

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SEA AROUND US?

THERE are two ways to consider the conflict of ideas about the nature of things. In the conflict, say, between the "materialist" and the "idealist" concerning *causation*, there is the issue itself to be argued—the assembling of evidence for each side, and the weighing of its importance and applicability. But then, in addition to this—or rather, "outside" of the argument itself—is the question of why this argument exists at all, and why it arises in the form that it does.

This second approach, it seems to us, is always of greater importance, although it is not always possible to make it. When one is very close to an issue—when it seems so important that nothing can or should be subordinated to it—to get "outside" of the issue is either very difficult or impossible. For in the heat of argument, we seek not the height of dispassionate understanding, but triumph and vindication.

In the matter of "materialism" versus "idealism," there is a further difficulty. This argument is so "ultimate" in its implications as to easily give way to pompous attitudes on both sides. When pursued in the terms that have been stated—"Materialism versus Idealism"—the argument tends to become a war of abstractions, bringing little benefit to the participants. Conflict and discussion on a lesser front seem likely to prove a great deal more fruitful, since the mood of inquiry need not be so uncompromising.

The thing that makes the argument between the Idealists and the Materialists of substantial importance and enduring interest is that it is never really *settled*. It breaks out anew in every age. If the idealists seem to win a round, the next generation of materialists is able to find some fatal error in their opponents' victory. And then, after a century or so, the tables are turned again.

You can take a side, of course. In fact, it is almost necessary to take one side or the other of this argument. But the question of why you take the side that you do may be far more important than the side you do take. What, for example, do you hope or expect to win by being on that side? What victories do you think can be won on that side, but not on the other?

Recently, a reader began an argument with us about the article, "Eccentric Memories," which appeared in MANAS for May '9. Fundamentally, this article adopted the "idealist" position. That is, it suggested that there are capacities in human beings considerably beyond the ordinary powers of perception represented by the five senses. It was an article, in short, which proposed the possibility of psychic powers, with a corresponding psychic constitution of the universe around us. Some evidence and some speculation was presented along these lines. In reply, our reader stated his own contrasting view:

What I object to is your apparent willingness to ask what is ultimately a scientific question in the wrong way—a formal query that has always led people barking up blind alleys.

"There might be a psycho-mental sea spread all about the universe, from which humans absorb by means of some kind of antenna. What is obtained depends upon the individual's receptive capacity."

You quote this, calling it a valuable speculation. I would say that we had better keep our noses to the grindstone of learning more about the individual "subconscious" before clutching madly at the universe.

Fifty years ago it was, perhaps, inevitable that men would speculate about evolution, about the origin of life, in unrewarding ways. Forty years ago, when *entelechies* and such undefinable and extraneous things were being dragged in, my attitude was my present one with respect to the "subconscious." As a "materialist," I was convinced that the answers would emerge, insofar as they could emerge, in terms of the

known, to the extent that they could be known, and that there was no use in asking the wrong questions and batting our heads against metaphysical walls, and I have lived long enough to be vindicated on a few crucial points. George Gaylord Simpson has shown that "chance," so far as the facts of evolution are concerned in his branch of paleontology, is adequate to account for evolution on a purely materialistic, almost Darwinian basis. Orthogenesis, a belief which led even biologists (is Sinnott one?) to accept demons, has been pretty well explained away. Even with respect to the origin of life, it is being learned that some three or four billion years ago the chemical constitution of the earth's surface evidently afforded the conditions under which life *could* arise by chance (and it becomes evident that peopling the universe with many inhabited planets is improbable, nor is Martian life probable—unless, of course, chemically different forms of life can be shown to be possible...)

The older chemistry had not synthesized organic compounds: Q.E.D.—Life is a special creation! The past hundred years has seen a steady retreat of obscurantism against encroaching knowledge; nor can I agree that the finding that matter itself is not so simple means what you seem to imply. It means, instead, that matter becomes *more* capable of serving as the basis of life. The problem of "consciousness" is a difficult one, but I'm not going to jump off any deep end into a universal sea of subconsciousness.

There are several lines of argument here. There is, first, the objection to idealist "speculation." We need, it is said, to know more about the individual *psyche* before attempting to interpret the universe in psychic terms. But what if studying the individual psyche without attention to the universal psyche is like examining fish without any consideration to the medium in which they live—the sea?

The fundamental question is this: Can science get along without a largely speculative theory of the universe? Is effective knowledge of the parts *possible*, so long as we remain ignorant of the character of the whole?

Empiricists and pluralists are bound to say that it is; that science can only suffer confusion and bewilderment by attempts to mix far-reaching speculative theory with demonstrable facts.

We can admit the possibility—very nearly the certainty —of confusion and bewilderment from this sort of theorizing, yet not that it should be avoided at the cost of refusing to think about the totality of nature.

It is a question of what you are looking for, and what you can expect to find out. Small fields of investigation produce only "small" facts. In physics, for example, the unifying conceptions of cosmology have been made possible only by great, intuitive leaps into the unknown.

A similar situation doubtless prevails with respect to psychology. While the study of the mind and the emotions obviously involves subtle subjective elements of experience, much more difficult to observe than the data of physics, a "field" theory of psychology, once it is formulated, may prove as revolutionary in the science of mind as field theory has been in physical science.

Moreover, such speculations are by no means new, nor are they found only in the thought of "idealists" and "mystics." Long ago, William James, often referred to as the father of American psychology, reported on his twenty-five years of interest in psychic research, stating as his own conclusion that he was prepared to go on record as vouching for the reality of the super-normal in psychic phenomena, and also, contrary to popular impression, the *commonness* of such manifestations. So impressed was James with the findings of psychic research (this essay by James, included in the volume, *Memories and Studies*, Longman's, 1917, first appeared in the *American Magazine* for October, 1909) that he launched into speculations very like those objected to by our critic, and this is the more remarkable, since James labeled himself a "radical empiricist" in philosophy, and was also the advocate of the pluralist point of view. James's proposal of a "psychic sea," necessary, as he saw it, to account for the psychic phenomena he had encountered, ran as follows:

. . . there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds

but accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or reservoir. Our "normal" consciousness is circumscribed for adaptation to our external earthly environment, but the fence is weak in spots, and fitful influences from beyond leak in, showing the otherwise unverifiable common connection. Not only psychic research, but metaphysical philosophy, and speculative biology are led in their own ways to look with favor on some such "panpsychic" view of the universe as this. Assuming this common reservoir of consciousness to exist, this bank upon which we all draw, and in which so many of earth's memories must in some way be stored, or mediums would not get at them as they do, the question is, What is its own structure? What is its inner topography? This question, first squarely formulated by Meyers, deserves to be called "Meyer's problem" by scientific men hereafter. What are the conditions of individuation or insulation in this mother-sea? To what tracts, to what active systems functioning separately in it, do personalities correspond? Are individual "spirits" constituted there? How numerous, and of how many hierarchic orders may these then be? How permanent? How transient? And how confluent with one another may they become?

What, again, are the relations between the cosmic consciousness and matter? Are there subtler forms of matter which upon occasion may enter into functional connection with the individuations in the psychic sea, and then, and then only, show themselves? So that our ordinary human experience, on its material as well as on its mental side, would appear to be only an extract from the larger psychophysical world?

Vast, indeed, and difficult is the inquirer's prospect here and the most significant data for his purpose will probably be just these dingy little mediumistic facts which the Huxleyan minds of our time find so unworthy of their attention. But when was not the science of the future stirred to its conquering activities by the little rebellious exceptions to the science of the present? Hardly, as yet, has the surface of the facts called "psychic" begun to be scratched for scientific purposes. It is through following these facts, I am persuaded, that the greatest scientific conquests of the coming generation will be achieved.

Since James wrote the above, great strides have been made in psychic research, with more emphasis resulting, today, on the positive capacities of human beings than upon the

abnormalities of mediumship. The course of investigation initiated by William McDougall at Duke University in the 1920's, and pursued by Dr. J. B. Rhine as head of Duke's Parapsychological Laboratory, set the level of psychic research during the twentieth century, and has proved more amenable to the scientific method, and more impressive, in the long run, to scientists generally.

Interestingly enough, scientific psychic research, as much or more than any other field of inquiry, has been shown to have overlapping frontiers with other disciplines. It is plain from the philosophic writings of scientists in other fields that they have been moved to consider the implications of Dr. Rhine's findings for their own lines of investigation. Dr. Edmund Sinnott, distinguished botanist and plant morphologist, is one whose thinking has been clearly affected by modern psychic research, and there are numerous others.

The motivations of Dr. McDougall in inaugurating the program at Duke are of particular interest in connection with the present discussion. In 1923, McDougall wrote:

Unless Psychical Research can discover facts incompatible with materialism, materialism will continue to spread. No other power can stop it; revealed religion and metaphysical philosophy are equally helpless before the advancing tide. And if that tide continues to rise and advance as it is doing now, all signs point to the view that it will be a destroying tide, that it will sweep away all the hard-won gains of humanity, all the moral traditions built up by the efforts of countless generations for the increase of truth, justice and charity.

Then, a year before he died, Dr. McDougall wrote in the first issue of the *Journal of Parapsychology*, published at Duke:

What are the relations of mind and matter? Are mental processes always and everywhere intimately and utterly dependent upon material or physical organizations? Do the volitions, the strivings, the desires, the joys and sorrows, the judgments and beliefs of men make any difference to the historical course of the events of our world, as the mass of men at all times have believed? Or does the truth lie with

those few philosophers and scientists who, with or without some more or less plausible theory in support of their view, confidently reject well-nigh universal beliefs, telling us that the physical is coextensive with the mental and that the powers and potentialities of mind may be defined by the laws of the physical sciences?

There is a striking contrast between the views expressed by our correspondent, who argues that "chance" is sufficient to account for the wonders of Evolution, and the general direction of the researches of men like McDougall and Rhine. But is there, after all, so great a difference in the *values* which are represented by these opposing attitudes?

This is the question which we proposed looking into at the outset of our discussion—the question of *why* there should be so profound a controversy between the materialists and the idealists. Why, for example, should "chance" as the foundation for all evolutionary achievement have been so popular a cause for so many years? What is blessed about sheer "accident" as the impersonal force behind all human greatness of character, works of poetic genius, and moral excellence?

That chance should be so honored is a strange anomaly, and one that would remain beyond rational explanation, were we without the history of religion in the West to instruct us in the "heredity" of materialistic doctrines. What the materialists were after—and the materialists, let us note, have included some of the most illustrious humanitarians of our epoch—was security against "divine" imperialism. If they could prove that "chance" was the author of all, then there would be no place for an interfering "God."

McDougall, on the other hand, was concerned about the confinement of human volitions and strivings by the mechanistic laws of physics. For this, after all, is only another kind of imperialism; the imperialism of matter instead of the autocracy of a supposed "creator."

On this view, the argument between the materialists and the idealists is not a scientific question at all, but an ideological question, and the value defended by both is *Freedom*.

Will it be possible for the scientists and the philosophers—and even the religionists—of the future to recognize the genesis of all these endless polemics in the human devotion to freedom? Will it be possible for them to build a conception of man to which all can subscribe, at the same time eliminating the insecurities which are always behind partisanship in the search for truth?

## *Letter from* CENTRAL EUROPE

INNSBRUCK.—Since 1945 the position of Austria has been unique. Although a small state, it shares boundaries with a number of neighbors—with Italy, Switzerland and Germany, as well as Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia. The eastern half of Austria was occupied by the Russians, and as one after the other of her eastern neighbors turned Communist, few political observers were able to believe that Austria could, in the long run, resist the Red influence.

The country was ruled by an Allied Council, seated at Vienna. But while elsewhere (for instance in Berlin) the cooperation of the Western and the Eastern delegates soon ended, the Allied Council at Vienna remained functioning until the State Treaty was signed, more than a year ago. The "cooperation" of course, was not very fruitful, since the Russians, as everywhere else, said "*nyet*," when the Western members pleaded "Yes," and vice versa. Serious differences, however, did not occur. Possibly the "don't-take-it-too-seriously" atmosphere of Vienna and the charm of the Austrian State-Secretaries (although chiefly of the Catholic anti-communist party) impressed the Russians, or maybe they did not want to take on one more rather unreliable satellite; in any event, they did not interfere with Austrian State affairs and even when—during the past six months—hundreds of thousands of Hungarian refugees sought refuge in Austria, with the Austrian press condemning the Soviet policies in Hungary, the Russian protests were wooden and inconsequential.

The coalition government under the leadership of the Austrian Peoples' Party, including the Social Democrats, has been practically without opposition in Parliament, and since 1945 has proved its stability, while aptly developing good connections with both the West and the East. Whereas the Chancellor (Prime Minister) has during these twelve years always

been a representative of the Austrian Peoples' Party, two State Presidents, Dr. Renner and Dr. Korner, both members of the Social Democratic Party, have been directly elected by a plebiscite of the nation. Since neither of these men was the "party-manager" type, both have been regarded as men of good will and ideals, and have enjoyed well-earned popularity as "*Landesväter*."

The situation before the plebiscite of this year—brought by Dr. Korner's death a few months ago—was somewhat different. The Social Democratic Party had no one who could command the popular vote, and was therefore obliged to nominate the party boss, Dr. Schärf, who served (and still serves) as Vice-Chancellor. This situation led the Austrian Peoples' Party, joined by the small Independent Party, to strike out in a new direction. Since no member of either of these parties could qualify as a popular candidate, and since the party leaders felt the public did not want a professional politician in the chair of the President, they nominated a man who has never during his lifetime had anything to do with politics. Dr. Denk is a medical scientist and famous as a leading surgeon at the University Clinic of Vienna. His supporters argue that a person like him, modest, altruistic, who has saved the lives of thousands, who in private has led a Christian and blameless life, and who is used to thinking in a scientific manner, would stand nearer to the hearts of the people than any professional politician and, if necessary, be able from his general human experience to disentangle political knots as well as anyone.

Since both previous plebiscites of the post-war period resulted in election of Social Democrats, the result of this experiment will be an exceedingly interesting one.

[In the recent plebiscite, Dr. Schärf was elected, but the vote was very close.—Editors.]

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW*

### "BEYOND THE FIVE SENSES"

A FOUR-HUNDRED-PAGE *anthology* with this title, recently published by Lippincott, will be an interesting book for many MANAS readers. For here is evidence that numerous serious-minded writers and scholars are convinced that there is a "super-normal" world, and that it is worthy of investigation. Contributors to *Beyond the Five Senses* include Prof. Hornell Hart of Duke University, Prof. C. J. Ducasse, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Psychiatrist Leslie LeCron, and Dr. J. B. Rhine. Mrs. Eileen Garrett, author of *Adventures in the Supernormal*, writes in the introduction to this volume:

The primary significance of this book lies in the fact that it could be assembled at all just after the mid-point of this twentieth century and that it can be expected to command the respectful attention of the best minds of our time. This is striking evidence of how far what formerly was called psychic research and is now generally termed parapsychology, has come in the last fifty years.

It is unquestionable that in discussions of the human mind, and phenomena connected with it, the "climate" of our day is markedly altered from that of, say, the year 1907. This is no accident. Just as in the same period the physical sciences have taken breath-taking strides forward, in like manner the study of the mind and its capacities has advanced over new and often exciting terrain.

In every branch of human inquiry the modern climate is different from that of fifty years ago. The passing of the iron reign of late-Victorian mechanistic materialism in the physical sciences has had a liberating effect in every department of man's thought. No longer can intelligent men assert dogmatically that observed phenomena, well attested by appropriate evidence, "simply can't happen, you know," and brush off such evidence without examining it. The closed mind is going out of fashion.

The roster of distinguished names and first-rate minds among contributors to this anthology bears eloquent witness to the fact that inquiry into the nature and capacities of human personality has not lagged behind progress in the physical sciences. There are excellent grounds for holding, as well, that

parapsychological investigation has outdistanced what we commonly call the "social sciences." The study of the mind is, at last, coming of age.

Prof. Hart's initial contribution—two articles by him are included—makes it clear that the investigation of the field of parapsychology may call for the re-establishment of the significance of the word "soul." Dr. Hart considers the methods employed in the scientific probing of extrasensory perception, etc.:

Professor R. H. Thouless, of the department of educational psychology, Cambridge University, has suggested that the adoption of a soul theory may be the step necessary to make it possible to fit into the same theoretical framework the "normal" facts of scientific psychology and physiology and those "paranormal" facts which psychical research compels us to recognize.

If Rhine and Thouless are justified in their claim that science has demonstrated the reality of the human soul, then whole scheme of thinking must be reconstructed from ground up. The established conclusions of modern science will not be overthrown, of course, but a new framework will have to be constructed that will include all the science will not be overthrown, of course, but a new framework will have to be constructed that will include *all* the pertinent findings of modern science—including those of the parapsychology laboratories of the world.

Since parapsychology promises to be one of the most momentous developments in the history of human thought, it is worth while to summarize briefly the solid foundation of evidence upon which this new science is building.

The essays in *Beyond the Five Senses* were obviously selected to show the diverse relationships between paranormal psychology and other fields of investigation. Dr. LeCron, perhaps the leading American authority on hypnosis, explains the manner in which hypnotism is indicative of the paranormal realm; he has warned, previously, of the dangers involved in a process which allows the hidden dimensions of the hypnotist's personality to be communicated or even transferred to the subject. Writing from his experiences in French Equatorial Africa, Dr. Schweitzer feels it valuable to point out to Christian contemporaries that the "occult" exists without as well as within the boundaries of religious

belief, and is represented by a wide reservoir of lore, ranging from the discoveries of the modern parapsychologists to the "folk wisdom" and "old wives' tales" of many peoples. Dr. Schweitzer comments:

It will be useful to point out from the start that the framework for parapsychological phenomena in the Gaboon is not properly speaking a religious one, if we define religion as the feeling of dependency on the part of an individual in relation to a divine being. Such a feeling is unknown to the natives. They hold to a system of belief which is not peculiar to them but which they share with primitive people of all times and places. It is not our purpose here to explain the astonishing identity of these beliefs held by widely differing groups. In broad outline, we may define this magical faith as follows: being of a non-religious nature, it rests essentially on the belief in a supernatural force placed above all other forces, even that of divinities and fetishes—a supernatural force which the initiate can compel to serve him once he has mastered the means.

An entirely different dimension of parapsychology is explored by Robert Amadou in "Portrait of the Artist as a Seer." Again and again will the question be raised as to whether what men call "intuition" is simply an essence distilled from rational thinking or an essentially different or separate source of illumination. Amadou writes:

As experience and as creation—to differentiate between these two stages of artistic activity—the work of art assumes in its creator and, by extension, in its admirer, the exercise of the faculties of knowledge and communication. Frequent reference to inexplicable flashes, to sudden illuminations, or "transferences"—to use a parapsychological term for a phenomenon which seems proven on the psychological level—should suffice to show that artistic creation cannot be reduced to a rational and conscious operation.

Other factors contribute. These are the ones we think of when we point to the links between parapsychology, the occult, mysticism and art. Art involves not only the mind but the whole man, not only the intellect but other functions and powers whose importance seems basic. To recognize the functions and powers which are exercised by or through the artist and to place them in relationship toward one another, to the extent that they constitute

the artistic experience and participate in the creation of the work of art—that will be our aim.

The concluding chapter, "What Next in Parapsychology?", is by Dr. Rhine. He points out that "psi" factors are becoming of increasing interest to physicians and to research men in the medical field. Something of this sort happened years ago in the field of psychiatry, so that we now encounter in psychiatric journals articles devoted to the "paranormal" factors involved in therapy—as either aids or hindrances. The following paragraph by Dr. Rhine deservedly captures the reader's attention:

There is a growing interest today in the relation of psi to some of the problem sections of the medical field. Here and there some recognition is now evidenced, even by medical men, of the possibility of psi as a factor in certain organic effects. This connection has been suggested most strongly by some of the simple, rustic practices of magic common over most of the world. It is familiarly represented, for example, by the oft-reported removal of warts without benefit of chemical or surgical methods. Interest is rather widespread, too, in and out of medicine, in the many practices of what is generally called spiritual healing. A little attention also has been given to some of the better-known instances of those puzzling organic effects known as stigmata, some of them with religious association and some without. Back of all these possibilities is the biological question as to whether there may not be still unidentified functions of the total organism and personality that affect disease resistance and in general direct the organization of the life processes. It now seems assured that greater attention in the years ahead will be given to the challenge of these unexplained borderline phenomena of medicine. The recognized need within the profession of medicine itself for a larger understanding of the nature of vitality and the whole self-regulatory system of the individual will favor the investigation.

It is interesting, finally, to note that Mrs. Garrett, the editor of *Beyond the Five Senses*, was at first herself a psychic, and later an amateur investigator in the field of psychical research. That she is now regarded as a colleague by distinguished scholars is one more indication of the wearing away of academic prejudice.

## *COMMENTARY*

### A PROBLEM FOR PLANNERS

ARTICLES like that presented in this week's *Frontiers* by Heinz Kraschutski are absolutely necessary for balance in respect to the power of environment over human beings. Judgments about the effect of environment can almost never be more than "statistical" conclusions, and for any sampling of a human population, statistical conclusions are bound to be wrong in regard to at least *some* individuals.

The reason why the differences among people are not more frequently pointed out is that they are extremely frustrating to planners and utopians. How can you plan the best possible environment if you are obliged to remember that, in at least a few cases, the best possible environment of one man will turn out to be the worst possible one for another?

The man who is convinced that he knows what is "good for humanity," and is determined to provide that "good," will tend to ignore the anomalies of "individual" behavior and seek a rule for the mass. He will speak largely of "the greatest good for the greatest number" and make belittling judgments of critics who insist that the deviating individual deserves as much consideration as the conforming multitude.

In this he is supported by the entire weight of habitual practice in the sciences. We *must*, he will argue, apply the genius of our age and civilization, the Scientific Method, to human problems. With a fine humanitarian fervor, he will point to the incredible achievements of science in technology, deploring the "obscurantist" attitude of those who fail to respond with enthusiasm to his claim that all these resources can and should be turned to the service of *human* values.

It is not easy for the defender of the individual to reply to these criticisms. Even if it is possible to establish the fact of the differences among human beings, and their widely varying responses to a common environment, there remains the question: "Well, what are you going to *do*? If you don't want us to work toward an environment based upon a statistical analysis of human needs, what *shall* we work for? An environment for the 'exceptions'?"

An abstract answer, of course, is not difficult. You can say that what is wanted is an environment which accommodates itself to all possible differences, but what sort of an environment is that?

The fact of the matter is that you cannot define a psychological environment in material terms. It is even hazardous to define a psychological environment in political terms. Only psychological terms of definition can possibly approach the elements of an ideal environment for human beings.

But supposing you could arrive at a workable definition of a psychological environment for man, how would you go about producing it?

A psychological environment is made up of human attitudes. What do we know about the production of attitudes? Well, on the one hand, there are the educators, the moralists, and the religious and philosophical teachers, and on the other are the indoctrinators of one sort or another—inquisitors, brain-washers, and the dispensers of chemical and surgical modifiers of human feelings.

Whom will you bring to your conference table—Socrates, or a man with a formula for Miltown?

One has a table of experimental results and a careful statement of what may be expected from an application of his methods. Within limits, he offers a sure thing. Of Socrates, you can expect only that he will ask a lot of puzzling, annoying, and possibly unanswerable questions. Least of all will he offer you a "sure thing."

Some will say that it would be nice to have Socrates around, if you could only "control" him. But you can't control Socrates. Our problem has really not changed much in the past two thousand years.



## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves CORRESPONDENCE

Editor, "Children . . . and Ourselves": A group of educators were discussing teachers' problems the other day. We agreed that the most difficult child in our classrooms is the one who, though he may have everything in the way of worldly goods, nevertheless *feels* neglected. This thought, of course is not new, but our avenue of approach to the idea was a little different. We began by discussing our school's Outdoor Education program. We spoke of the opportunity it gave to children to encounter constructive physical struggle of a sort. We decided (as you may have) that this is important. Every child should have experienced some emotional learning of the words "hardship" and "struggle."

Then someone pointed out that a child's struggle against *neglect* is not a natural struggle. As time goes on he becomes warped by his battle with shadows. Many a child has plenty to eat, plenty of clothes and toys, a new home in a new tract, a new car in which to ride. But inter-family communication in so many homes is almost totally lacking.

The child comes home to a deserted house, he finds his meal in the refrigerator, amuses himself with TV, and goes to bed without having exchanged half a dozen words with his parents. Table conversation is lacking. Family trips to interesting places are lacking. Children grow up without having had the experiences—and their associated vocabulary—which could enable them to express any vital ideas of their own. But worse than this is the subtle feeling within the child himself that *something* is amiss. He cannot understand what is the matter because he has no way of evaluating his own outward environment and inner condition in the light of others' experiences. His whole nature senses a lack. He gropes for some way to satisfy his need for genuine companionship, especially the companionship of adults. At school he vents his frustration in ways destructive to classroom procedures.

The school, then, tries to give some few, weak substitutes for this lack of companionship—study trips, teacher-interest in pupils, free association and companionship within the classroom. But none of these really fulfills the need of the child for a parent's constant, conscious, direct awareness of him as a person, and the resulting genuine companionship.

I personally feel that one service we could do for such children would be to help them frankly face the situation as it is. We should help them to become aware that they can know themselves well enough to realize what their own particular reactions to their situations are. I believe that it is extremely important that we give children some help in "self-analysis" by simple, direct steps. This kind of education might save them from delinquency and maladjustments as they grow older. Do you agree?

A TEACHER (L. A. COUNTY)

It occurs to us that the need for "struggle" and the feeling of "neglect" can be related in an interesting way. Neglect, obviously, is much more a state of mind than a condition represented by the number of hours per day a parent spends with his child. And while a parent may be unable to be with the child during the daytime, he can still provide activities which allow the child to struggle and achieve. Even more important than personal attention, then, is attention to supplying the conditions which help the child to become self-reliant.

The child of working parents needs to find work of his own. If this is impossible to arrange, and if the location and nature of the home preclude the existence of enough serious and necessary chores which the child may perform regularly, enrollment in recreational programs seems to be the next best thing; here, especially if the child feels neglected, the parent needs to make such recreational programs appealing—providing a context for sharing whatever achievements are gained or whatever problems are encountered. The child needs a sense of direction, and a sense of direction, without the natural companionship of a parent, will probably come only when some sort of orderly program is followed. One of the greatest tragedies of our children's lives is that so few parents seem to be able to realize the extent to which such "programs" are a necessity.

Here, the psychological problem is somewhat related to that of the parent who is told that he does not give the child "enough love." This may be true enough, but love is not something that can

be planned or contrived, while neglect is something that one can do a great deal to correct, whether or not there is a strong emotional tie. And it is at precisely this point that one can feel tremendous appreciation for the efforts made by our present schools. Often the teacher is able to make the child feel much less neglected—an area in which the schools of an earlier day were probably quite inadequate. By and large, we don't have "homes" any more, but rather a series of arrangements among people living in the same houses. Planning supplants spontaneity, and this is unfortunate, but planning *for* the child, by both parents and teachers, can also mitigate neglect.

Our correspondent's suggestion that the child neglected at home needs instruction in "self-analysis" is an interesting one. It is true that no one is in a really bad situation when he can "frankly face it." If there is some other "self" within each human being than the purely personal self of emotional feelings and reactions, then this "other self" needs to be awakened. If it were possible for a child to suffer emotionally, yet remain detached enough to realize that he is not *simply* his feelings, but also a form of consciousness which can stand aside from those feelings and evaluate them, he would be taking a first step on the road of philosophy. But this sort of instruction is extremely difficult and, if carried on according to some system or other, apt to be dangerous. As Erich Fromm recently pointed out in his *Saturday Review* article on "The Limitations of Psychoanalysis," the Age of Psychology has not been a wholly constructive influence. There are times when psychological stimulus to cause either adults or children to "face" a situation, may only increase the suffering of those involved—by forcing some sort of realization they are simply not ready for. However, to the degree that every good teacher and every worthy parent is justified in attempts to awaken a *sense* of psychology in the young, a few things can be suggested: First, whatever the situation in which the child finds himself, how little of the sort of love he needs he may actually have, or how much he may be

neglected, there are always points of contact in his life to which he has a positive rather than a negative reaction. Encouragement can be given to make the most of those points of contact, although, in order to do this fully, it is necessary to "frankly face" the facts that other areas of daily life are disappointing. Second, the child realize that it is always possible for him to make some progress toward a more fulfilling life, and he needs to be shown that "self-analysis" is often necessary in order to release the energies which allow growth to proceed. Third, the adult, whether parent or teacher, needs to do some frank self-analyzing of his own in the presence of the child. He needs to admit that he is not entirely the sort of person he wishes to be, nor does he have many of the things he would like to have; and then, in the face of such admission, he needs also to show that he is in no sense dismayed—that every failure can lead toward success, that every inadequacy is "material" to be worked on, instead of the cause for petulance or despair.

## *FRONTIERS* **PRISON LIFE**

YOUR article, "The Object All Sublime," concerned with Justice, has given me much satisfaction. I have had to deal very much in my life with what is called "Justice," having been in jail for over nine years (as a political prisoner in Spain, under Franco) and afterwards having been a prison officer for eight years.

It is my deep conviction, based, as you see, on long and two-sided experience, that man is unable to judge. He can apply legal sanctions to men who happen to fall into his hands, but nothing more.

My activity while I was a jailer was to try to help the inmates of my prison, whether they were there for murder, theft, sexual offenses, or—as sometimes happened—for nothing at all. (There were other cases in which, in my opinion, men had been sentenced to long terms or even to life-imprisonment on absolutely insufficient evidence, and were innocent in my judgment.) But the men knew what I thought about them and about the system. One man, serving life sentence for murder, admittedly guilty, once said to me: "I thank you so much for all you are doing for me!" I answered: "But what am I doing for you? Practically, I cannot do anything." He replied: "You are doing for me just what I need most. You come to my cell and sit with me here for half an hour and I have the wonderful feeling: Here is a man who does not despise me—as all others do!"

You say that prison does not rehabilitate anybody. That is my firm conviction. How could it? The efforts of the prison staff are almost entirely concentrated on repression and security. Very little attempt, if any, is made to talk with the men about their inner problems. There are hard-headed criminals amongst them who exercise a continuously bad influence, while good influence can come only from such prisoners who are able and willing to provide it, considering the absolute lack of interest on the part of the prison staff for educational matters. (I do not speak of "trade school" activities.)

But is it true that the bad influence of prison life is always effective? Is there danger that we overestimate it?

In Munich recently a boy, "Charles," was arrested for murder. The police pressed him so much that he finally admitted that he had killed a young boy with his pistol. A full confession was written down. Some weeks later the doctors found out that the victim had not been shot with a pistol, but with a rifle, and another boy confessed to the crime.

Charles was released as innocent. He was of good family and his parents and all the people of his neighborhood acclaimed him as a martyr, while the press taunted the police for their ruthless methods. But a few weeks later Charles was again arrested. He had joined a gang of young evil-doers and had committed several acts of burglary with them. This time there was no doubt.

Now arguments began in the press. Why had Charles turned to crime? He was not in need of money, his family being well-to-do. His life had been an honest one until he was wrongly arrested for murder. The newspapers discussed the case. Was the explanation that Charles had been in jail in a cell with a murderer and a burglar? Had these two spoiled him? If so, this would be a most serious accusation of the penal system. It would mean; send a decent boy in, and a criminal will come out, only a few weeks later.

Much as I dislike the penal system, such a conclusion would over-simplify things. This idea is as erroneous as the popular opinion that a man's bad qualities correspond to the length of the term he serves in prison. On this basis murders would be the very worst of all. In my experience this is utterly unrealistic.

Most of the murderers I have known had no previous convictions. They had done one bad thing, for which the law prescribes a heavy sentence, but many of them were of better character than those guilty of lesser offenses. Murderers have gone through such stormy emotions—the act of killing itself, the desperate flight, the detention, the cross-examination, the confession at last, the tears of the mother or wife, the public trial finally—all this can change the character of a man down to its very roots. Actually, the influence of murderers on others in jail is often the very best.

There is another aspect of prison life which is often overlooked. A boy sentenced to eleven years of hard labor once said to me: "Just now you were

speaking about education. May I remind you that this thing does not exist. There is only self-education. You can, of course, help me in my self-education, and I am obliged for it. But nobody can educate me if I don't want to be educated."

Since that conversation, I have never used the term "education"!

In spite of all the evils of prison life, it does offer the opportunity for self-education, at least to inmates who have the will for it. For self-education, solitary confinement is the best. The men should have the opportunity to talk with each other during the time they are working, but during the evening and the long nights they should perhaps be alone. Many of them, the best, prefer that.

Once two young men, rather exceptional, shared a cell with a third of rather ordinary qualities. The two asked me to find for them a third companion equal to their level. I asked a young man who had to serve a fifteen-year sentence whom I knew well. I knew that he used to read according to plan, now all books of Romain Rolland which he could obtain, then all of Thomas Mann, etc. He had permission to work with lenses and had constructed for his own use a microscope, making the frame of cardboard. But he only said: "Listen! I have been in a single cell for over four years. You will not get me out! While I am alone with myself, I think I have pretty good company. I am not interested in the good and bad qualities of other people. I have enough to do with my own."

This man has now served about eight years. Whether he will have to serve the whole fifteen years, or gains a pardon, he will in any case know himself much better than most of us "law-abiding" folks, who are daily, hourly, surrounded by garrulous, often fatuous, people who keep us from really thinking, who keep us away from ourselves!

In our noisy and nervous time, prison is one of the few places where people at least *can* be alone and learn from what they hear of the "inner voice." If "rehabilitation" is possible, it can take place under these conditions.

While few of the inmates of prisons recognize this fact and make use of it, some do find the way. And once they get out, they say, as I have sometimes heard—and as I have said myself—"The prison time?

Well, it was a bad time, of course, and yet, I am in a way glad that I had it in my life. . . ."

What about those who are not in solitary confinement? I knew another young prisoner who complained of his two companions. They talked all day long about the criminal acts they had committed and those they were going to commit. "At the beginning," he said, "I liked it and was like them. But now I am resolved never to come back to such a place. I hate it."

I offered to take him out of that cell. But he protested: "Oh no! The struggle against the two of them every day and night—that is just what I most need now. It makes me stronger in my resolution not to become what they are."

That was eight years ago, and this boy has not come back to prison. He is leading a decent life. The other two, oddly enough, also!

Prison life is not easy. A man with a strong character will be strengthened by the battle against the low instincts of many of his companions, against the depressive atmosphere of the place itself. I know some to whom I bow in respect for what they have achieved in their strenuous, tireless self-education. But a man with a weak character—and these are in the majority—will be weakened more and more and may slide down to utter depravity.

If the prison authorities would not think so much of simple revenge—and if they were not told to do so!—but would devote themselves to helping those who are under their care, things would be different. Actually, the damage done to the many now exceeds by far the good given to the few.

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