *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Columbia University Press, 1948), points out that the first Egyptologists studied the evidences of Egyptian religious belief as an entomologist might examine the behavior of a colony of ants, seldom noticing or interesting themselves in what the Egyptians might themselves have *felt* about their beliefs. It was as though the Egyptians, not enjoying the illuminations of modern civilization, could not possibly have felt anything worth describing. As Frankfort says:

Men of this school have dominated the subject for the last twenty or thirty years; they possess a splendid knowledge of the texts and have enriched our information greatly. But in reading their books you would never think that the gods they discussed once moved men to acts of worship.

Elsewhere, Prof. Frankfort distinguishes between the various levels of Egyptian religion, making it clear that they had a gamut of beliefs ranging all the way from what might be called high philosophical religion to a vulgar "Fundamentalism." After reviewing some of the ideas of the latter, Prof. Frankfort observes:

. . . it is understandable that the ordinary man, absorbed by the struggle for existence in his lifetime, did not think much beyond the measures of precaution which usage indicated as desirable in case of his death. It is this limited, worried point of view which prevails in so many texts; and it is this point of view which appears as a mechanical projection of ordinary life into the beyond. . . . It is no wonder that those who approach Egyptian religion from such adaptations, and take their stand on texts written for the least thoughtful section of the population, reach the conclusion that the Egyptian beliefs concerning afterlife do not make sense. But they act like a man who would gauge our present knowledge of the stars by studying horoscopes in the newspapers. The view which we have described in this chapter stands at the opposite end of the scale; in fact, the belief that immortality is found in sharing the perennial

movements of nature may seem to us too vague and too unrelated to the actual problems of human life to qualify as a basic faith.

In short, the inner life of the Egyptians escapes us by its subtlety, not by its "primitive" character.

To convey the larger dimensions of Egyptian religion, Prof. Frankfort quotes from a work by his wife the following passage concerned with scenes painted in the tombs of the New Kingdom:

The central concept which gives these scenes their unity . . . was the problem of the relation between life and death. Seen in the light of this problem, the different types of scenes are merely various approaches, varying answers, but all imply the same assertion that death is a mere phase of life, that the significance of life is as timeless as death. These scenes are quite literally concerned with eternal values, namely, the immanent values of life such as power, wealth, abundance seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. . . . These scenes contain an implicit but emphatic denial that death should be a tragic and violent negation of life; on the contrary, they attempt a harmonious approximation, a mutual interpenetration of life and death on a scale never equalled by any other people. It is true that death, the unknown, claimed an ever-present awareness and unceasing service on the part of the living; but this was not merely the price at which doubt and terror could be kept at bay, but a tribute paid to the phenomena of life which, pictured in a funerary setting, became unassailable even by death.

Which of our over-intellectualized speculations about the "meaning" of death would we choose to fall into the hands of a wondering archaeologist, a few thousand years hence, that he might compare it with the ideas of the Egyptians? Choose as we will, he would be more likely to lay hands on an issue of *Time* magazine, and to recognize in the advertisements—the highest achievements of our art, psychological science, and technology—representations of those goals and values upon which our hearts are really set. What better illustration of our popular religion could be found? Are not the totems of our society here displayed in their most persuasive light?

Think of the high demand made upon the resources of trained taxonomists in order to classify the almost ineffable excellences of a particular cigarette! And tomorrow, thanks to the inventiveness and originality of our scientific civilization, a dozen new criteria of smoking pleasure will be developed, all in a properly serious mood. If it be complained that this is not so much science as an example of our insight into the possibilities of gracious living, it becomes reasonable to ask how the archaeologist will grade us for the pursuit of such cultural distinctions. Is *Time* a journal devoted to the iconography of taste? One is reminded of the conclusion of Lévi-Strauss (in *The Savage Mind*) that—

Every civilization tends to overestimate the objective orientation of its own thought and this tendency is never absent. When we make the mistake of thinking that the Savage is governed solely by organic or economic needs, we forget that he levels the same reproach at us, and that to him his own desires for knowledge seem more balanced than ours.

The betel chewing Hanunóo of the Philippines do not delegate their choice of betel nuts to professional mythmakers, but know from personal experience that "betel chewing demands a knowledge of four varieties of areca nut and eight substitutes for them, and of five varieties of betel and five substitutes." Handy and Pukui are cited by Lévi-Strauss as saying:

These native Hawaiians' utilization of their available natural assets was well-nigh complete—infinitely more so than that of the present commercial era which ruthlessly exploits the few things that are financially profitable for the time being, neglecting and often obliterating the rest.

Then, as J. D. Unwin has pointed out, much of the information used by James Frazer in his "authoritative" *Golden Bough* was gathered from the reports of ignorant missionaries who thought themselves well equipped by Christian revelation to explain the "heathen" beliefs of mere natives. But as Unwin shows, often the natives ranked as Platonic philosophers in comparison with the crude religious anthropomorphisms of their

visitors. And as for the practice of science, Lévi-Strauss relates:

In Tewa [language] there are distinct terms for all or almost all the parts of birds and mammals. . . . Forty terms are employed in the morphological description of the leaves of trees or plants, and there are fifteen distinct terms for the different parts of a maize plant.

The Hanunoo have more than a hundred and fifty terms for the parts and properties of plants. These provide categories for the identification of plants and for "discussing the hundreds of characteristics which differentiate plant types and often indicate significant features of medicinal or nutritional value." . . . Over six hundred named plants have been recorded among the Pinatubo and "in addition to having an amazing knowledge of plants and their uses, . . . (they) employ nearly one hundred terms in describing the parts or characteristics of plants." . . . Knowledge as systematically developed as this clearly cannot relate just to practical purposes.

Primitive thought, Lévi-Strauss shows again and again, was not, as Malinowski imagined, merely a response of tribal peoples to the rumbling of their stomachs, but an application of science, namely, an attempt to achieve order. In this remarkable book, Lévi-Strauss shows the holistic roots of this attempt:

A native thinker makes the penetrating comment that "All sacred things must have their place." . . . It could even be said that being in their place is what makes them sacred for if they were taken out of their place, even in thought, the entire order of the universe would be destroyed. Sacred objects therefore contribute to the maintenance of order in the universe by occupying the place allocated to them.

A Pawnee custom of pronouncing certain invocations at each of four stages of crossing a river concludes: "Now we can move forward in safety." The Indian informant explained: "We must address with song every object we meet, because Tira'wa (the supreme spirit) is in all things, everything we come to as we travel can give us help."

Who, indeed, is closer to "reality"—the Pawnee practitioner of wholeness with nature, or the modern encyclopedist of "native customs"? And why, only after a hundred years or so, is it pressed upon our attention that the Osage explained: "We do not believe that our ancestors were really animals, birds, etc., as told in traditions. These things are only *wa-we-ku-ska'-ye* (symbols) of something higher"?

In the end, Lévi-Strauss' profound study of what he calls the "savage mind" becomes a searching critique of philosophies which find their climax in *historical* development. History, he points out, while useful as a method of cataloguing the structures of experience, does not of itself bring any enduring meaning to human life. "It is therefore," he says, "far from being the case that the search for intelligibility comes to an end in history as though it were its terminus."

And this, we see, is precisely the mistake of those anxious doctrines of "progress," often administered like some kind of happiness pill, which have now become harbingers of failure through being expected to produce meanings which were never in them. "Rather," says Lévi-Strauss, "it is history that serves as the point of departure in any quest for intelligibility. As we say of certain careers, history may lead to anything, provided you get out of it."

There is therefore a profound corrective in recognizing that the ancients, as well as men of so-called "primitive" mind, acknowledged the roots of their being in a timeless reality, and while they patiently endured the confinements of an admittedly static vision, it was nonetheless a *vision*, and it gave them the homeostatic balance of which we speak with intellectual assurance, but do not know how to achieve.

There may be a kind of progress which men will finally attain, but it now seems certain that its rewards, if any, will not be reached through the triumph of manipulative techniques which, applied one after another, seem to succeed only in suppressing the humanity they were intended to

increase. This progress of ours—there is really no *veracity* in it. Nor is there any dignity in the uses of inventions which have the over-all effect of making the landscape hideous, the air an attenuated toxin, and the waters of the earth an accumulating sludge.

We are not really constrained to *believe* at all in the claims and pretensions of such a civilization. A man is not really a man who takes no account of his host, and as the world is host to man, so he is no more than guest, along with others, at the board of the common life. Crowding and hoarding are vulgar habits, taken by themselves, but when they are made into a kind of "philosophy," and defended by official apologies which could as easily serve to explain why the Carthaginians thought it well to feed small children to a God named Moloch, then the resulting paralysis of the human spirit may be the first symptom of the vast self-disgust that comes before self-reconstructive change.

So, in its own way, the present is also an "indefinable epoch," a time when old institutions are declining, and new ones are not yet born. It is certainly a time when "uncanny powers of generalization are needed," and most of all the courage to strip down to the bare human essence in us, and to start all over again.

REVIEW

ALBERT CAMUS

WHY, after reading a little of Albert Camus, does one eagerly go on and on? It is not, certainly, because he has all the right opinions. Nor is it because, in an epoch filled with contradictions, Camus is able to announce some final, resolving truth. One reads Camus, and goes on reading him, because he shows that it is possible for a single human being to generate authentic meaning and integrity for himself, while living intensely in what, for many of us, seems to be becoming the worst of all possible worlds.

Camus is a vindicator of the mind. He is a writer. Fortunately, he is a writer who makes us able to bear with patience the vanities and useless preoccupations of a great deal of modern writing, since he goes beyond all this to a use of his craft that restores faith in thinking man. After reading Camus for a time, one has little sympathy for those who parade their contempt for "mere" words. Words are the speech of human beings, capable of reflecting the highest human longings; in words are enshrined what men are able to say to one another concerning what they live for and sometimes die for. Now and then there comes a man, a writer, who is able to contain in words something of both the vision and the agony of an age, making sacrifices seem futile no longer. Camus, who admitted to being a pessimist, gives courage to the men of his time because he gathered up within himself certain qualities of being human and endowed them with a stubborn reality. Camus' humanity, we might say, grew by resistance to the antihuman tendencies of the age.

Resistance, Rebellion, and Death (Modern Library, \$2.45) is made up of the essays and other writings which Camus selected, shortly before his death, as representing "the primary concerns of his life." They are drawn from work done between 1943 and 1957. Without exception, they reveal a man committed to impartial understanding, whether it be in regard to the war against the Nazis (illustrated in Camus' "Letters to a German Friend"), in dialogue with Christians and Communists, or in what he required of himself as an artist. Camus' judgments

seem luminous, not because they are right, but because of the way he reaches them.

Camus' letters to his former German friend bring a brooding sense of the end of an epoch. Camus writes here as a Frenchman. He speaks in the language of nationality and, considering his role in the Resistance, he had generated a right to use this language. He felt that the French Resistance was keeping alive a conception of human life which the Nazis could not understand. He wrote:

You never believed in the meaning of the world, and you therefore deduced the idea that everything was equivalent and that good and evil could be defined according to one's wishes. You supposed that in the absence of any human or divine code the only values were those of the animal world—in other words, violence and cunning. Hence you concluded that man was negligible and that his soul could be killed, that in the maddest of histories the only pursuit for the individual was the adventure of power and his only morality, the realism of conquests. And, to tell the truth, I, believing I thought as you did, saw no valid argument to answer you except a fierce love of justice which, after all, seemed to me as unreasonable as the most sudden passion.

Where lay the difference? Simply that you readily accepted despair and I never yielded to it. Simply that you saw the injustice of our condition to the point of being willing to add to it, whereas it seemed to me that man must exalt justice in order to fight injustice, create happiness in order to protest against the universe of unhappiness. Because you turned your despair into intoxication, because you freed yourself from it by making a principle of it, you were willing to destroy man's works and to fight him in order to add to his basic misery. Meanwhile, refusing to accept that despair and that tortured world, I merely wanted men to rediscover their solidarity in order to wage war against their revolting fate.

In 1948, Camus spoke before the members of a Dominican monastery. Apparently, he had been asked to say what Humanists expected of Christians. In one place, after deploring the formal obscurity of the pope's encyclicals against the horror of the war, he continued:

What the world expects of Christians is that Christians should speak out loud and clear, and that they should voice their condemnation in such a way that never a doubt, never the slightest doubt, could rise in the heart of the simplest man. That they should get away from abstraction and confront the blood-stained face history

has taken on today. The grouping we need is a grouping of men resolved to speak out clearly and to pay up personally. When a Spanish bishop blesses political executions, he ceases to be a Christian or even a man; he is a dog just like the one who, backed by an ideology, orders that execution without doing the dirty work himself. We are still waiting, and I am waiting, for a grouping of all those who refuse to be dogs and are resolved to pay the price that must be paid so that men can be something more than a dog.

Camus knew no partisan loyalty. He always spoke in behalf of man, and in the matter of historical truth, he said, "the more anyone claims to possess it, the more he lies." Not "sacred truth," but the freedom to look for it, claimed his allegiance. He had small respect for labels. "A press or a book is not true because it is revolutionary," he said. Rather, "It has a chance of being revolutionary only if it tries to tell the truth." Yet Camus showed respect to those who belonged to a faith or a party. He began his talk to the Dominicans with these words:

Inasmuch as you have been so kind as to invite a man who does not share your convictions to come and answer the very question that you are raising in these conversations, before telling you what I think unbelievers should expect of Christians, I should like first to acknowledge your intellectual generosity by stating a few principles.

First, there is a lay pharisaism in which I shall strive not to indulge. To me a lay pharisee is the person who pretends to believe that Christianity is an easy thing and asks of the Christian, on the basis of an external view of Christianity more than he asks of himself. I believe indeed that the Christian has many obligations but that it is not up to the man who rejects them himself to recall their existence to anyone who has already accepted them. If there is anyone who can ask anything of the Christian, it is the Christian himself. The conclusion is that if I allowed myself at the end of this statement to demand of you certain duties, these could only be duties that it is essential to ask of any man today, whether or not he is a Christian.

It is clear that Camus rejects every conceit of the party spirit. He knows the pitfalls. "Sometimes," he says, "we imagine some barbarous state where the truth becomes effortless." There is a like awareness in the following:

Our Communist comrades and our Christian comrades talk to us from the vantage point of doctrines we respect. Their doctrines are not ours, but it has never

occurred to us to talk of them in the tone they have just used toward us, and with the assurance they show.

Always one finds in Camus a kind of classic balance, an avoidance of excess, with contempt toward any excuse for inhumanity. In an essay on art, he says:

The aim of art, the aim of a life can only be to increase the sum of freedom and responsibility to be found in every man and in the world. It cannot, under any circumstances, be to reduce or suppress that freedom, even temporarily. There are works of art that tend to make man conform and convert him to some external rule. Others tend to subject him to whatever is worst in him, to terror or hatred. Such works are valueless to me. No great work has ever been based on hatred or contempt. On the contrary, there is not a single true work of art that has not in the end added to the inner freedom of each person who has known and loved it. Yes, that is the freedom I am extolling, and it is what helps me through life. An artist may make a success or a failure of his work. He may make a success or a failure of his life. But if he can tell himself that, finally, as a result of his long effort, he has eased or decreased the various forms of bondage weighing upon men, then in a sense he is justified and, to some extent, he can forgive himself.

The will to understand and the determination neither to understate nor overstate—these qualities gave Camus what may some day be accounted as the most penetrating grasp of the human situation as it appeared in the middle years of the twentieth century. We conclude with a quotation in which he links himself with two great contemporaries:

No one is more closely attached to his Algerian province than I, and yet I have no trouble feeling a part of French tradition. Consequently, I learned, as naturally as we learn to breathe, that love of one's native land can broaden without dying. And finally, it is because I love my country that I feel European. Just take for example Ortega y Gasset. . . . He is perhaps the greatest of European writers after Nietzsche, and yet it would be hard to be more Spanish. Silone speaks to all of Europe, and the reason I feel so close to him is that he is also so unbelievably rooted in his national and even provincial tradition.

Yet these three speak more widely than to Europe alone.

COMMENTARY ENDS AND MEANS

TODAY, naked power is still esteemed as the vindicator of political truth. As a result, the cruelties of war, the ruthlessness of subversion, and the deceptions of propaganda are still regarded as necessary policies in national and ideological struggles.

It should be obvious that the human betrayal in such policies must some day become plain to all. But to wait for this lesson to be learned only through the experience of betrayal is to make men lose all respect for the uses of reason. The modern world of power politics may be much further along on this path than its leaders suspect. The only choice which lies before them may be one they have not yet seriously considered—the choice of whether they will be disarmed by spreading apathy or by the fellow feeling of man for man.

A divorce between ideology and power produces an enormous change in the practical meaning of forms of social organization. When coercive power is lacking, methods of organization are adopted by common sense, and according to practical need. As Arthur Morgan pointed out years ago:

America likes to use different kinds of social organization. America likes communism. In many respects we serve everybody regardless of his resources. Our fire departments are communistic. We serve everyone alike from public funds. Our public school system is communistic. There also we not only serve the public from public funds, regardless of relative financial contributions, but we compel children to take the schooling offered. Our highways are largely communistic. Probably half of all state and local taxes in America are levied for communistic purposes.

We have state socialism in our country. Look at all the great municipal water supplies where government is in business. Our great irrigation systems are socialistic. America is not afraid of communism and America is not afraid of socialism, except as some people hold them up as terrible menaces. America also believes in democracy; we elect officers to represent us in government.

On the other hand America is not afraid of other forms of social organization; America is not afraid of autocracy, of aristocracy. You have here a great

university (the University of Chicago). Unless it is governed differently from most other great endowed universities, it is autocratically managed, and a little group of men who are its trustees choose their own successors. Yes, we have long-time, self-perpetuating autocracies in the management of many of our endowed colleges and universities. Yet I find liberals from all over the United States coming to places like this to study. You will find as great regard for academic freedom here in this autocratic institution as in the supposedly democratic state university. America is not afraid of autocracy so long as autocracy has a social purpose.

America is not afraid of despotism. One of the most absolute of industrial despotisms has been the Ford automobile industry, controlled by two men; and yet America has not frowned upon that great organization. To the extent that social-mindedness and sound economics have been evident America has been rather proud of it.

America has recognized that, in certain places, autocracy has seemed to have a higher degree of effectiveness than have democratic methods. We have been ready to let many forms of social organization live and thrive among us. We have judged them by their service to our society, and not by any abstract theory of social organization. . . .

This analysis by Dr. Morgan becomes a means of understanding Thich Nhat Hanh when he points out that Vietnam can hardly afford a "Western-type capitalism," and that socialist economic organization fits the needs of his country—but then goes on to say:

Vietnamese anti-communism stems from the methods that organized communism uses to attain its ends: the suppression of all significant dissent and debate; the liquidation of even the most sincere and committed opponents, violently if need be, the assumption of omniscience on the part of the party which is a form of fanaticism that is stultifying to the never-ending search for truth—to which Buddhists, for example are committed; and the willingness to sacrifice the very existence of a small country like Vietnam to the "larger" interests of the Communist side in the cold war. . . . This is not theorizing for Vietnamese non-communist nationalists, who have found themselves and their organizations repressed with the same ruthlessness north and south of the 17th parallel, by the North-Vietnamese—NLF-China coalition as well as by the Diem-Ky-U.S. grouping.

How could it be made plainer that power, not ideology, is at the root of the tragedy of Vietnam?

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

DIAGNOSIS OF CHILDREN'S PROBLEMS

THE old criticism—that if teachers would really *teach* the disciplines of basic education, they wouldn't have to worry so much about "psychology" and children's personal problems, and wouldn't have to learn how to be "therapists," along with everything else they must do—this claim, while not heard so much these days, is still a lurking doubt in the minds of some people. It was after reading a book that is completely self-justifying in its psychological approach that we got to thinking anew about this question. The book is *The Authentic Teacher*, by Clark Moustakas (Doyle, Cambridge, Mass., 1966, \$3.50), a thoroughly revised edition of Mr. Moustakas' earlier volume, *The Teacher and the Child* (1956), and it would be difficult to find a more perceptive study of the wonder, promise, and vulnerability of childhood. It is an especially good book for adults to read, since grown-ups, including parents, too easily forget how it feels to be a child. Mr. Moustakas draws on the experiences of ninety-two teachers in relation to particular children that needed help and attention. His book was written to be of use to teachers, but the lay reader will find that it generates a wholesome respect *for* teachers. The patience, honesty, compassion, and persistence of these people in their efforts to understand and help children is something to behold.

But why must children have all these "problems"? This is a question the person impatient of "psychology" is hardly interested in, since he has the blanket solution of a demanding curriculum and a no-nonsense approach to teaching. It sometimes seems that the people who have this attitude have mainly brought forward into the present the memory of their own school days—recalled, that is, the learning experience of a time when there was a lot more certainty about

the purpose of "going to school," and, indeed, about practically everything people do.

You don't have to go back so very far in history to reach a period when all the uncomfortable questions about "identity" and meaning did not arise. Since that time, the entire mood of the adult community has changed. Think of the numerous symptoms which have developed in the past thirty years or so, and what they signify in terms of the felt sense of meaning in human life: the existentialist revolt against commonplace and mediocre attitudes; the emptiness at the center revealed by the Theatre of the Absurd; the multiple response of brutalization/guilt/protest to atomic war and the threat of nuclear armament; the end-of-the-line feelings of the beatnik generation; the enormous preoccupation with the idea of "image"; and, finally, the uneasy acceptance of shallow pretexts justifying military action as a substitute for anything resembling a dignified and humane national policy.

Of course the children have problems. They were born to parents and into communities that have not displayed an authentic aspiration for nearly a generation. The culture, that is to say, has become slack and stagnant, so that in those areas where the child once had opportunity to absorb feelings of on-going vision, there is now only doubt and subterfuge.

It is certainly the case that the human community is *capable* of generating an atmosphere in which many of the problems of children might become, so to speak, self-healing. Rollo May has spoken of the natural therapy of great drama, experienced by the populace of ancient Greece. William Ryan has pointed out that when a Negro community gathers its energies in a struggle "aimed at mastering its own fate," behavioral pathology falls away to a minimum. In short, the humanly healthy community is the matrix for the health of the individual; but today, the communities able to perform this function are almost always "intentional" in a special sense—they represent some strenuous rectifying activity

such as the civil rights movement, or the Black Muslims. Actually, we can learn a great deal about the potentialities of community from the work of contemporary groups which came into being mainly as salvage operations, as specific antidotes to the destructive currents in modern life. The Synanon houses in various parts of the country grew out of the deliberate creation of a small, intensive, therapeutic environment which had inner "lines of force" strong enough to exclude the disintegrating alienations which lead to the use of drugs.

One can imagine, even if he cannot remember, the sense of purpose generated in the young by the musing conversations of a father and mother who have the practical objectives of a family settling on the land and concerned with the conversion of the natural environment to human purposes. One might say, logically enough, that when these basic needs are satisfied, the time has come for larger objectives to emerge in the psychological life of the family. But this does not happen—or, at least, it is not likely to happen—unless a germinal awareness of such objectives has been maintained in the life of the family and community. Without such potential vision, a vacuum of motivation can hardly be escaped, and this vacuum, as we know, is habitually filled by elaboration and multiplication of material needs, which soon are transformed into status symbols of acquisition and conspicuous consumption. These symbols do not represent authentic purposes in human life, but are mere pretexts, and children who grow up in such an atmosphere can find no stabilizing, healthful influence in either home or community, and acquire no absorbing, ongoing vision to engage their energies and expand their inner lives. "Problems" are naturally the result.

This means that in some sense all educational activities must now be remedial, thus creating both special obligations and special opportunities for the teacher. Mr. Moustakas is well aware of this aspect of the teacher's role and burden. He begins his book:

One of the most devastating evils in modern living is betrayal; devastating because it spreads quickly and quietly and has become so commonplace it is considered normal; devastating because it turns men into machines—a transformation which seems natural enough in a technical society; devastating because in one sharp turnabout friendship and love become exploitation and hypocrisy and professionalism becomes another name for manipulation and control; devastating because what appears to be an enduring trust between persons is suddenly broken; devastating because it breeds new evils—suspicion, fear, dehumanization, fragmentation, and ultimately alienation of men from themselves and from each other. The whole process is often without any awareness that the mask, the role and the status symbol are killing the real sources of life in the self and in the community.

Betrayal is an everyday occurrence in the home and in the school, unrecognized and hidden, often unseen in its destructive forms, but nevertheless when effectively executed it initiates a dehumanizing process which results in the moral and psychic decay of human relationships. In some instances the meaning of betrayal is so twisted that we are more afraid of the truth than the lie, and more shocked by sensitivity and kindness than by violence and brutality.

We should say that while Mr. Moustakas' book is presented in the light of these recognitions, they are by no means its theme. It is the faltering human spirit, as expressed by children, and given tender help by understanding teachers, that is the theme.

There is a sense in which *The Authentic Teacher* is a profound appeal by all teachers to the community to regenerate itself and to once again accomplish those whole-making functions which take place in a natural society, so that teachers, some day, will once again find natural, eager, and healthy children coming to school. Then teachers will not have to spend so much of their time in binding up wounds.

FRONTIERS A Familiar Question

A READER who found much to sympathize with in Richard Gregg's article, "Considerations on Peacemaking" (MANAS, March 1), and who suspects that the power and riches of the United States produce anxieties which play a part in the psychology of the Cold War, nonetheless feels constrained to ask this question:

However, don't the Communist leaders plan to eventually acquire the whole world, bit by bit, and to make everybody do it *their* way? Shouldn't they be stopped?

This is a question that cannot be briefly answered, nor easily ignored. In it lie very nearly all the unsolved problems of moral and political philosophy. From the days of Urban II, who called upon the chivalry of Europe to erase the infamy of Islam, which in the twelfth century was threatening to engulf the Holy Land, to the various campaigns of the twentieth century to cleanse the world of more recent evils, men have felt justified in using military power to oppose both actual and imagined threats to what they have held to be their welfare, or even the common good. The history that is made by righteous men seems always to have to be written in blood, and the cruelest wars are those which are undertaken in the name of the highest principles.

The study of war in modern times is the study of the behavior of men under the morally equivocal direction of the "national interest." There is no more disillusioning reading than that concerned with the wars of the twentieth century. It is not that no genuine moral emotions were involved. Nor is it that, on balance, one cannot choose between sides in these terrible conflicts. The really devastating effect of the study of war is the slow realization that the ends which men proclaim they are fighting for are inevitably swallowed up by the unspeakable horror of the means, and that when the peace of exhaustion finally comes, an entire generation of human beings has been uselessly debauched by what is, by any honest appraisal, largely a slaughter of innocents.

It is well known that the populations of the great nations of the world are not by nature aggressive or belligerent. In order to send them off to war, it is necessary to make them fear and hate. And since fear and hate are the grossest expressions of man's emotional nature, the propaganda that is capable of preparing a nation for war must be made of the grossest provocations. The "enemy" is invariably represented as a personification of evil. The individual's desire to reason impartially and to choose rightly must be submerged in a vast wave of righteous justification. Meanwhile, the practical managers of a war must keep their heads. Since victory is the end to which all other values are now subordinate, there will be strange alliances to conclude and dark opportunisms to be concealed from view. This is *war*, we say, as though that settled every possible question.

So anyone who asks whether or not it may be "right" to stop a spreading evil in the world involves himself, not in a simple answer, but in a tortuous investigation of what he knows beyond doubt about this "evil," and whether, indeed, the means of "stopping" it will have the desired effect.

And if he comes to the conclusion that there is little hope of stopping *any* evil by the means of modern warfare, he is then faced with what may be a still more difficult question—how can he, a single individual, set his judgment against that vast, if merely habitual, assent given by his countrymen to the proclaimed necessity of war?

So we arrive at the issue which is indeed before all the world, for it soon becomes obvious that only as individuals begin to ask themselves such questions, and to break with the habit of assent, will there be any hope at all of putting an end to war.

It is not so much a matter of the painfully forged opinion of a lonely individual in contrast to the multitude of those who have acquired their views by other means; this is of course a problem, but what lies at the root of individual conviction in such matters is the much larger question of a human being's identity. With what assurance does a man declare his allegiance to the fraternity of man beyond national barriers? It comes down to where a man

gets his sense of reality in human life. This is the challenge posed by the Tolstoys and the Gandhis, and by all those who have declared themselves as no longer able to take the lives of other human beings in the name of whatever ideals a particular war is said to serve.

Is it conceivable that the human race will come at last to this conception of the duty of the individual to all the rest? Men are called to this view by various persuasions, and called in enlarging numbers as the years go by. If this is a significant movement in the feelings of human beings concerning who they are and what they must do to hold up their heads in self-respect, then there is upon us the beginning of a new ideal of human association—one that may be destined to outlive and outgrow the idea of the nation-state. Much more than mere "survival" is involved in this idea.

It should be useful, here, to turn to a just-published study of the situation in Southeast Asia—*Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire* (Hill and Wang, 1967, \$1.25) by Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk and scholar who toured the United States in 1966. If it is possible for a dispassionate, just, and truth-telling book about the war in Vietnam to appear, Thich Nhat Hanh has produced such a book. Free of recrimination, yet strongly committed to unequivocal statement, this study of the tragic plight of the Vietnamese people will be disarming to all but the most prejudiced readers.

In it are revealing passages such as the following:

It is common knowledge that there are very many patriotic, non-Communist elements in the National Liberation Front. They joined the Front because they agreed with it that they must oppose the regime of President Diem and the policies of the Americans, which they had begun to see as very similar to earlier French policies. This was especially true when the extensive financial help that had been given to the French by the Americans during that earlier war became generally known. Since the United States supported the dictatorial Diem regime, it was itself identified with it by the Vietnamese people. They were increasingly convinced that the Americans were not in Vietnam to protect the freedom and democracy of the Vietnamese, but to

defend their own national self-interests and the interests of the so-called "free world."

The Front could never have grown strong if the Diem regime had known how to deal with the non-Communist elements in Vietnam. The Diem regime succeeded in paralyzing most of the non-Communist elements who sought a democratic society; those that were not forced into immobility had no place to turn except to the Front. Thus the irony of history was that the very intensity of the Diem efforts to eliminate all forms of non-Communist opposition served eventually to assure the strengthening of the Front and the consequent strengthening of its Communist leadership. There were many brave and devoted South Vietnamese who spoke their minds, but they were subject to such persecution, arrest, and exile that they had no alternative but to flee. Unhappily, there was no place to flee except to the one effective center of opposition, the Front. The terrorism and suppression of the government toward these opponents greatly helped the Front to grow, both in numbers and in influence. . . .

The peasants are not concerned with ideology; no one can frighten them with stories of the evils of communism. With their property already destroyed, they do not fear that the Communists will take their property. And if one speaks to them of freedom and democracy, they say, "Of what use is freedom and democracy if one is not alive to enjoy them?" So it is clear that the first problem of the Vietnamese peasant is a problem of life itself. . . . The fact is that the Front has the support of a considerable number of the peasants because it has been able to persuade them that this is in fact the struggle for national independence. The spirit of patriotism among the peasants is very high. They are not informed about world history or ideological struggles; what they see is a large force of white Westerners doing their best to kill their fellow countrymen, many of whom previously fought against the French. The peasants do not see the victims of the American military effort as dead Communists, but as dead patriots.

In this book, a great silence is broken. American readers have opportunity to learn from it what the inarticulate and repressed people of Vietnam feel and think about their war-torn country and how they regard the role of the United States in their struggle to be free.