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THE GREAT INTERRUPTION

WITH only a few exceptions, ancient philosophers were content to assume a direct relationship between the reasonable and the actual. In their wonderings and speculations about the nature of the universe, they saw nothing wrong in taking as their criterion a human sense of order or proportion. If a proposition would satisfy the rational sense of a man, it would, they seem to have argued, come close to approximating the actual structure of things. It never occurred to them to suppose that the structure of things could be other than rational in character.

Ancient philosophy, therefore, achieved a wholeness which has been virtually impossible for modern thinkers. Hegel was probably the last of the great European philosophers who felt able to offer a purely rational cosmology and to draw from it conclusions with direct implications for human behavior. Alfred North Whitehead was also a philosopher in the idealist tradition, but he did not venture an interpretation of history and so stayed out of trouble. Philosophers who deal with history must also deal with morals, and it is at this point that philosophic theory moving from the assumptions of Reason meets the impassable barrier established by modern science.

Here, essentially, is the great difference between ancient and modern thought. A whole continent of brute material reality prevents the modern philosopher from arguing from metaphysical first principles to final conclusions about the nature of things. He has somehow to work into his system the findings of physics, chemistry, and biology, and since the facts of these fields of investigation are the fruit of empirical discovery, without reference to any kind of general philosophy of nature, he must either abandon his Idealism altogether, becoming a "scientific philosopher," or try to contain the sciences at a level of thought so broad or abstract that what he has to say is no longer philosophy at all. It is no longer philosophy for the reason that it leaves untouched the essential human problems.

The crucial difference between ancient and modern thought becomes clearly evident from a reading of one of the ancient philosophers. For illustration, there is the following written by Plotinus, taken from the *Third Ennead*, in the section on Providence. (Stephen MacKenna translation, published by Pantheon):

> . . . if the evil in men is involuntary, if their own will has not made them what they are, how can we either blame wrong-doers or even reproach their victims with suffering through their own fault?
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> If there is a Necessity, bringing about human wickedness either by force of the celestial movement or by a rigorous sequence set up by the First Cause, is not the evil a thing rooted in Nature? And if thus the Reason-Principle of the universe is the creator of evil, surely all is injustice?
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> No: men are no doubt involuntary sinners in the sense that they do not actually desire to sin; but this does not alter the fact that wrong-doers, of their own choice, are, themselves the agents; it is because they themselves act that the sin is their own; if they were not agents they could not sin.
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> The Necessity (held to underlie human wickedness) is not an outer force (actually compelling the individual), but exists only in the sense of a universal relationship.

Manifestly, Plotinus is not in the least inhibited by considerations outside the mandate of Reason. The idea that any kind of practical observation of the ways of nature—such as is called "scientific" in our time—might diminish the force of his argument is nowhere present in his thought, not even in the background. Reason is the sole and highest court of appeal. A little later he follows another line of development:

> Are we, then, to conclude that particular things are determined by necessities rooted in Nature and by the sequence of causes, and that everything is as good as anything can be?
>
> No: the Reason-Principle is the sovereign, making all: it wills things as they are and, in its reasonable act, it produces even what we know as evil: it cannot desire all to be good: an artist would not make an animal all eyes, and in the same way, the Reason-Principle would not make all divine; it makes

> Gods but also celestial spirits, the intermediate order, then men, then the animals; all is graded succession, and this in no spirit of grudging but in the expression of a Reason teeming with intellectual variety.
>
> We are like people ignorant of painting who complain that the colours are not beautiful everywhere in the picture, but the Artist has laid on the appropriate tint to every spot. Or we are censuring a drama because the persons are not all heroes but include a servant and a rustic and some scurrilous clown; yet take away the low characters and the power of the drama is gone; these are part and parcel of it.

Here, the appeal is to the natural endowments of the human mind, to the sense of fitness and the expectation of and demand for justice. As Plotinus looks at things, these are the requirements of philosophy. Since the real is measured by the mind and the feelings, what other requirements could there be?

He continues with the argument:

> Suppose this Universe to be the direct creation of the Reason-Principle applying itself, quite unchanged, to Matter, retaining, that is, the differentiation of parts which it derives from its Prior, the Intellectual Principle—then, this its product, so produced, must be of supreme and unparalleled excellence. The Reason-Principle cannot be a thing of entire identity or even of closely compact diversity, and the modes in which it is here manifested is no matter of censure since its function is to be all things, each single thing in some distinctive way.
>
> But (it will be asked) has it not, besides itself entering Matter, brought other beings down? Has it not for example brought souls into Matter and, in adapting them to its creation, twisted them against their own nature and been the ruin of many of them? And can this be right?
>
> The answer is that the souls are, in a fair sense, members of this Reason-Principle and that it has not adapted them to the creation by perverting them, but has set them in the place here to which their quality entitles them.

The modern reader, while recognizing in Plotinus the presence of a guiding principle of thought, is likely to be wholly bewildered by what he says. Where, the reader will ask, does all this stuff come from? By what warrant does it enter the discussion? It comes, of course, largely from Plato, but ultimately it comes from the Reason-Principle itself. It arises from the initial content of philosophic consciousness, placed in combination with sense experience and the moral issues which result from the combination. The satisfaction of the moral equation is primary with Plotinus; in this, at least, we can understand him. Concerning the distribution of men in various circumstances, he says:

> And we must not despise the familiar observation that there is something more to be considered than the present. There are the periods of the past and, again, those in the future; and these have everything to do with the fixing of place.
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> Thus a man, once a ruler, will be made a slave because he abused his power and because the fall is to his future good. Those that have misused money will be made poor—and to the good poverty is no hindrance. Those that have killed, are killed in turn, unjustly as regards the murderer but justly as regards the victim, and those that are to suffer are thrown into the path of those that administer the merited treatment.
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> It is not accident that makes a man a slave, no one is a prisoner by chance; every bodily outrage has its due cause. The man once did what he now suffers. A man that murders his mother will become a woman and be murdered by his son; a man that wrongs a woman will become a woman, to be wronged.
>
> Hence arises that awesome word Adrasteia (the Inevitable Retribution); for in very truth this ordinance is an Adrasteia, Justice itself and a wonderful wisdom.

Now comes a general declaration:

> We cannot but recognize from what we observe in this universe that some such principle of order prevails throughout the entire of existence—the minutest of things a tributary to the vast total; the marvellous art shown not merely in the mightiest works and sublimest members of the All, but even amid such littleness as one would think Providence must disdain; the varied workmanship of wonder in any and every animal form; the world of vegetation, too; the grace of fruits and even of leaves, the lavishness, the delicacy, the diversity of exquisite bloom: and all this not issuing once, and then to die out, but made ever and ever anew as the Transcendent Beings move variously over this earth.

Here, in ample measure, is the antique conception of the world, which survived the Middle Ages, was

reborn in the Renaissance, and is, with some modifications, the basis of the Elizabethan world view found in the plays of Shakespeare. It is a view susceptible of clear alignment with Buddhist conceptions of the Great Law, as beautifully expressed in Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, and still earlier in Vedic and Upanishadic teachings.

Stripped to primary ideas, the Neoplatonic philosophy consists of the proposition that the universe is founded on thought, is made of thought, and that matter is no more than the modes of life according to the pattern established by the *Nous*, or, as Stephen MacKenna translates, the Reason-Principle. It is on this ground that philosophy, supported by the immediacy of mystical perception, is held entitled to make declarations concerning the nature of things. Thought, in short, is consubstantial with the shaping forces of nature and capable, therefore, of penetrating the mysteries of existence.

Plotinus, let it be noted, was no sentimentalist, nor a high-minded theorist without awareness of practical problems. An aside concerning what we might today call the subject of "juvenile delinquency" reveals his urbane intelligence:

> . . . humanity, in reality, is poised midway between gods and beasts, and inclines now to the one order, now to the other; some men grow like to the divine, others to the brute, the greater number stand neutral. But those that are corrupted to the point of approximating to irrational animals and wild beasts pull the mid-folk about and inflict wrong upon them; the victims are no doubt better than the wrongdoers, but are at the mercy of their inferiors in the field in which they themselves are inferior, where, that is, they cannot be classed among the good since they have not trained themselves in self-defence.
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> A gang of lads, morally neglected, and in that respect inferior to the intermediate class, but in good physical training, attack and throw another set, trained neither physically nor morally, and make off with their food and their dainty clothes. What more is called for than a laugh?
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> And surely the lawgiver would be right in allowing the second group to suffer this treatment, the penalty of their sloth and self-indulgence: the gymnasium lies there before them, and they, in laziness and luxury and listlessness, have allowed themselves to fall like fat-loaded sheep, a prey to the wolves.
>
> But the evil-doers also have their punishment: first they pay in that very wolfishness, in the disaster to their human quality: and next there is laid up for them the due of their kind; living ill here, they will not get off by death; on every precedent through all the line there waits its sequent, reasonable and natural—worse to the bad, better to the good.

The moral law, as much as the primacy of thought, is at the root of Plotinus' thinking. It is inconceivable to him that evil should go unpunished, that good should remain unrewarded. Ethical balance in human experience, late or soon, is of the very fabric of the universe, for Plotinus. It has the same invariable, integrating role which gravitation and the laws of motion perform for the generations of men who came centuries later.

Only with Emerson and his fellow Transcendentalists does this principle of moral justice as a natural rule, a veritable law of nature, enjoy a brief interlude of acceptance in modern times. The Neoplatonic philosophy lives again in Emerson with vigor and substance, but his is a lonely voice by comparison with the rushing tide of scientific progress and the triumphant assertion of newly discovered scientific laws which filled the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Darwin, and soon after, Freud, set the tone of the science of man, in the twentieth century. Physics and chemistry were already established authorities, supplying the model of their mechanistic assumptions to the life sciences, the social sciences, and the several branches of psychology. There was no room for the philosophic idealism of the ancients in an age which took its conceptions of reality from the idea of a "world machine," and which, at the outset, saw in biological impulses the sole provocatives to human behavior.

So, there came a great interruption to the process of philosophizing. No one will take moral issues seriously unless there is a place in nature for moral reality. The philosophers lost their standing and the search for truth was taken over by the politicians and social revolutionaries. The revolutions of the eighteenth century may have declared that Nature gave the mandate for revolt—that Nature and Nature's laws were the source of inspiration for the new order of things—but not the revolutions of the twentieth century. The political State—in our contemporary

vocabulary, the totalitarian State—became the source of morality for our time. Morality, today, in Communist countries, is what serves the interest of the Communist State and the Party apparatus. Unfortunately, the idea that the State is the source of morality is an infectious idea, so that even countries enjoying an eighteenth-century tradition in political philosophy have been perverted into practices representing this belief. The drafting of religion to the service of the State—as an instrument of "morale"—is a current phenomenon in the United States. Religion which is no longer an end in itself, but a means to political ends, is religion which admits that the political good is more important than the religious good. Much of contemporary religion is of this sort.

But we are now experiencing, on the other hand, the exhaustion of science as a resource of assumptions for philosophy. In recent years there has been a noticeable return to more primitive sources of philosophic ideas. The sweep of Oriental philosophy with its roots in pantheistic conviction is exercising a pervasive and leavening influence on Western thought. This change, accomplished in mechanical terms by a war which brought the East and the West closer together, and which gave great prominence to Gandhi, an expositor of vital elements in ancient Eastern philosophy, came at a period of barrenness in Western philosophy, which had reached a moral dead end in the sterility of Positivism. A third liberating influence may be observed in the pioneering work of the psychotherapists—work which, as a historian of the psychoanalytical movement recently observed, has gone from the initial extreme of Freudian materialism to a new kind of "spiritual" thinking which happens to be extraordinarily hospitable to the assumptions of ancient philosophy.

In short, we have worn out the great interruption of philosophical—or metaphysical—thinking. The drama of physical discovery and the prestige brought to science by the wonders of technology and gadgetry no longer impress us to the point of expecting to find our salvation by further applications of the scientific method. The war between science and theology is over—theology has lost; but at the same time we are beginning to recognize that science defeated only the pseudo-science in theology, and did not even touch the authentic metaphysical content in theology. At the same time, one branch of science—psychical research—continues to throw up evidence (shadowy evidence, but nonetheless evidence) of a metaphysical structure behind the outward forms and motions of material things.

These several transitions, which are proceeding with a rapidity amazing in comparison to past revolutions in the climate of opinion, are all opening the way to a return to the assumptions of ancient philosophy—to, that is, the idea that the foundations of reality are laid in *mind*, that the universe has an essentially intellectual structure, and that the discoveries of science will have to be assimilated to this view.

A beginning has already been made in this direction by mathematical philosophers—by men like Sir James Jeans, by Arthur Eddington, and Erwin Schroedinger. These are the Neo-Pythagoreans, the men who believe, with Plato, that the world is formed according to number. But what is number but the abstract relationship of forms which have their origin in *idea*. To turn this mathematical philosophy of formation into a moral philosophy of consciousness, only the concept of moral units is needed—souls, egos, monads—the term used is not important.

It is not too much to suggest that the great interruption may soon be over; that the resumption of philosophic inquiry may once more begin, taking for its field the wider universe left open by the cycle of scientific discovery.

REVIEW
DIMENSIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

THE word "transcendentalist" carries entirely different connotations for men of differing intellectual backgrounds—and for many, unfortunately, it conveys no meaning at all. However, it seems clear that the greatest need of the modern world is a deepening understanding of the word "transcendental," and an increase in number and influence of those determined to look beyond the "practical" to matters of principle.

Science, now, has taken us full circle, from increasingly specific definitions of what is really "real"—external nature, and the laws of physics—to the discovery that there is nothing *solid*, in the older meaning of that term. Every material form is made up of innumerable tiny particles in constant motion, and while these may be regarded as separate, they are yet all held "in orbit" by attraction to one another. To understand "matter" one must, in other words, literally get beyond it.

The scientist must become a philosopher, and the social scientist a psychologist. In the field of politics and foreign relations, the need is clearly for a "unified field theory" which transcends the immediate self-interest of any particular group or nation.

On the national front, the Supreme Court of the United States is now reaffirming the necessity for just such a transcendental view, in denying the right of a state to subvert the principles set forth in the Constitution, and when it declares that a man of undoubted Communist sympathies nonetheless is a man, and entitled to equal respect before the law.

A thoughtful essay by Pearl Buck on the need for a new transcendentalism, "The Artist in a World of Science," appears in the *Saturday Review* for Sept. 20. The artist, Mrs. Buck says, must abstract himself from local considerations:

> The artist must not allow himself to be influenced by his private personality and inheritance, nor must he be influenced by common moods, inevitable in such times as these. Because others are frightened, he must not permit himself the luxury of fear, or depression, or despair. He must stand alone as artists have always stood alone, he must search as artists have always searched, for the true philosophy of the unified field, the elements of life and growth wherein are contained unquenchable hope. He must continually affirm his faith in the unquenchable hope, the premise of faith in humanity itself. Let us remember that the human race has always met new horizons with preliminary fear. It is the province of the artist to step out of fear so that others may follow him into the widening universe.

Mrs. Buck sees a great deal of art in science, and a great deal of the true scientific spirit in those arts which are related to the humanities. Mrs. Buck seems also to be a Platonist, for, like Plato, she insists "upon mind, or philosophy, as the only reality." She finds a fellow philosopher in the physicist, Arthur Compton, who, in the following remarks, which Mrs. Buck recorded, gave evidence of perceiving the need of "a unified field theory" in political and social relationships:

> The forces of nuclear energy must develop in a healthy fashion for the benefit of mankind and not for its destruction. The nations must agree upon a common objective. It is no longer safe for any one nation to put its own interest above those of any other. Martin Luther King of Montgomery, Alabama, in speaking of his own people, quoted the words of Nasser of Egypt. "We are ready to sacrifice our economic future but we insist upon being recognized as human beings." Our objective, therefore, can only be the development of all men and women. Let us determine that we will do all in our power to help every human being grow to his or her full stature, that we will help every other nation to do the same, that we will join with every other nation in adhering to this policy, allowing at the same time full freedom to other nations to follow their own *methods,* however different from our own. The test of which is best is simply the welfare of the people.

It is perhaps easier for Mrs. Buck than for many writers to dissociate herself from a national or even a hemispheric approach. Her familiarity with the Orient and its differing outlooks and persuasions helped make her a true cosmopolitan. She says:

We of the West are accustomed to the scientific approach and to the concept of truth based upon the experience of material fact rather than upon philosophy. Exactly the reverse is true in Asia. There facts have little or nothing to do with truth. For the Asian, truth is contained in philosophy and ethic.

Yet the peoples of Asia have something valid and profound to contribute to the unified field of human relations. There *is* truth in philosophy and in ethic, profound spiritual truth, especially when, as they have in Asia, they evolve out of long experience in the subtleties of human psychology and relationships.

The November *Progressive* makes available a slightly condensed version of the United States Supreme Court's historic decision to fight the evasion by the State of Arkansas of the Court's earlier decision respecting segregation. All eight Associate Justices concurred with Chief Justice Warren's opinion—presented under the title, "Equal Justice Under Law." Justice Warren concludes:

Chief Justice Marshall spoke for a unanimous court in saying that: "If the legislatures of the several states may, at will, annul the judgments of the court of the United States, and destroy the rights acquired under those judgments, the Constitution itself becomes a solemn mockery."

It is, of course, quite true that the responsibility for public education is primarily the concern of the states, but it is equally true that such responsibilities, like all other state activity, must be exercised consistently with federal Constitutional requirements as they apply to state action. The Constitution created a government dedicated to equal justice under law. The Fourteenth Amendment embodied and emphasized that ideal.

State support of segregated schools through any arrangement, funds, or property cannot be squared with the Amendment's command that no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. The right of a student not to be segregated on racial grounds in schools so maintained is indeed so fundamental and pervasive that it is embraced in the concept of due process of law.

The basic decision in *Brown* was unanimously reached by this Court only after the case had been briefed and twice argued and the issues had been given the most serious consideration.

Since the first *Brown* opinion three new justices have come to the court. They are at one with the justices still on the court who participated in that basic decision as to its correctness and that decision is now unanimous1y reaffirmed.

The principles announced in that decision and the obedience of the states to them, according to the command of the Constitution, are indispensable for the protection of the freedoms guaranteed by our fundamental charter for all of us.

Our Constitutional ideal of equal justice under law is thus made a living truth.

The concepts underlying this declaration of faith by all the members of the Supreme Court are philosophical principles. They transcend any concern with the result of their decision in terms of unpopularity and attack by partisan "realists." This is not a new language, but it seems to us that Mrs. Buck and Arthur Compton on the one hand, and the nine Justices of the Supreme Court on the other are demonstrating the power and the promise of the Platonic world view.

COMMENTARY
TWO LOGICS

FEELING that the facts supplied in our Frontiers article, reviewing Jean-Paul Sartre's discussion of *The Question*, by Henri Alleg, were not sufficient for the American reader, we secured a copy of Braziller's edition of the book and read it. It is a luminous work reflecting the incredible endurance of a modest and unassuming man.

Alleg is a Frenchman. He was from 1950 to 1955 editor of the *Alger Républicain*, the only paper, according to George Braziller's preface, "which printed all aspects of Algerian democratic and national opinion." The paper was banned in September, 1955, and a year later Alleg had to hide to escape internment. He was found by French paratroops in June, 1957. For a month he was held at El-Biar, in the suburbs of Algiers. *The Question* is the story of what happened to him during that month. The French paratroops tried to make him tell them who had given him a haven while he was in hiding. The tortures were various, producing exquisite pain. He did not talk. They threatened to torture his wife, and one night he heard the screams of a woman who he thought (mistakenly) might be his wife. They tried the "truth serum" on him, but he resisted the drug and, although answering questions volubly, told his captors nothing of what they wanted to know.

After the month of torture—some of the sessions lasting twelve hours—he wrote this book, a report of what was done to him, and of what was being done to others, mostly Algerians. His manuscript was secretly brought to France and published. The French edition sold 150,000 copies in the first two weeks. Then it was banned and unsold copies were confiscated—the first book-banning in France since the eighteenth century. But the banning was futile. *The Question* has been published in Switzerland and is being smuggled into France. It is also being published in translation all over the world.

At the end of the book, Alleg writes:

> All this I have had to say for those Frenchmen who will read me. I want them to know that the Algerians do not confuse their torturers with the great people of France, from whom they have learnt so much and whose friendship is so dear to them.
>
> But they must know what is done IN THEIR NAME.

Alleg is still in his Algerian prison, held as a member of the Communist Party charged with endangering the safety of the State.

Sartre's article about this book, which was first printed in *l'Express*, and later in the American papers named in Frontiers, is substantially the Introduction he wrote for *The Question* which appears in the Braziller edition ($2.95).

This book has the same importance that Macdonald's "The Responsibility of Peoples" has. It is a This book has the same importance that Macdonald's "The Responsibility of Peoples" has. It is a book about what man has done, is doing, and will do to man. Its facts ought not to be evaded. These facts are a part of war, the war in Algeria today, and almost certainly *any* war. They are what you invite when you agree to go to war.

Such methods, of course, are not resorted to unless they become "necessary." How do they become "necessary"? Sartre explains:

> Our Army is scattered all over Algeria. We have the men, the money, the arms. The rebels have nothing but the confidence and support of a large part of the population. It is we, in spite of ourselves, who have imposed this type of war—terrorism in the towns and ambushes in the country. With the disequilibrium in the forces, the F.L.N. has no other means of action. The ratio between our forces and theirs gives them no option but to attack us by surprise. Invisible, ungraspable, unexpected, they must strike and disappear, or be exterminated. The elusiveness of the enemy is the reason for our disquiet. A bomb is thrown in the street, a soldier wounded by a random shot. People rush up and then disperse. Later, Moslems nearby claim they saw nothing. All this fits into the pattern of a popular war of the poor against the rich, with the rebel units depending on local support. That is why the regular Army and civilian powers have come to regard the destitute swarm of people as a constant and

> numberless enemy. The occupying troops are baffled by the silence they themselves have created; the rich feel hunted down by the uncommunicative poor. The "forces of order," hindered by their own might, have no defence against guerillas except punitive expeditions and reprisals, no defence against terrorism but terror. Everybody, everywhere, is hiding something. They must be *made to talk.*

Hence the torture. You can easily follow the reasoning. There is nothing else to do, if the Algerian revolt is to be put down. If you *have* to win a war, there will come a day when you must torture.

That is one kind of logic. There is also the logic of the tortured, repeated by Alleg:

> Every morning and evening . . . I would pass Arab prisoners in the corridor. . . . I was always naked to the waist, still marked by the blows I had received, my chest and hands covered with bandages. They understood that, like themselves, I had been tortured, and they greeted me in passing, "Have courage, brother!"
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> In their eyes I read a solidarity, a friendship, and such complete trust that I felt proud, particularly as a European, to be among them.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

RELIGION AND NATURE

THE most beneficent effects of any religious practice or belief, as we see it, are to be described by Schweitzer's phrase "reverence for life." For a religionist, in the highest and most inspiring sense of the word, is a mystic; his mysticism is his means of penetrating, with sympathy, the nature of all life and all beings around him. It can be expected, then, that devotees of "natural religion" and men whose instinctive reverence for life constitutes a religion of nature should be seen to have close rapport with each other, throughout the history of modern thought. Today, for instance, we find that the Universalist-Unitarians have much to say about the instruction to be gained from knowledge of the natural world, whenever discussing "religious education." Some representative paragraphs from a Council of Liberal Churches' pamphlet, "It Matters What We Believe," will illustrate this. Sophia Fahs turns to the book of nature rather than to the book of Job, or either Testament, to reach a sense of sacredness in the child. She writes:

> One of the most important of man's beliefs is what he thinks about himself. "What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather, indicates his fate." This is one of Henry Thoreau's great insights, now confirmed by modern psychology. Few, however, think of belief in oneself as a religious belief. Yet it is like the main stem out of which the body of one's faith must grow. And what a person believes about himself depends on what he believes about his mother and his father, his brothers and his sisters. And what he believes about these persons in his intimate family influences what he believes about his neighbors and others in his larger world. And all these beliefs, one by one, grow up together with his beliefs about all sorts of things: his beliefs about his food, clothes, body, work and play; his beliefs about birds, fishes, animals, bugs and even dirt; his beliefs about the earth, rain, winds, the dark and the stars. All these in time become linked with what he believes about Negroes and whites, about Communists and Democrats, about rich and poor, about the strong and the weak, about what is good and what is bad. All these and unnumbered other beliefs go into the caldron of experience, together with ideas of God, prayer, the Bible, Jesus, Moses and eternity. It is quite impossible to separate these beliefs into two kinds, secular and religious. To the extent that any one of these beliefs affects the quality of the "gestalt" or total configuration of belief, it is religious.
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> What then is it that is most significant about the total pattern of one's religion? Surely it is not its conformity to Christianity or Judaism, its likeness to Buddhism or Mohammedanism. Its significance must be found at a deeper level where universal truth and universal human need are found.
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> When then we think of the "beliefs" we yearn for children to have, let us not first ask, "How can I tell my child about God?" Let us consider rather the many smaller experiences through which the child is slowly gathering his childlike philosophy of living. What a child believes really matters, but the things that matter most do not lie on the surface, in words said or in prayers repeated. They are found in the "inner world of childhood" where only the sensitive adult may enter.

Mrs. Fahs' books and pamphlets dealing with the introduction of children to natural religion are extraordinarily well-conceived, and carry the Emersonian sentiment reflected by many other liberal church representatives for a full century. As Universalist-Unitarian Bisbee remarked in the eighteen hundreds, "Nature has cast her children in different molds. Natural religion is the all-embracing religion. It recognizes peculiarities and stages of growth, thereby becoming tolerant and helpful to all. It recognizes the religion of the Atheist and the Infidel, as well as of the Brahman and the Moslem; it opens the door for infinite expansion; it takes the hand of the hardened ruffian; it says the same God has made us all, and has made us to differ in religion as in all other things. There must be sects in Natural Religion, as there are grades in schools, and as there are congenial circles in society. But there can be no bigotry; there can be no persecution. An honest doubter is as acceptable to God as an honest believer; the merit is in the honesty, not in the doubt nor belief."

But this approach to religion is not dissimilar to that of the naturalists. We have before us an immensely interesting volume, *Exploring Nature With Your Child,* by Dorothy Edwards Shuttlesworth (Greystone Press), indicating many ways in which the study of natural phenomena may arouse constructive wondering and a little awe. This book opens, for example, with these words:

> Children are natural explorers. They have the true explorer's interest in their immediate surroundings as well as in faraway places, and they are eager to know why things are as they are. If you are a wise parent, you will look upon these qualities in your child as a sacred fire—always to be fed, allowed to die out never. An inquiring mind and zest for living are essential for a rich, interesting, and worthwhile life. Childhood is the time to nourish and strengthen these fine qualities.

Even in dealing with the more technical aspects of physical science with atoms and suns rather than with little creatures—the same expanding awareness is anticipated for both the child, as pupil, and the parent as teacher. For example:

> Children take a lively interest in the information that the sun's energy is atomic, and that this giant heavenly body was producing atomic energy before the earth began. Long ago people believed that the sun was merely a great burning mass; but if this had been true, it would have burned itself out in less than two thousand years. When scientists realized that this idea must be wrong, they were puzzled about the secret of the sun's energy—until they discovered, quite recently, that an atom could be split, releasing an enormous amount of energy. This solved the puzzle of the sun's energy!
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> The term "atom" (taken from a Greek word meaning "indivisible") had been chosen for what was believed to be the tiniest possible unit of matter. We now know that these units are made of still smaller particles that are in motion—and are constantly changing into new forms. The change may be sudden and violent, as in an atomic bomb, or slow and gradual.
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> In the case of the sun, hydrogen atoms are changing into helium atoms. To be specific, four hydrogen atoms are changed into one helium atom, and one per cent of their weight is converted into atomic energy. This means that the sun, with its countless active atoms, is constantly growing smaller, or losing weight; but it is so enormous that it can continue to shrink at its present rate for billions of years without affecting the earth!
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> The sun is four hundred times farther away from us than is the moon. Yet the sun, in comparison to the other stars is a *nearby* star!—that is why it appears large and red. This fact will give a youngster some notion of the incredibly vast distances between us and the other stars.
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> The average size of a star is about equal to the size of the sun. Many stars that we can see with unaided eye are much larger than the sun; on the other hand, countless stars that can be seen only through telescopes are smaller than the average size.

All in all, what seems most needed is perception that the "expanding universe" of physical discoveries is but one aspect of a larger and more important development—an unfoldment of our psychological and philosophical horizons. To help a child to see the widening horizons of what Julian Huxley has called "trans-humanism," we need to indicate that the doctrines of religion may ultimately be transcended by self-knowledge, that whatever truth articles of faith possess is validated only by its liberating effect upon the human mind. True religion, appreciation of the relationship between nature and man, and wisdom concerning one's own possibilities for "trans-human" development—these three can be seen to be interrelated and interdependent elements of experience.

FRONTIERS

Disease of an Epoch

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE wrote for the French weekly, *l'Express,* a review of *The Question,* by Henri Alleg, who has suffered torture in Algeria at the hands of the French Army. His review appeared in translation in the American magazine, *Forum,* and was reprinted in the *Unitarian Register* for October.

Sartre addresses himself to the French, but what he says needs to be heard by everyone. It may be only an accident of history that the French are the guilty ones, today. Sartre writes:

> During the war, . . . we looked at the German soldiers who walked about with an inoffensive air and said to ourselves from time to time: "These are men who, in spite of everything, resemble us. How can they do what they are doing?" And we were proud because we did not understand.

Sartre tells of the Nazi torture center in Paris, on the rue Lauriston, where Frenchmen cried out in pain when the question was put to them. One thing the French told themselves: it was impossible that "one day men would be made to cry out in our name." But now it is happening:

> . . . in 1958, in Algeria, there is regular and systematic torture; everyone knows it, from M. Lacoste to the cultivators of the Aveyron; no one talks about it. Or almost no one.

So, as Sartre says, there is nothing to understand. The Nazi, in 1943, had the face of a hateful stranger, but today, the French look in the mirror and see the same face:

> Plunged into stupor, the French have uncovered a terrible fact. If nothing protects a nation against itself, neither its past, its integrity, nor its laws—if fifteen years are enough to change victims into executioners—it means that the occasion alone will decide. According to the circumstances, anyone, anytime, will become either the victim or the executioner.

There is profound instruction for all men in this. It is first of all a moral instruction. No one, really, has justification for self-righteousness. Under the skin, we are alike, now victims, now executioners.

Sartre tells of the compulsion to torture—the "grandeur of France requires it." If you reject the doctrine or suffer from conscience, you are a "defeatist." Further, it is claimed that tormenting one man may save the lives of hundreds.

The real explanation is a darker one still—the psychological need of the European colonists to dehumanize their enemy:

> The goal of the question is not only to force the victim to talk, to betray, he must designate himself by his cries and his submission as a human beast. In the eyes of all and in his eyes, his betrayal must break him and dispose of him forever. No, it is not desired that the victim who gives in to the question simply talks; a status has been imposed forever, that of a subhuman.
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> This radicalization of the stakes is a trait of our epoch. It is what man is doing. In no other time has the will to be free been more conscious or stronger, in no other time the oppression more violent and better armed.
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> In Algeria, the contradictions are irreducible; each of the groups in conflict demands the complete exclusion of the other. We have taken everything from the Moslems, and we have forbidden them everything, including the use of their own language. Memmi has shown how colonization is realized in annulling the colonized. We have liquidated their civilization at the same time we refused them ours. They had asked for integration, assimilation, and we said no: by what miracle could colonial exploitation be maintained if the colonized enjoyed the same rights as the colonizers?
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> Underfed, neglected, poor, the system threw them back pitilessly to the confines of the Sahara, to the limits of the human. Under demographic pressure, their standards of living fell from one year to the next. When despair pushed them to revolt, they had to perish, these sub-men, or to affirm their humanity against us. They rejected all our values, our culture, our pretended superiorities, and it was one and the same thing for them to claim the title of man and to refuse French nationality.

Alleg, a tortured man, did not talk. He is still in an A1gerian prison, but his book is being read all over France. The first edition of 20,000 copies

sold out immediately. The second printing is unable to satisfy the demand. Some book stores sell from fifty to a hundred copies a day. (An American edition, published by Braziller, is now available in the United States.)

Sartre sees in Alleg a deliverer from despair, for he is a conqueror of torture. Would we be capable of the same thing? "That," says Sartre, "is another matter."

> What counts is that the victim delivers us by causing us to discover, as he discovers himself, that we have the power and the duty to endure everything.
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> We are fascinated by the pit of the inhuman. But one hard and stubborn man who persists in his task of being a man is enough to snatch us back from madness. The "question" is not inhuman but simply an ignoble and vicious crime committed by men against men, which other men can and ought to repress. . . . What distinguishes us from these sadists? Nothing, since we remain silent.

The problem is a general one, belonging to our time:

> Torture is not civilian nor military nor specifically French. It is a disease which is ravaging our entire epoch. In the East as in the West there have been executioners. Not so long ago, Farkas was torturing Hungarians; the Poles do not hide the fact that their police, before Posnan, willingly put the question; as to what went on in Russia during Stalin's lifetime, the Krushchev report is an unimpeachable witness. Yesterday, there was questioning in Nasser's prisons (of politicians who have since been raised to eminence). Today, it is Cyprus and Algeria. Hitler was just a forerunner.

What do these things mean? If, as Sartre says, it is the occasion which makes men into torturers, and not a deep evil which sets them off from other men, then we need to look at the "occasions" that exercise this malign power. Sartre describes two kinds of occasions, and in both appears the need of the oppressors, the torturers, "to convince themselves and their victims of their absolute sovereignty." It is either a colonial situation or a totalitarian situation. The compulsive evil is in the situation. What right have I here? the colonial asks himself. I am here by right of being a superior breed, he answers. The displacement of others is as justified as weeding a garden. Hence the need to prove the sub-human quality of those others, and torture is a means.

In the totalitarian situation, the reasoning is more coldly rational, more intellectualized. Here, the *system* is at stake, and since the system assures the good of man, no measure is too extreme in order to defend the system, which embodies the highest value.

Plainly, we must make an end to all such systems, and to the idolization of any sort of system. The "occasion" is only a superficial cause of torture. What permits and even encourages the torture is the delusion about the good of man, the delusion that it lies in systems, in the case of the totalitarian situation; and in the case of colonialism, the delusion of superiority, and the assumption that superiority, supposing some kind of superiority should exist, entitles anyone to make use of another human being for his own ends. The supposition that anyone has the right to "use" another man immediately blackens any distinction the former may possess, making it irrelevant.

The torture is only an end-product of these delusions, and the delusions by no means belong only to torturers. The delusion itself is the potential torturer. Of the men who stand over the martyrized bodies of other men, making them suffer pain, Sartre says:

> None of these men exists by himself, not one will remain as he is: there are moments of inexorable transformation. Between the best and the worst there is a single difference: the former are the new recruits, the latter the old ones. They will all finally go away, and if the war continues, others will replace them, blond fellows from the North or short brown-haired fellows from the South. They will go through the same apprenticeship and attain the same violence and the same nervousness.

"This," says Sartre, "is what is striking in Alleg's narrative: behind these haggard and grotesque surgeons, one senses an inflexibility

which surpasses them and surpasses their superiors."

Where do the delusions come from? They come from a low opinion of man and from any and all doctrines which spread a low opinion of man. They come from religion whenever religion makes claim to exclusive possession of truth and an exclusive salvation for the possessors of that truth; they come from nationalist egotism and the chauvinist vanities which make the people of one country contemptuous of the people of another country; they come from racist assumptions and the arrogance in the notion of hereditary rights and privileges. They come, finally, from fear and insecurity joined to these other ways of thinking, blotting out considerations of common humanity and turning men into wretches who practice torture, justify torture, or remain complacent about this and other crimes against man.

Sartre tells how the madness works:

> . . . of these two indissoluble couples, the colonial and the colonized, the executioner and the victim, the second is only an emanation of the first. And without any doubt, the executioners are not colonials, nor are colonials executioners. The latter are frequently young men from France who have lived twenty years of their lives without ever worrying about the Algerian problem. But hate was a magnetic field: it cut through them, corroded, enslaved.

We quote in conclusion Sartre's high tribute to Alleg:

> The calm lucidity of Alleg permits us to understand all of this. If he gave us nothing else, we would still have to be profoundly grateful. But he has done more: by intimidating his executioners, he has achieved a triumph in behalf of the humanity of the victims and the colonized against the unruly violence of certain soldiers, against the racism of the colonials. . . . Alleg is the only hard one, the only one who is really strong. *We* can say that he has paid the highest price for the simple right of remaining a man. But he does not even think about that. That is why this phrase from the end of a paragraph moves us so strongly:
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> *"I felt proud all of a sudden, and joyous at not having given in; I was convinced that I could take it again if they started over; that I would fight to the end; that I would not make their task easy by my suicide."*