

THE MEANING OF SALVATION

A SOUTHWESTERN reader writes to ask an old, old question, and while he apparently has in mind at least a partial answer of his own, the question is seriously asked. The letter reads in part:

I have a question. This question has followed me somewhat like my shadow for all of forty years. (I give ten years away since this question did not bother me until I was ten!) From that time to this, I have not found a final answer to the question, "What is Salvation?" . . . Salvation *from what*, and *for what?* . . . Every dogma, creed, and philosophy I have been fortunate to study—or to read or scan, if you will—speaks of this "Saving" business. What does it mean?

There are dozens of ways to regard this question. At the outset, however, it seems necessary to decide whether the question contains a universal meaning, or is one that can be addressed only to the religious tradition or traditions which supply a clearly defined content for the word Salvation.

Two things about this word may be noted: it implies some kind of *ultimate* satisfaction or fulfillment, as distinguished from all partial realizations; and, second, the fulfillment of Salvation belongs to some kind of transcendental order of experience. While "Salvation" can be substituted for other words like "Evolution," as a literary device, the meaning is not the same. Evolution is a process which has no known end or stage of climactic conclusion. Salvation, on the other hand, is both a process and a finality. If you are saved, you are *saved*, and that is it. In contrast, to say that a being or creature is "evolved" has no special significance, since, for the evolutionist, *everything* is evolved. "Evolution" contains no signification of ultimate degree.

Evolution can, of course, be endowed with a wider meaning than that given it by modern biology. You can say that evolution is mental,

and even spiritual, as distinguished from organic evolution. In this case, evolution is made to approach salvation in meaning, but even then it does not contain the full implication of salvation, since salvation also means high or ultimate achievement.

There are further differences. Evolution is conceived of as a *natural* process. An *evolving* intelligence or organism is unfolding inherent potentialities. Salvation, on the other hand, is either wholly or partially the gift or contribution of some external power—a God or Saviour. Salvation, in the traditional religious vocabulary, is supernatural and results from the threefold causation of Faith, Works, and Divine Grace or the Vicarious Atonement. Faith and Works are perhaps human contributions to Salvation, but Grace is the miraculous intervention of the Deity. Further, there are those who contend that Faith may be difficult or even impossible without assistance from Grace, so that, on the whole, the individual man has little to do with his own salvation. Fundamentally, it is an act of God.

Now the word salvation is often used by those who believe that human beings can save themselves, without benefit of a supposed Deity, and who choose the word salvation to express this idea in order to retain the transcendental significance of the term, since this is entirely lost in such words as Evolution or Progress. This we might call the "reformed" meaning of the word Salvation. It still has an ultimate significance, but no supernatural meaning. The case for the reformed meaning of salvation requires considerable explanation, and a good basis for this explanation is found in a paragraph in Carl Becker's *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, concerned with the "key-words" of different historical epochs. Becker wrote:

If we would discover the little backstairs door that for any age serves as the secret entranceway to knowledge, we will do well to look for certain unobtrusive words with uncertain meanings that are permitted to slip off the tongue or the pen without fear and without research; words which, having from constant repetition lost their metaphorical significance, are unconsciously mistaken for objective realities. In the thirteenth century the key words would no doubt be God, sin, salvation, heaven, and the like; in the nineteenth century matter, fact, matter-of-fact, evolution, progress; in the twentieth century, relativity, process, adjustment, function, complex. In the eighteenth century the words without which no enlightened person could reach a restful conclusion were nature, natural law, first cause, reason, sentiment, humanity, perfectibility (these last three being necessary only for the more tender-minded, perhaps).

In each age these magic words have their entrances and exits. And how unobtrusively they come in and go out! We should scarcely be aware either of their approach or their departure, except for a slight feeling of discomfort, a shy self-consciousness in the use of them. The word "progress" has long been in good standing, but just now we are beginning to feel, in introducing it into the highest circles, the need of easing it in with quotation marks, that conventional apology that will save all our faces. Words of more ancient lineage trouble us more. Did not President Wilson, during the war, embarrass us not a little by appearing in public on such familiar terms with "humanity," by the frank avowal of his love for "mankind"? As for God, sin, grace, salvation—the introduction of these ghosts from the dead past we regard as inexcusable, so completely do their unfamiliar presences put us out of countenance, so effectively do they, even under the most favorable circumstances, cramp our style.

Salvation, then, is a word which embodies a meaning buried, but it is far from dead. Except for the surviving orthodoxies which still employ the word in its old, conventional religious sense, its contemporary use is by people who feel that no word common to the twentieth-century vocabulary has a meaning that will express the human longing for regeneration, for a new or *higher* life. Here, in fact, is the real argument about Salvation—do we need such a word at all?

Those for whom the twentieth-century words are quite adequate will probably say that "salvation" is better left in the Middle Ages, where it belonged; that it has no place in modern civilization, as an unsupported and intruding competitor to modern ideas of the good and the desirable.

A defense of the idea of salvation might run something like this: Look at the words which dominate the expression of the twentieth century—*relativity, process, adjustment, function, complex*. They are all words which can be applied to both matter and man. We do not have any words of our own which express man's unique qualities; for such meanings, we are obliged to borrow from the past and to give the words we find new or somewhat different significance.

Further, despite all our talk about "individuality," we have far less intellectual justification for honoring individuality than the people of earlier centuries. Our science has by implication undermined the notion of individuality. It has a great deal to say about the kind of human behavior which is not individual at all, and almost nothing to say about individual expression, such as originality, creativity, or genius. Our thought on these subjects is either personal, artistic, or possibly political—never scientific. You have to set the scientific vocabulary aside to speak of these things.

Another look at Becker's list of twentieth-century words shows that they have practically no relation to subjective values. If you were limited to the twentieth-century mode of expression, you could say very little about the human love of drama, the sense of climax in high achievement, and the entire gamut of poetic, artistic, and mystical experience.

If you had no other key-words than the twentieth-century ones, you could make no explanation at all of the *sense of meaning* which people seek throughout their lives. You might be able to say, "Life is a process of relative adjustments of organisms to their environments,

through various complex functions," but is this what you *want* to say? In short, we don't have any modern words which even attempt to tell what life is really about.

This is intellectual and emotional poverty, or would be, were it not for the persistent attempt of writers and others to maintain meanings for the older words, using them to create some kind of idiom of living human values.

Our analysis has perhaps been carried far enough, bringing the need for some basic assertions. First, then, there is an underlying longing in human beings for a dream of "translation" to a higher life, for some kind of greatness beyond the horizons of the present. A culture which is dominated by thinking which ignores this kind of dreaming for individuals invariably produces some compensating emotional expression such as the Marxist vision of the Classless Society, or any one of the socio-economic paradises of the modern utopians. This result, for some, makes a desirable end to "supernaturalist superstition," while to others it is known as "materialism."

We have no doubt that the charges of both have more than a little truth in them. The Salvation of orthodox Christianity was contemptuous of man, branding him an inadequate moral weakling, unable to save himself. Of course, if you happen to think that man *is* inadequate, then some other theory of salvation will probably appear to you arrogant and presumptuous, but we prefer to support a theory of human strength instead of one which rests on weakness. It is no coincidence that the theory of materialism—the theory, that is, which grew from nineteenth-century evolutionary doctrines, and, reacting away from any "spiritual" ideas, rested its hopes upon the promise of material progress—was largely the creation of strong, independent men who refused to acknowledge the sovereignty of an outside Ruler and Creator. So, by interesting paradox, if a love of freedom, self-reliance, and independence of mind, are the

highest human qualities, then the so-called "materialists" were functionally "spiritual" in attitude, and the orthodox religionists, the low-raters of man—the believers in sin and in a low potential of human capacity—were the true materialists!

But when materialism became an orthodoxy and no longer represented the growing-tip of the thought of strong and independent men, it lost its spiritual quality and became materialism in mood as well as in formal definition. Pioneers, it seems, have no deep psychological need for belief in salvation. They are already involved in "saving" activities and their capacity for dreaming is absorbed by the plans and projects of the hour. But the men who follow in the wake of the pioneers, the inheritors of the work of others—we, who belong to an existing civilization, whose energies are not fully engaged—are left to wonder about the meaning of their lives. Physical completion brings the time for reflection, so that epochs which follow a great burst of imaginative expression become occasions for an anxious searching of the past, to see what has been forgotten during the preoccupations of practical achievement. It is natural to ask, "What have we been doing all this *for*?"

Dreams of utopia can absorb the interest of one, perhaps two, generations, but eventually there comes a sense of futility. Those who work only for "tomorrow" are eventually overtaken by a sense of being the means to the ends of other men—the men of the "future." There is also the vague suspicion that a generation which labors only for the next is laboring for an age that will never come—that unless the future exists in some deep, realizing sense within the present, it will never arrive at all. The child who feels no joy in childhood, who cannot tolerate being a child, but exists only in order to become a man—such a child we recognize as a very sick child, a neurotic child.

This is a difficulty of materialistic doctrines of progress or salvation. They, also, are

contemptuous of the individual, placing the promised land of the Good Life in a far-off future.

Salvation is a word which embodies the feeling-content of our hope for a fulfillment of meaning. Every man is entitled to this hope and it is one of the tasks of philosophy to give that hope rational support.

A mere longing for fulfillment, it may be objected, is not to be taken as evidence of a law of nature. It may be a chimera of the imagination. Logically, we suppose, this will have to be admitted. But that men long for a thing is not an argument against it. The longing rather suggests the need to search for reasonable means of satisfying it. The tropisms of the psyche are surely not less "natural" than the drive which makes seeds direct their primary buds to the light and their roots to the water in the earth. And if longings are individual, then we may legitimately search without prejudice for a philosophy which answers to the longings of individuals.

In ancient times, the myths were forms of the promise of salvation. Every people had its pattern of heroic achievement, by which a man might earn his seat at the banquet of the gods. The place at the table was bought at a high price, but the heroic spirit wanted a task equal to his ardors. He would have no menial pursuit, no merely commercial enterprise. He would seek the Golden Fleece or the Holy Grail. He would strike death to Fafnir and gain the treasure of his life's aspiration. He would rescue his bride Sita from the monster's stronghold, regain his lost kingdom from the usurping Kuru princes, wrestle with Mondamin to establish his manhood, or, like Ulysses, find his way home to Ithaca.

These are all dreams of salvation. What have we, in our time, to take their place?

Manifestly, we have nothing to take their place. The rejoinder may be that the myths are all very well for a handful of "heroes," who may even invent a mythology for themselves, if their culture is lacking in such high dreams, but what about the

"ordinary man"? Are you going to ask him to be a "hero" in order to gain his salvation?

This is not so poor a proposal. Unless you plan to revive the caste system of antiquity, something like the proposal of heroism for every man may be the best possible guide to salvation. Why can we not think that there is a heroism appropriate for each human being—an expression of his best, which is heroism for him? Would we respect a "salvation" that comes on any easier terms?

By now, most readers will have suspected that the idea of immortality is lingering in the wings of this discussion, awaiting an entrance cue. For our part, we do not see how a reasonable idea of salvation can do without immortality as the *modus operandi*. Respect for the human individual virtually requires some such theory, for what of all those people whose life-span is so brief, or so confined by hardship or sorrow, that they have no time to think of salvation, much less to labor for it?

If salvation is something that must be achieved, then a continuing course of effort must extend beyond a single lifetime. Here, we are borrowing the logic of our correspondent, who turns out to be a reincarnationist, and it must be admitted that this doctrine, however remote from the familiar beliefs of our age, does permit of a blend of the idea of salvation with that of individual evolution, without any *deus ex machina* to help it along.

But if it be asked in what, precisely, salvation consists, we should be obliged to answer that we do not know. We shy away from any account of salvation which makes it mark the end of the human struggle, since endings without subsequent beginnings are wholly unappealing. Possibly salvation means a sense of direction equal to our power to understand, and a confidence in our ability to move in the direction we have chosen. What more can any man ask?

REVIEW

A LECTURE YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD

ON December 6 last, Joseph Wood Krutch delivered in Beverly Hills a critical lecture on the science of man. His title was "The First Freedom—Man's Right to Be Himself." Though we have just reviewed Dr. Krutch's latest book, *The Great Chain of Life*, and, like most editors, are reluctant to seem guilty of having "favorites," this is a small price to pay for the opportunity to repeat some profound observations.

During the past several years, Dr. Krutch seems to have been living out the title of Jung's book, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, and, like Erich Fromm in the field of psychological philosophy, and C. J. Ducasse in the area of metaphysics, he emerges with some important affirmations. That none of these three enjoys the sponsorship of formal religion indicates that they are "modern" in a useful sense of the word. Familiar with the disciplined logic of a scientific age, they are yet free from the bias of either conventional science or religion.

Dr. Krutch began his lecture—an interesting sort of beginning—with a review of the opinions expressed in his first major work—*The Modern Temper*—published in 1929. Then, as now, his reasoning required him to face up to what currently appeared to be some dismal realities. In his Beverly Hills lecture, Krutch summarizes *The Modern Temper* and relates it to his present views:

Its thesis was that the universe which science, especially the sciences of biology and psychology, has revealed is a universe in which the human spirit cannot find a comfortable home. That spirit is one which can breathe only in a universe where what the philosopher calls value judgments are of supreme importance. It needs to believe, for instance, that right and wrong are real things, that Love is something more than a biological urge, that the human mind is capable of reason, not merely of rationalizing its prejudices and its wants, that man has the power to will and choose, rather than that he is merely what his conditioning makes him. It

seemed to me then that we must accept a science which found nothing but delusion in any of these beliefs. Hence, we were condemned to tragic existence in a universe alien to the deepest needs of our nature. As I have lived through these military and political events, as they carried me from the Age of Confidence which was just coming to an end, into this Age which we seem to agree to call the Age of Anxiety, I have continued to question the convictions expressed in *The Modern Temper*. Is it really true that there is no escaping the scientific conviction that religion, morality and the human being's power to make free choices are mere delusions?

While these may appear to be purely theoretical questions, the consequences of suasion in either direction are considerable, affecting both the state of mind of individuals and social legislation and political policies. Dr. Krutch explains:

If you do so much as move in the direction which these premises suggest, you are almost certain to arrive sooner or later at certain other general principles which society is tending more and more to accept.

If men are nothing but what their conditioning has made them, if their very thoughts are what they cannot help thinking, then, you ought to be able so to control the factors which condition them as to make them think and do what you have decided they should. If the individual cannot control himself, he can be controlled.

Thus, a few years ago, the Dean of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is my third example of today's thinking, made a speech at a convocation, in the course of which he spoke—and I quote his exact words—of "our approaching scientific ability to control men's *thoughts* with *precision*."

It is true that Mr. Churchill who was present said in reply, "I hope I shall be dead first." But both the Nazi and the Communist states were based upon the assumption that men's thoughts can already be controlled sufficiently for practical purposes, even if not with perfect precision. "You can," said the Nazis and the Communists, "make citizens believe what you want them to believe, and make them do what you want them to do by exploiting what is already known about the conditioning process. You can, if necessary, wash their brains."

From such societies, most of us recoil in horror. But are not such societies perfectly logical, more logical than ours, on the basis of the premises which we, as well as the Nazis and the Communists, tend to accept? If men are nothing but the product of their conditioning and if nothing is moral or immoral except insofar as it is approved or disapproved of by a given society, why should not men be made whatever we happen to fancy we would like to make them?

Actually, it seems to me that that is the direction in which we tend to go, and that we are merely lagging a little bit behind the totalitarian countries *in recognizing* the implication of today's thinking.

People who call themselves liberals and democrats protest strongly against totalitarianism in the name of freedom, and the rights of individuals. Yet a great many of them seem nevertheless to be inclined to accept "today's thinking," without realizing that the two are absolutely incompatible.

How can an individual be sacred or even significant if he is merely the product of his environment? What can freedom mean if man is not to some extent free to make his own choices and his own decisions?

The very idea of political liberty is absurd unless the individuals who assert it are to some extent free. Unless they are, then what can civil liberty or free speech mean? If every individual does and thinks what he has been conditioned to do and think, then from what or for what can he possibly be free? If moral means no more than what a society approves of, then what difference does it make what the thing that society approves of happens to be?

This is Nihilism, then, built into the mind-set of the twentieth century by some of the "hard-headed" assumptions of an age preceding. These assumptions seem to have found symptomatic focus in the writings of Marx and Freud, a sequence we need to understand, as Krutch puts it, "by looking back to the age which prepared for this one to see that it cultivated a science of which the general effect was to belittle man, and to deny him the qualities which we had been accustomed to think of as human." Dr. Krutch continues:

Few would deny that the most powerful ideas generated in the nineteenth century were those associated with the names of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. Few would deny that we live in a universe which we habitually interpret in

terms of one or all of these ideas. The three theories are not identical; to some extent they are contradictory. Nevertheless, they have certain very important characteristics in common. *Each in its own way emphasizes the extent to which the human being is the product of forces outside his control.*

From one point of view, it makes little difference whether we are told by Darwin that natural selection, operating with mechanical inevitability, has caused man to evolve from lower forms of life; or, by Marx, that we are the product of society, which in turn is the product of the dialectic of matter, or, by Freud, that what we call our unique self is really determined by the way in which the fixed drives of human nature have been modified by the things which have happened to us—especially by things which happened in an infancy now almost completely forgotten.

No matter to which of the three we listen with conviction, the result is to accept as demonstrated fact the assumption that we neither can nor need do much of anything for ourselves. Throughout all time, natural selection has performed the function of what used to be called aspiration, or the dialectic of matter has performed the function of effort.

Whatever disputes may still exist concerning what each of the three great teachers "really meant," there can be no doubt that they have been popularly interpreted in this fashion. At worst, each has made the excuse for a sort of secular Calvinism, in the light of which man is seen as the victim of an absolute predestination. Even when attempts have been made to mitigate it, the effect has nevertheless still been to focus attention on that part of ourself over which we have least control.

Perhaps you will say that only a few fanatics accept all this as dogma. But most people accept at least enough of it so that we live in a civilization which tends to believe that men are less the captains of their souls than the helpless victims of what "conditions" make them.

But since as naturalist and amateur biologist, Dr. Krutch is conscientious in giving attention to new discoveries in the physical world, he notes that modern physics has already left nineteenth-century mechanism quite a way behind:

There has been a revolution in physics which many sober physicists recognize as perhaps greater even than the seventeenth century revolution of Galileo and Newton. In biology and in medicine, a

revolution which may well be equally momentous is also taking place. Many, perhaps most, biologists now reject the mechanical implications of Darwinian evolution. Doctors now talk about psychosomatic medicine which recognized that not only does the body influence the mind but that the mind influences the body.

What the physicist now accepts concerning the paradoxical nature of physical reality, about the relation of matter to energy, about the things he simply cannot understand, are no less repugnant to the old hardheaded materialist, than independent judgment and the validity of moral standards is repugnant to the old fashioned hardheaded sociologist and psychologist.

Mechanisms are not as mechanical, and matter is not as material as each was once supposed to be. Mechanisms are not mechanical because individual atoms do not always follow the so-called laws. Matter is not as material because it can be transformed into energy despite the fact that matter and energy were once supposed to be irreducibly different as, say, reason and the brain which thinks that it reasons. The paradox of man who is both a body and a mind is no more implausible than the paradox of an atom which is both matter and force.

COMMENTARY
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

THERE was more to the letter of the Indian correspondent referred to in this week's *Frontiers* than appears in quotation. Not only was the writer dissatisfied with Indian journalism regarding the Naga problem, but he also expressed fairly strong criticism of Prime Minister Nehru, blaming the Indian press for not calling him to account for his mistakes, of which, no doubt, there are some.

We had practically decided to ignore this portion of the letter, but then the question of "free expression" came up, and this editorial space was available. (Of course, we do not regard the right of "free expression" as obliging editors to publish everything that is sent to them. MANAS policy is to print only things which the editors believe will be of value to readers, feeling free to cut what they wish, so long as no mutilation or distortion of the writer's meaning results. In the present instance, Mr. Nehru's recent visit to the United States makes an occasion for considering criticisms of India's leader from another point of view.)

Our correspondent feels that Mr. Nehru needs criticism, and that the Indian press won't give it. Our own view is that while Nehru may need criticism in India, he certainly doesn't need it in the United States. We should hate to have these pages seem in any sense an echo of the sniping at him that one finds in, say, *Time Magazine*.

But when Indians become impatiently critical of their Prime Minister, as sometimes happens, we find it hard to sympathize. Where, looking around the world, will you find a leader to equal Nehru in Stature? Do Indians realize how fortunate they are in having such a man, or do they tend to take him for granted?

We have before us several pages from the *New York Times* of last December, giving full reports of Mr. Nehru's addresses and interviews

with the press during his short visit to the United States. He was both uncompromising and gracious, winning the respect of everyone—even his critics. Further, he gave expression to views that no other national leader would dare to expose, such as the following:

It is not for me to criticize, yet it would serve little purpose for me to talk in empty platitudes. I am quite sure that as we stand today all these pacts and military alliances are completely out of place. They are even unnecessary for the people who have them. They may have had some use in the past. But they do not add to the strength of any nation now and they only make other nations hostile to you.

However, concerning India's supposed leadership in "moral force," he said:

Well, first of all, I disclaim entirely any—well, any claim to moral force for India as a country. I do think that our leader, Mr. Gandhi, was an exponent, and a very powerful one, of moral force, and that he has influenced India greatly in the right direction, and we have tried, to some extent, to follow what he said. Sometimes we fail, sometimes we succeed in a small measure. That is, I do not wish anyone to imagine that we in India think ourselves more moral, higher or better in any way than others. We do think that our leader set us a very fine example, and we try to keep it in mind, to the best of our ability.

When Nehru was about to leave India, a Western diplomat advised Americans—"Stand back from Nehru. . . .Stand back and try to get a picture of what he means in India and Asia. That's a lot more important than what he means to Americans."

This was good advice. Even Indians might take it, now and then, to good advantage. Nehru also means something to the world, and this may be as important as what he means to Indians.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

OUR discussion (of two weeks ago) of the most important elements in "literature for children" wandered far afield, and we now propose to let it wander a bit more. For this seems to be an instance where the longest way around provides the best view of home. Just as there is far too much of compartmentalizing in regarding children apart from adults—or "child psychology," as if this were a separate subject of itself—so is the most worth-while impact of reading the same for elders and young alike. One cannot read "just anything" and learn the meaning of words, for example, since words have real meaning to us only when we relate them to our own states of consciousness. Just to be amused, distracted or excited by the plot of a story usually leaves us mentally passive, unconcerned with meaning. Good reading makes us struggle a bit with our emotions, discouraging simple drift. And, as last week's quotation from Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces* indicated, the only tale worth telling is that of the human soul struggling to know itself, passing through adventures and catastrophes to reach to expanded awareness. Since this sort of literature is not generally in vogue, even for adults, we are still less likely to find books having such qualities on the children's shelves of our libraries.

Our suggestion, made by way of a short quotation from J. W. N. Sullivan's book—*Beethoven—a Study in Genius*—that part of "basic education" is learning to come to terms with suffering, needs further consideration. For we truly live in an age of pasteurization. Unconsciously, our culture has set the goal of a trouble-free life, and this is a poor environment for the philosophizing capacities of adults and children alike. Sullivan refers to the superficiality of the current psychological outlook, remarking: ". . . to the modern mind suffering is essentially remediable. Suffering is primarily due to physical

and moral maladjustment, and with the spread of science and correct social theories we shall be able to abolish it. For an increasing number of people suffering is already practically abolished. They may go through life without meeting one problem they cannot evade until they reach their death-bed, while they find the sufferings of others easier to endure through their conviction that they are the temporary consequences of the imperfect state of society."

But the man who knows nothing of suffering, or who believes that he really has something to complain about if he finds himself in either circumstantial or psychological travail, has been cut off from an important part of his human heritage. Sullivan continues, showing that the man who professes to believe that suffering is nothing but catastrophic, may nevertheless be deeply impressed by art or music which has grown *out of suffering*:

But to the vast majority of people suffering is still one of the fundamental characteristics of life, and it is their realization that an experience of suffering, pure and profound, enters as an integral part in Beethoven's greatest work, that helps to give that work its unique place in the minds and hearts of men.

Beethoven's capacity for a deep and passionate realization of suffering necessitated, if he were not to be reduced to impotence, a corresponding capacity for endurance and an enormous power of self-assertion. No artist ever lived whose work gives a greater impression of indomitable strength than we find in some of Beethoven's most characteristic movements.

The chief characteristics of the fully mature Beethoven's attitude towards life are to be found in his realization of suffering and in his realization of the heroism of achievement. The character of life as suffering is an aspect that our modern civilization, mercifully for the great majority of people, does a great deal to obscure. Few men have the capacity fully to realize suffering as one of the great structural lines of human life.

To Beethoven the character of life as suffering became a fundamental part of his outlook. The quality of this realization has nothing in common with the pessimism of such a man as Schopenhauer. It is the direct, simple and final acceptance of an

obvious fact. This attitude of mind is perhaps rarer today than at any previous period in history.

It is obvious enough that suffering and philosophy have been close companions throughout history. While it may be theoretically possible for a man to learn as much from intense joy as from intense unhappiness, we are far from having reached the form of psychological maturity which would make this possible. All too easily, our pleasures isolate us from a deep understanding of our fellowman, while we come to know something of the meaning of compassion and love when we are in deep trouble. David Riesman's "lonely crowd" is composed of the multitude of immature who keep trying to escape from the labyrinths of their own nature—including those secret passages where hide some of our most precious potentials. No one understands integrity without the test of tribulation, no one loves unless he can love even when it hurts, and know that the love is worth the price of hurt, many times over—and this is why the frenetic seeker of pleasures is never fully satisfied.

It seems a thankless task to try to relate such things to children's literature! Yet who will deny that the whole of modern culture conspires to shield us from the sort of psychological travail out of which wisdom and strength can grow? This is what is wrong with the happy endings of conventional novels, plays and movies—and the "true to life," easy-success stories which the American public avidly devours. It is not that our children should be made to suffer, certainly, but that they may come to understand that for every form of suffering there is an appropriate catharsis, if it can only be found. Nor has the capacity to endure and transcend suffering anything to do with guilt. The man who nurtures a guilt complex is one who has evaded himself, ignoring the necessary anxieties and doubts with which he must come to terms if he is to have confidence in his ability to be a man, whatever the circumstances. Beethoven's "capacity for endurance" was the stuff out of which full human beings are made, and we don't learn psychological endurance without a

struggle, any more than we acquire physical stamina without appropriate discipline of training.

There are times, perhaps, when the child should learn from the parent that he, like almost everyone, has often teetered on the brink of despair—or is even currently doing so. For, later on, he may have the opportunity to discover that it is precisely when a man is half brave and half a coward, half beaten and half persevering, that we reach close to his being and come to know him truly.

Meantime, because we are afraid of suffering, because we foolishly believe that a scientific manipulation of our biological and economic environment may rid us of the challenge of adversity, we shun philosophy. What a waste! For children are natural philosophers, and given any encouragement to believe that philosophy is essential to the examined life, they will continue to develop in this direction. Teen-agers may often hunger for reading fare which challenges both their minds and their feelings, and yet not recognize the nature of this longing—so surrounded are they by those who believe that "trying to be happy" is the end of all existence.

A short time ago a friend tried Plato on children—the three famous discourses describing the trial and death of Socrates—*Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*. These ten-year-olds were interested, genuinely interested, and moved by the story of a man who had completed the conquest of fear, who could face his death not only with equanimity, but with the knowledge that he was helping to enrich the account of man's nature. With the background of this symbolic drama in mind, the children began to argue about the ethical issues Socrates raised. They were able to feel some sympathetic closeness to a hero very different from those appearing in comic books. And, we venture to say, these children will remember something of Socrates, what he tried to stand for, and the drama of his prosecution and death, long after they have forgotten all the characterless characters who trip along to happy endings in conventional stories.

Perhaps one can do without drama in literature if one also lives a life rich in philosophic thought, but we have to have either the chicken or the egg to get the cycle moving. Meanwhile, what philosophic interests we have can at least aid us in winnowing the wheat from the chaff when we visit the local library in search of provocative, worthwhile writing for ourselves. And there is little doubt that those parents who conscientiously undertake the quest will find that their attempts at communication with their children will take on deeper meaning, just by reading stories which reflect a measure of heroism and also imply philosophy.

Where can we find modern literature meeting these exalted requirements? The answer is probably nowhere, or at least not in any one locale. Steinbeck, occasionally, in his own often dark and interrupted way, touches a dominant note of the great theme. A book such as David Davidson's *The Steeper Cliff*, reproduces psychological ingredients of the hero cycle in a war setting, and perhaps we may say that James Jones' *From Here to Eternity* shows that even among the lowly and apparently lost, the capacity for suffering and for thought can argue the possibility that the cycle will not always end in despair. But these authors are not for the children; the appropriate symbols for man's struggle to know himself are those which can be taken to heart without producing unnecessary confusion. Enough confusion exists within, and symbolic literature should serve to bring rays of light to the darkness. Our earliest recommendation for children's reading, here, and a repeated suggestion since, was Armstrong Sperry's *Call It Courage*. Here, in a setting of the clear standards and simple living of the South Sea Islanders, a sensitive boy's conquest of fear stands out with a strength and beauty which any person, young or old, can relate to his own trials and strivings. In the context of primitive African life, *Garram, the Hunter* does much of the same. But such books are few.

FRONTIERS Asian "Colonialism"

THE conservative American weekly, *U.S. News & World Report* (Jan. 11), takes manifest pleasure in reporting "a new brand of colonialism" in the Far East. It is not the colonialism imposed by aging empires which rule far-off lands from foreign offices situated in Paris or Amsterdam or London, but the colonialism attributed to one of the new Far Eastern republics. Indonesia, *U.S. News* discloses through an interview with a South Moluccan patriot, "is accused of holding millions of people in colonial status by force of arms." According to Karel J. V. Nikijuluw, South Moluccan representative in the United States, the people of the Spice Islands and other island groups south of the Philippines, want to be a separate nation and not part of the Indonesian Republic. Mr. Nikijuluw says that the South Moluccas were originally one of sixteen states which were to join with each other to form the Indonesian Federation, but that the Javanese State, also one of the sixteen, revolted against the federation idea and claimed authority over all the other states. The Moluccans, he says, are Melanesians and they reject the authority of Indonesia, which treats them like a colony of aliens, subduing the Moluccan freedom movement with armed force.

From practical appearances, at least, the Indonesians are assuming a portion of the "white man's burden"! Perhaps, as the years go by, the so-called "colonial" problem will cease to be known as a *white* man's burden, and will be recognized as a problem which exists wherever there are centralized governments ruling over diverse elements of population. At any rate, Asians will not be long in realizing that the sins of the so-called "colonial powers" were not entirely a European or even an American defect, but are likely to grow out of all administrative situations which have had a parentage of violence and revolution. It would take some research to determine why the various countries and cultures

united under the Republic of Indonesia came to be considered a logical part of this new country, but we suspect that the territorial lines were in some measure inherited from the days of Dutch imperialism. It may take decades or even a century for free social institutions to evolve throughout the Far East. A sudden switch from colonial administration to self-determination can hardly be completed in a matter of ten years, and the Republic of Indonesia is not yet ten years old. This is not to suggest that the two million South Moluccans are mere hecklers of a brave effort on the part of the Indonesian government to establish a free society throughout its far-flung archipelago. We know little of the merits of this conflict between Indonesia and the South Moluccans. Quite conceivably, President Sukarno has made mistakes. He may be terribly wrong. It is certain, in any event, that the Asian Republics will have to solve many problems of a sort that the Western republics and democracies have been coping with for generations.

It is even possible that Asian critics of the West will begin to realize that political injustice is one of the inevitable concomitants of the modern, national State. If you want a modern, national state, you have to tolerate at least *some* political injustice.

India, too, is having her problems of "colonialism." An Indian correspondent writes to say that he has been reading with great interest articles in *MANAS* on the American Indians, of whom he knew almost nothing. He then continues:

I do not know whether you are aware that India has a similar aboriginal problem. The Government of India periodically launch punitive military operations against the Nagas—a truculent tribal people on India's Northeast Frontier—who refuse to recognize the hegemony of the Government of India and claim independence. While reading the *MANAS* articles on American Indians, I cannot but reflect on the unfortunate Indian administrators whom hardly a single Indian journal or newspaper of standing has chosen to guide by rebuke, criticism, or even a

suggestion that their Naga policy is worth some reconsideration.

I do not propose to take sides on the Naga question; nor am I anxious to prove that the Government of India are wrong in their operations against the Nagas. It is possible that their policy is right and inspired by the purest motives. But there is still much to disconcert impartial observers who believe in freedom of opinion, which we all believe the press has a duty to ensure and safeguard. I am not proud of the manner in which the Indian press for the most part has acquitted itself over the reports on the Naga problem. . . .

Negotiations with the Nagas have been carried on by the Indian Government through a Naga leader who is apparently a nuisance and perhaps avid for personal power. This may have been taken as an excuse for failing to measure the justice in the claims of the Nagas. Further, Christian missionaries are accused of stirring up separatist agitation among the Nagas. Our correspondent remarks, however:

One may accept the veracity of such charges and conclusions but still not be persuaded of the Naga heresy in demanding a separate state—or, for that matter, of the inviolable sanctity of Indian rule over the Nagas. This can stand a thorough examination which unfortunately most of the Indian newspapers have not undertaken.

Another section of this correspondent's letter concerns MANAS articles on India:

To my recollection MANAS has been very charitable in its treatment of Indian affairs and therefore it needs a corrective. Political interests stunt and corrupt and they have not spared India. The sickening power-mongering in India's metropolitan towns will disillusion foreigners with ethereal notions of India's Gandhian heritage.

A distinguished U.S. official, Mr. Paul Sherbert, made some very sensible remarks upon leaving India. He said that all talk of Americans being as a nation materialistic and India being "spiritualistic" is nonsense. Indians, he observed, are very poor and are therefore desperately interested in making an anna (one sixteenth of the Indian rupee) go as far as possible. Poverty is so real and life so hard that there can be nothing but the rankest materialism in such depraving atmosphere. One comes across much dishonesty in daily life in India. The Indian

merchant does not have a reputation for fair dealing and honesty and has effectively sabotaged India's honour abroad.

We have heard much about the community sense and good neighborliness in America—and the Americans we have met in India have borne out this reputation. Community life is conspicuous by its absence in India. To take a simple example: It is customary for milkmen in India to dilute milk supplied to customers with as much water as possible—and yet the Indian customer will prefer to be fleeced in this fashion; he could effectively bring the milkman to his knees by organising the neighborhood and boycotting the offending supplier for just a couple of days. And yet, seldom is such community action forthcoming.

MANAS will be doing a real service to Indian readers if in future it makes a more critical approach to Indian affairs.

Well, these are all real problems. But the case of the naughty milkman seems a minor matter when it is compared to the decalciumized, pasteurized milk sold all over the United States with the blessing of public health departments, to the white bread which has the most vital elements of the wheat removed, and dozens of other adulterations and dilutions, perfected by the most magnificent scientific techniques and to the accompaniment of fully orchestrated hymns to "progress"!

There is a friendly sort of irony in recalling that the organic gardening movement, which is now beginning to reconstitute thinking about nutrition and wholesome food products in the United States, originated half a century ago in India, where Sir Albert Howard, as a scientist at a British agricultural station, learned from the methods of the Indian peasants the importance of organic fertilizer and thereupon began a lifetime of agricultural reform for Europe and America!

Let us all count our blessings.