



136.2 096g  
Overstreet  
The great enterprise

cop 2  
\$ 3.50



kansas city  public library  
kansas city, missouri

Books will be issued only  
on presentation of library card.  
Please report lost cards and  
change of residence promptly.  
Card holders are responsible for  
all books, records, films, pictures  
or other library materials  
checked out on their cards.









## THE GREAT ENTERPRISE

*Books by H. A. Overstreet*

ABOUT OURSELVES

INFLUENCING HUMAN BEHAVIOR

OUR FREE MINDS

A DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE

THE MATURE MIND

THE GREAT ENTERPRISE



THE  
GREAT  
ENTERPRISE

*Relating Ourselves to Our World*

---

H. A. OVERSTREET

---



W · W · NORTON & COMPANY · INC ·

NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1952, BY  
W. W. NORTON & COMPANY, INC.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FOR THE PUBLISHERS BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS

## *Relating Ourselves to Our World*

By H. A. OVERSTREET

In his famous book *The Mature Mind*, Dr. Overstreet gave his readers a new insight into themselves, by explaining the meaning of psychological and emotional maturity. In this new book, he undertakes to explore more fully the effect upon ourselves of the larger world in which we live. No individual, he points out, ever evolves into his mature personality out of forces that are found only within his private self. We grow only if we grow outward into living relationships with our fellow man. This outreach of mind and spirit is our distinctively human enterprise, life's great enterprise.

In the first part of his book, Dr. Overstreet explores the psychological qualities we must have in order to realize the full maturing of our personalities. These are the "standard equipment," as it were, for acting with any degree of sense and satisfaction in life. In the second part he takes us into the midst of typical and often perplexing life situations of our time and shows us how we can act wisely and maturely.

---



# CONTENTS

## PART ONE EQUIPMENT FOR MATURING

ONE	CONTEXT OF THE SELF	17
TWO	THE SELF-IMAGE	34
THREE	IMAGES OF OTHERS	52
FOUR	THE EGOCENTRIC TRAP	68
FIVE	OVER-UNDER RELATIONS	88
SIX	THE FEELING FOR POTENTIALITY	107
SEVEN	THE REVEALING READINESS	130

## PART TWO THE SELF IN THE WORLD

EIGHT	IN THIS TIME OF TENSION	143
NINE	LIVING ON THE SCIENTIFIC FRONTIER	158
TEN	LIVING ON THE SPIRITUAL FRONTIER	178
ELEVEN	ATTACKING THE PROBLEM OF HATE	205
TWELVE	EXPLORING OUR TWENTIETH-CENTURY CRISIS	226
THIRTEEN	IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON OUR MINDS	248
FOURTEEN	CONFRONTING THE PROBLEM	281
FIFTEEN	ALTERNATIVE TO DISASTER	300
SIXTEEN	NEW FORCES AT WORK	318
	INDEX	329



## PREFACE

A GENUINE insight has a life of its own. "It dares appear and spread and glister in the *World*."<sup>1</sup> Its strength is in its truth; and its sphere of influence is the total society in which men live together.

One such insight—made clear to us by the scientists of human nature—is that psychological maturing is something over and above physical maturing. It is itself a highly complex process of bringing our intellectual, emotional, and social selves up to the level of our bodily growth and environmental opportunities. The achievement of such maturity is the greatest of our human triumphs.

In an earlier book, *The Mature Mind*, I undertook to speak for the importance of this "maturity concept" to individual development and to certain institutions of our society. In the present book, I am venturing to explore more fully its importance to our social development. How can we relate our-

<sup>1</sup> John Donne, *That Goodness Is More Common than Evil*.

selves maturely within our larger world, and particularly within our larger world of human beings? To discover the answer to this question and to enact the answer is our distinctively human enterprise.

The researches of psychologists and psychiatrists have shown us that the person who fails to grow up psychologically is invariably one who is unable to move out into the realities of his social environment. Certain disabilities hold him back. He is fixated in a too prolonged dependence; or held back by certain irrational fears and timidities; or imprisoned within a too narrow and inflexible ego; or disconnected from his fellows by sheer ignorance; or made intolerant of them by prejudice. In short, he is a constricted human being, disastrously shut up within himself. The individual who truly grows, grows outward, into warm and mutually supportive relationships with his fellows.

Of the making of human relationships—friendly and hostile, encouraging and inhibiting—there is no end. The process goes on whenever we speak or act. Our greatest problem in life is to create those relationships of confidence and good will that promote our living together as human beings. Growth toward maturity, in short, involves in a very special and necessary way growth toward social maturity.

Part One of the book examines the qualities we must have—the basic psychological equipment, as it were—if we are to grow into livable relationships with our fellows. Part Two examines the qualities of understanding and concern we need if we are to relate ourselves soundly and productively to this age in which we live.



As in the previous book, my thanks go to the host of investigators whose researches have enriched and steadied our life. A few of them I have been able to acknowledge. Most of them move anonymously through the pages of the book because they have moved too intimately into my own thinking to be disentangled from it. Also, my thanks go to those readers of *The Mature Mind* who wrote me their reactions and gave suggestions that led me to further exploration. And again my thanks go to my wife, Bonaro W. Overstreet, for help so great and constant that it is all I can do not to place her name beside my own in authorship.

H.A.O.



## THE GREAT ENTERPRISE



P A R T O N E

EQUIPMENT FOR  
MATURING



## O N E

### CONTEXT OF THE SELF

LIFE consists in relating ourselves to . . . objects, interests, persons, ideas, activities, problems—an endless array of them. What we relate ourselves to and how we relate ourselves makes up the content of our life.

Our common tendency is to think of ourselves as simply ourselves. Here am I, John X, with a body that is my own, separated from all other human bodies. Also, here am I with a mind that is my own, separated from all other minds by its sense of *being itself*. Jim Y, my neighbor, can never walk in and be my mind, hard as he may try at times to bend it in his direction. "My mind to me a kingdom is." I rule there as sovereign.

We have been so accustomed to this separative or atomistic view of the individual that it is hard for us to move beyond it. Yet we begin to see that it can seriously hinder the understanding and the maturing of the human personality.

The emphasis of this view has been upon what takes place

within the individual's self. From the standpoint of morals, the view has probed the individual's inner intentions. Is he, as an individual, good or bad? If good, he has been praised for his inner rectitude; if bad, he has been reproached or punished for the unseemliness of his inner intentions and his consequent outer behavior. This particular individual, we have been accustomed to say, is a *good person*; this other, a *bad person*. In each case, the image conjured up has been that of an entity that stands separate from his environment; and attention has focused upon what has presumably been going on within his "skin-enclosed" self.

So far as the appraisal of an individual's mind has been concerned, this older view has taken account merely, so to speak, of the "brain-enclosed" mind. Have the processes of his separate thinking been logical? Does he have an adequate I.Q.? If so, we have been accustomed to say that this man thinks well—he has a good mind; if not, that he thinks poorly—he has a poor mind.

In all of this we have missed the profoundly important fact that, as a moral and intellectual being, an individual is never solely himself; he is enmeshed in relationships. We might broaden this statement and make it apply to all of us: a human being succeeds in his life insofar as he relates himself rightly to all the factors—people, ideas, interests, materials, obligations—that are part of living a life. If this is true, then it should become clear that our major troubles (not all our troubles, but the major ones) come from some flaw in our life relationships. Either our relationships are too constricted (so that we have, for example, too little access to food and shelter; too little learning; too little affectionate



contact with other people); or those relationships are distorted (being those of hate, prejudice, fear, or power-seeking). What we chiefly need, then, is to discover *how* we should relate ourselves to *what* and *whom*.

## II

One of the sayings of the Seven Wise Men of Greece was "Know Thyself." In school and out, this aphorism has been aimed at us, almost like an accusation. For the most part, it has left us at a loss. Thinking of ourselves as skin-enclosed entities, we have taken "Know Thyself" to mean that we should get busy probing into our inner depths. But when, on this or that occasion, we have tried to probe into these special inner depths, we have usually found no depths we could probe into. We have found mostly a vague darkness and a shifting confusion. As we have brooded over this inner thing we have thought to be the self, we have found ourselves turning morbidly introspective. Too much occupation with our inner selves has sicklied us o'er "with the pale cast of thought." Looking inward has not turned out to be a highly successful way of knowing ourselves.

We now begin to see that there is a good reason why. The separate self, in and by himself, is no real individual at all. To try to find oneself, therefore, within one's own isolated being is to prepare for disappointment.

When we abandon the futile enterprise of probing into our separate selves and adventure forth to find the things, people, ideas, and cultural and other environmental forces that, from our infancy on, have become intimately part of us, we begin to get a soundly objective sense of what we are.

In recent years, five terms (among others) have come into important use in the psychological and social sciences. These are "interpersonal relations"; "interhuman relations"; "group therapy"; "group dynamics"; and "field theory of personality."

"We can understand human personality," writes Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, "only in terms of interpersonal relationships."<sup>1</sup> Further, "Emotional difficulties in living are difficulties in interpersonal relations." A person is "mentally healthy to the extent that he is able to be aware of, and therefore, to handle his interpersonal relationships."

This is the clarifying insight that has come out of the work begun by Sigmund Freud and carried on by his successors during the past fifty-odd years. Freud did the unprecedented thing of trying to cure mental and emotional diseases by the apparently ludicrous method (ludicrous to the medical practice of his day) of getting the patient to become aware of his long-forgotten or long-misunderstood relationships—to father and mother, and to other persons in his environment.

This was something almost new under the medical sun. An occasional physician, like the great Hippocrates, had glimpsed mental disorders as springing out of strained human relations; but for the most part, medical practitioners had regarded mental diseases as something inside the individual patient. Hence the various attempts to "beat the devil" out of the insane: the bleedings, chainings, straitjacketings, and all the incredible rest. Hence the efforts to treat neurotic diseases—hysterias and the like—by sedatives, purgings, and other modes of medication. In every case, it was assumed that

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy*, p. xiv. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950.

there was something wrong *within the individual*. Some evil influence, or poison, or perversity had entered him. The medical problem was how to get it out.

Today, the picture is changed, and changing. In dealing with the mentally ill, we now begin to focus not upon separate individuals but upon the relations between individuals. This means a different kind of diagnosis and treatment. It requires an awareness of the influences that play upon the individual, particularly those that thwart or distort or variously frustrate him. It requires seeing the individual not in his isolation, but in an interweaving context of life.

If human relationships are faulty—between child and parent, at the beginning of life; or, later, between child and teachers; or between adolescent and community; or between the adult and those with whom and under whom he works; or between the citizen and his political world—we can expect these faults in interpersonal relations to leave scars upon the individual. We can expect them to distort his attitude toward himself. We can expect them to multiply the blunders he makes in his human dealings.

Mental unhealth, then, when it cannot be traced to some organic inadequacy or deterioration, is to be overcome by the overcoming of faulty interpersonal relations. How to do this? Here, too, the psychiatric developments that had their beginnings in Freud present a sharp contrast to the old medicine of pills and purges. It was this new, far different view that Harry Stack Sullivan expressed when he said that we achieve mental health to the extent that we become aware of our interpersonal relations. Mental and emotional health, in short—so the scientific story now runs—depends first and

foremost upon genuine self-knowing. This self-knowing, however, must not be the old mistaken probing into the supposed depths of our separate selves. It must involve knowing our relatedness. If and when we become genuinely aware of the faults in our personal relationships, better relationships can begin to form. This is how the psychiatric wise men of the present interpret the "Know Thyself" of the Seven Wise Men of Greece.

The second of the terms we have selected for emphasis is "interhuman relations." This might seem to be simply a synonym for "interpersonal relations." But it suggests something more. The human world is made up not only of individuals but of those consolidations or interpenetrations of individuals we call institutions, cultures, climates of opinion, ideologies, traditions, social attitudes, social expectations. Although consciously or unconsciously created by individuals, these operate as super-individual forces that profoundly affect our individual development.

In the Preface to his book, *Our Age of Unreason*,<sup>2</sup> Franz Alexander writes, "In Europe I saw the world of my youth rapidly disintegrate and standards and ideals that had become second nature to me vanish. . . . What would follow was not clear, but much clearer was what was specifically disappearing, the highest values I had known; science and artistic creation for their own sakes, the gradual improvement of human relations by the use of knowledge and reason were giving way to a sense of insecurity, fear, and distrust among mechanically minded men. . . ."

Here is the description of a powerful force—namely, a new

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1951 (revised edition).

climate of opinion—that had entered the lives of millions of Europeans and that was gradually changing their basic character structure. “In the analysis of my patients,” Alexander continues, “I observed increasingly a regressive withdrawal into their own personal problems and noted the emphasis laid upon those personal relationships which compose what is commonly called ‘private life’. . . . This over-heated, over-charged atmosphere of the ‘private life’ was fertile breeding ground for all kinds of neurotic disturbances.”

The effect, as Alexander describes it, was to make them withdraw from healthy participation in the common life and concentrate unhealthily upon their separate egos.

In all cultures, good and bad, the individual has to relate himself to such super-individual forces. In large measure, he becomes what those forces make him. Moving to America, Alexander was much impressed by the historian Frederick Turner’s theory of the influence of the frontier upon the formation of American character. “It explained the most common conflict of the American neurotic, the thwarted ambition among people trained to admire individual achievements, as their ancestors had done . . . yet situated in a standardized industrial civilization which imposed uneventful routine and offered no real security in return.”

Obviously, if we are to know ourselves, we need to know what these super-individual forces are to which we relate ourselves. This, however, is a kind of self-knowledge in which most of us are notoriously weak. Cultural attitudes, ideologies, and climates of opinion become so subtly and powerfully part of ourselves that we are quick to rise in their defense if they are criticized. Nationalistic, religious, and racial intolerances

are cases in point. Not only are individuals, on the average, reluctant to examine these with complete honesty, but they are quick to resent any examination of them on the part of others. "Know Thyself" is readily enough accepted—though not always understood—as good counsel; but "Know thy culturally conditioned self"—thyself as an American, as a Christian or a Jew, as a Catholic or a Protestant, as a white man, as a Republican or a Democrat, as a capitalist or a communist—this kind of self-knowing is quite another matter. Here our skin is singularly tender. We wince at any rough handling of what our culture has made us.

Although we are made into the beings we are by these *interhuman relations*—of race, religion, social class, nation—we are, for the most part, ignorant both of what they are and of what they do to us. Thus we walk in darkness and in that darkness strike out against one another. It is our good fortune today that the light of cultural self-knowledge is beginning to send broader rays into this darkness—largely as a result of the yeoman work of the social psychologists and cultural anthropologists.

A third term that is coming into wide use is "group therapy." It, too, reveals a divergence from older practices of healing. In older practices, the curative agent was administered *to* the individual (patient) *by* an individual (doctor). In group therapy the assumption is that the curative agent can be found *in the relationships between patients* and that these relationships themselves, as they develop under favorable conditions, can promote the cure.

A striking example of this relational process is found in the work described by S. R. Slavson in his *Introduction to Group*

*Therapy.*<sup>3</sup> Here the "patients" were delinquent children who fought, stole, burned, smashed windows, broke rules, and in general made unholy nuisances of themselves. They were young people in a condition of resistance to the world. They saw the world as hostile; and they struck back at it.

What Slavson and his associates realized was that the most essential need was to remove from these children the feeling that the world was hostile. How could this be done? Certainly not by punishment. By preachment, then? Personal kindness? Praise? Rewards? Education? All these methods had been tried with such children; and the results had not been encouraging.

It was felt that the treatment of such abnormally hostile children must go deeper. As their hostility was, by all the evidence, the reflection of what had been done to them by their environment—a reflection of their having been too cruelly dominated, punished, rejected, pushed around—so the cure for that hostility must be looked for in environmental conditions. These emotionally distorted youngsters must be helped to live in what they themselves could feel to be a thoroughly non-hostile atmosphere. How could this be contrived? At home, the authority of the parents would seem to these hostile children a constant threat; in school, there would be the threat of the teacher, the principal, the truant officer. Could an environment be created for these abnormal youngsters from which "being told" was eliminated? "By allowing a distorted child to act as he pleases we assure him of our love and acceptance by the group."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1943, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Slavson, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

It was a daring thesis to put into practice. It meant creating a situation where children whose crime was that they apparently did as they pleased—and not as parents, teachers, policemen, and the rest told them—*were to be given the sanction to do as they pleased.*

But the thesis, although on the face of it absurd, and disturbingly inconvenient for adults, turned out to be psychologically sound. One boy from one of Slavson's do-as-you-please groups said, "When people let me do what I want to do then I know they love me." However ludicrous and anti-social this may seem to orderly-minded adults, this boy, by being allowed to do what he wanted to do, under conditions where all the rest of the group were also allowed to do what they wanted to do, found his way out of hostility into friendly co-operation. No longer having to focus on the lonely task of holding his own against the world, he found, gradually, that what he wanted to do became different. Rebellion stopped being an important want when there was no longer an ego-defending function for it to serve. In its stead, friendly and productive impulses began to yield satisfaction. To be sure, this boy, like all the others in the group, had to learn the hard way—hard for himself and especially hard for the adults who had to be patient while he was learning; but he learned.

Briefly, the method used by Slavson depended upon creating for these children conditions of complete freedom within their own groups. These delinquent boys and girls were brought together into separate groups which, on the surface, looked like settlement clubs. But only on the surface. The adult in these therapeutic groups was not there to "lead"—to organize, plan, direct, and, above all, to keep order. He or she



was simply there "to pick up the pieces." If the children smashed things, the leader was to make no comment, but, in time, to gather these up. If the children fought, the leader's job was merely to keep a wary eye open to see that they did not completely demolish each other—or him. Tools, materials, food were available. It was up to the children in their separate groups of boys and girls to do with these as they pleased.

The aim, in short, was to create for these hostility-ridden youngsters a condition in which they would feel no curb of imposed authority, no restraints of rules and prohibitions. These they had already felt too often and too cruelly. If they were to be cured of their delinquent impulses, they must, in an atmosphere of freedom, cure themselves.

Cures were not effected in a day, a week, or a month. But the record shows that they were effected. The antisocial boy began to take an appreciative interest in what another boy was making—voluntarily helped him with the work instead of barging in and smashing it. The antisocial girl stopped screaming and throwing things around. Little by little, the youngsters learned the advantages of civility and mutual aid, not by having these preached to them or beaten into them, but by learning that they made things go better for everyone. What had been at first "a bunch of savages" became, in time, a self-ordered group of youngsters capable of at least recognizing one another's rights and of variously co-operating with one another.

In all of this, Slavson felt, the experience of *being in a free group* was the essence of the cure. In any group where there is complete freedom, "the presence of others," he writes, "has a socializing effect through spontaneous, mutual help, admira-

tion of the work done by others, cooperation of two or more in a group project, pleasurable feelings that come from constructive effort in a group and the fundamental awareness of the needs of others.”<sup>5</sup>

*Being freely in a group can itself be a curative force.* Out of the very experience of groupness something psychologically important happens to the individual. If the group rejects him, the rejection is far more likely to bring him up short than is the rejection by some individual authority. If the group accepts him, the acceptance creates a sense of belonging that brings sturdiness and power into his life.

Here, again, we see how far more than an isolated unit an individual is. He is what he relates himself to and how he relates himself to it. In all instances of group therapy, the individual becomes what the group relationship *helps him to become*.

The term “group dynamics” has come into use out of the realization that although clear communication is a basic human need, most of us are unable to fulfill this need. We cannot seem to make ideas pass from our own minds to those of others, nor can we receive unaltered into our own minds what other minds try to convey.

One chief tragedy in today’s world is our widespread inability to communicate. Not only is the Iron Curtain lowered between nations; it is also daily and hourly lowered between individuals and groups. Obviously, if in all our practices of

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 190. The foregoing does not mean, of course, that the proper way to bring up all children is just to “let them have their own way.” The experiments that Slavson performed were with distorted children who had been too much dominated and punished; and the methods he employed were geared to the unusualness of his problem. Nevertheless, in many different ways, the “permissive” principle revealed in these experiments now begins to be recognized as of wide utility.

life we could learn to listen and be listened to; if we could grasp what other persons are saying *as they themselves understand what they are saying*, the major hostilities of life would disappear, for the simple reason that misunderstandings would disappear.

The first experiments in group dynamics were initiated under the inspiration of the psychologist Kurt Lewin; and they have been continued by groups of investigators under the auspices of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Michigan, and at summer sessions held chiefly at Bethel, Maine. The purpose of the experiments has been simple, although the experiments themselves have sometimes been bewilderingly complex. The purpose has been to discover the best conditions under which individuals in a group can put their heads together and make sensible conclusions, understandable to all, emerge out of their joint thinking.

Before the emergence of the group dynamics movement, few, if any, controlled experiments had been set up to determine what these "best conditions" might be. In adult education, group discussion had become almost a fetish; but no one had, with scientific patience, examined the processes of discussion to see whether they were psychologically as sound as they appeared to be. Twenty people in a room, engaged in discussing a certain problem, all seemed to be busy at the business of communicating to one another; and at the end, they were likely to agree that "a good time was had by all." The leader, to be sure, might anxiously note that one person was saying nothing; that another was doing most of the talking; that yet another started several times to say something and then, with quick embarrassment, closed his mouth. "Next

time," the leader might say to himself, "I'll get *everyone* into the discussion; and I'll have to do something about that fellow who monopolizes the floor." But dissatisfied as he might be—and as every good discussion leader usually is—with the processes and results of the discussion, he would not be likely, and would have little opportunity, to probe into the deeper psychological situation.

This deeper psychological situation is precisely what investigators in group dynamics are concerning themselves about. They ask what it is that individuals carry with them out of their life-conditioning that acts as a bar to their proper listening to others. What is it that makes it so often impossible for them to express their own ideas with lucidity and ease? What makes it impossible for them to keep their heads level and to stop when they have said enough; and then, with a genuine will to understand, take in what others have to say?

Asking such questions—never before asked with such exactness in all our long human history of mutual misunderstanding—the researchers in group dynamics have come to an initial conclusion. Individuals, they discover, do not enter a discussion—whether it be in a labor-management group, an inter-faith group, a community group, or any other group—mind-free. They enter with the marks upon them of all kinds of previous conditions of mental and emotional servitude—servitude to class or racial or national or philosophical prejudices; servitude to personal peevishness, dislikes, fears, hates, shynesses. In short, they come to any discussion group—or any other group situation—with their total personalities; and these total personalities, instead of being freely open to ideas, are usually, for a number of self-defensive reasons, closed against many of them.

Thus twenty people brought together in a room to discuss a certain problem may be twenty people who are themselves unsolved psychological problems. The need, then, becomes clear. We need to know how to create discussional situations in which these twenty who are psychological problems can work their way through to the cure of themselves.

This particular sort of effort has never before been made with systematic research and laboratory effectiveness. In a sense, it is another form of group therapy, though the persons whom it assembles are, by ordinary standards, far from "delinquent"; for it assumes that only through a period of free functioning in a group can any individual work his way into the kind of dispassionate clarity that will make him able to contribute productively and to listen productively.

### III

All of the foregoing culminates in what we are now coming to call the "field theory of personality." There are three levels, as Gardner Murphy has pointed out,<sup>6</sup> on which we can study the human individual. The first is the level on which we see him as one among many others. On this level, we pay no attention to his unique characteristics or to the peculiar and oft-times difficult complexities of his mental and emotional make-up. We simply lump him with others, as one of the multitude. This is the level on which most sociologists, economists, and political scientists do most of their work. They take individuals in the aggregate in order to see the larger pattern of human behavior. We might call this the statistical level.

The second we might call the internal-structure level. Here,

<sup>6</sup> *Personality: a Biological Approach*, p. 3. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947.

we study the individual in his unique complexity. We find that he possesses interests, aptitudes, passions, an intelligence quotient, an emotional age; and that he possesses these in ways uniquely different from the rest of his fellows. This is the level on which psychologists have mostly worked in the past and on which, for various practical purposes, they will continue to work. On this level, the individual is studied *as an individual*. What lies outside him is, as far as possible, disregarded.

Even on this second level, however, it has become increasingly clear that if we merely study the individual in his unique separateness, there will be something missing. As a matter of fact, no person can be so contained within his own body as to escape influence from the world around him. The outer world, both physical and psychological, is constantly flowing into him: air, sunshine, food; people; political, social, educational, and religious influences. (It is interesting that this fact is conveyed by the very word "influence": in-flowing.)

On the third level—to continue Murphy's analysis—the self is seen to be "a reciprocity of outgoing and incoming energies." He is seen to be a creature made by his environment—of home, school, community, church, nation, air, food, rain, snow, plants, movies, radio, newspapers, atom bombs; but also a creature who remakes his environments. World and self play in upon each other. Literally, therefore, no man liveth to himself alone. No man *is* himself alone. Each lives in an intricate and wide-ranging "field of forces." He is not, however, merely shuttled about, a passive victim of forces stronger than himself. On the contrary, he is himself an "organizing force in a field."

If there is one point of view about our life that may be considered most hopeful of all, it is this recently developed view that the individual is a center of force in a field of forces. In this network of forces we live out our days. Most of what happens to us happens because the environments around us are what they are; but also because we do to these environments the things we do. Each of us thus is truly on the receiving end of life; but just as truly, each of us is on the initiating end. There is no outer fate that controls us utterly, nor any inner fate completely within our power. Life is a creative adjustment of self to non-self and of non-self to self.

So we come to the insight that must rule in all efforts to know ourselves and fulfill ourselves: *we must, so to speak, go beyond ourselves in order to find ourselves*. This is the principle of relationship: that we must look outward to look inward. It is this principle which, understood and applied, holds out to us the promise that we, for all our individual limitations and collective follies, can yet create sound minds, in sound bodies, in a sound human society.

Before we become too swiftly confident, however, we must note five serious barriers that tend to prevent our relating ourselves in such ways that we create soundness of mind, body, and society. These are (1) unrealistic estimates of ourselves; (2) unrealistic estimates of others; (3) too close confinements of ourselves within our ego-concerns; (4) false conceptions of authority; and (5) too meager conceptions of the potentialities of life. In the remaining chapters of Part One we shall explore the why and how of these barriers.

## T W O

### THE SELF-IMAGE

**B**ASIC to all other life relations is our relation to reality. If this is faulty, life goes by default. Leon Saul describes as one of our fundamental needs what he calls "a grasp of reality." It is a sense and a function, he writes, "which develops slowly and gradually as the individual matures. Only little by little does the infant and then the small child become aware of its surroundings and the significance of the inanimate world about it and of the persons who enter its life. This comprehension of the outer world depends in part upon the intellectual development or the intelligence and in part upon the emotional development and orientation. . . . But whatever the relationship of the emotions and the intellect, it is obvious that a grasp of reality is an essential characteristic of maturity."<sup>1</sup>

Among the most tragic of human defeats is insanity. We

<sup>1</sup> *Emotional Maturity*, p. 149. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1947.



know the pathetic sickness of mind that makes a person think he is what he quite obviously is not: a poor man convinced that he is a millionaire; a deeply ignorant man proclaiming that he holds the secret of the universe; a quite unmilitary man strutting about as a general. Insanity is the cruelest of life's impostures. It takes from us the one defense essential to our humanity: the power to relate ourselves to things as they are. When we lose this power—when we see what is not there to be seen, or fear what is not there to be feared, we lose the connecting link with life that makes it possible for us to perform at the level of our uniquely human powers. We suffer from *reality disorientation*.

A less tragic but profoundly troublesome form of reality disorientation is exhibited by neurotics. A neurosis, broadly speaking, arises out of an inability to confront the realities of a conflictual situation and to resolve the conflict; or to learn to live with it in realistic terms. James Plant illustrates this by his report on a certain case of psychosomatic illness: "A child of eight finds herself struggling along in the fourth grade because of the overweening interest that her parents have in her academic achievement. She develops a neurosis—a form of severe nausea, of vomiting that shows itself on school mornings and is otherwise absent. This has been termed unconscious malingering; certainly the only conscious reaction is that of extreme discomfort . . . the whole reaction is beyond conscious control. Yet it is purposive and both the nature of the symptom and its cure show that the origin is mental rather than in any primary poisoning of the body . . . the primary factor here is an effort on the part of the personal-

ity to use physical illness as a satisfactory solution to an otherwise intolerable situation.”<sup>2</sup>

The neurotic child “solves” her problem; but she solves it without adequate relation to the realities involved. Thus in fact she does not solve it, since the actual situation remains unchanged. With all her vomitings, she is still the frightened child unable to be what her parents expect her to be.

Neurosis in general is of this pattern. It is an attempt to resolve a “real” emotional disturbance by “unreal” means. To the neurotic, his “unreal” solution seems always to be a real one. He clings to it; cannot let it go; cannot, in fact, *afford* to let it go. Unreal though it may be, it is the source of his neurotic strength. It enables him, however unhappily, to live through situations that would otherwise be intolerable. And yet, precisely because it is unreal, it keeps his relationships to his environment conflictual and is thus the source of his profound weakness and failure.

## II

Most of us are neither insane nor neurotic, although, if the psychiatrists are to be believed, even the best of us have our strains of abnormality. In his book, *Insanity*, Bernard Hart went so far as to assure his readers that they would, in all probability, find themselves within his pages.

Perhaps this is not the happiest way of putting the case. It might seem less discouraging to say that each of us walks forever on the thin edge between reality and unreality. At times, we waver to the unreality side; get lost in a morass of

<sup>2</sup> James Plant, *Personality and the Cultural Pattern*, p. 361. New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1937.

false assumptions; find ourselves slogging through swamps of self-deceptions. When we thus get ourselves lost in unreality, we invariably come a cropper. To be mistaken means that we make mistakes. As the old proverb has it, "He struck at Tib, but down fell Tim."

Much of our so-called normal life is, after this fashion, mistake-ridden. In all honesty, we shoot at an evil, and down comes a good. If we had known more about the reality of the situation, we might have withheld our gunfire. We might have gone at the evil in some other way. But not knowing the reality, we kill, often, what we intend to save; we foster what we intend to eliminate.

Among the determining factors in our relationship to reality are the images we live by: the *images of ourselves*, and the *images of our environing world of people, things, and events*. If these are distorted, our behaviors will not fit the situations to which they are ostensibly geared.

### III

In "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," James Thurber has given a tender, unforgettable picture of a timid, functionless little man who overcompensates for the insignificance and humiliation of his daily life by fantasies of his own heroism.

"We're going through!" The Commander's voice was like thin ice breaking. He wore his full-dress uniform, with the heavily braided white cap pulled down rakishly over one cold gray eye. "We can't make it, sir. It's spoiling for a hurricane if you ask me." "I'm not asking you, Lieutenant Berg," said the Commander. "Throw on the power lights! Rev her up to 8,500! We're going through!" The pounding of the cylinders increased:

tapocketa-pocketa-pocketa-*pocketa-pocketa*. The Commander stared at the ice forming on the pilot window. He walked over and twisted a row of complicated dials. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" he shouted. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" repeated Lieutenant Berg. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" shouted the Commander. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" The crew, bending to their various tasks in the huge hurtling eight-engined Navy hydroplane, looked at each other and grinned. "The Old Man'll get us through," they said to one another. "The Old Man ain't afraid of Hell!" . . .

"Not so fast! You're driving too fast!" said Mrs. Mitty. "What are you driving so fast for?"

"Hmm?" said Walter Mitty. He looked at his wife in the seat beside him with shocked astonishment. She seemed grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in a crowd. "You were up to fifty-five!" she said. "You know I don't like to go more than forty. You were up to fifty-five." Walter Mitty drove on toward Waterbury in silence, the roaring of the SN202 through the worst storm in twenty years of Navy flying fading in the remote, intimate airways of his mind. "You're tensed up again," said Mrs. Mitty. "It's one of your days. I wish you'd let Dr. Renshaw look you over."

Walter Mitty stopped the car in front of the building where his wife went to have her hair done. "Remember to get those overshoes while I'm having my hair done," she said. "I don't need overshoes," said Mitty. She put her mirror back into her bag. "We've been all through that," she said, getting out of the car. "You're not a young man any longer." He raced the engine a little. "Why don't you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?" Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them

off again. "Pick it up, brother!" snapped a cop as the light changed, and Mitty hastily pulled on his gloves and lurched ahead. He drove around the streets aimlessly for a time, and then drove past the hospital on his way to the parking lot."<sup>3</sup>

Lost in unreality. Routine-bound; wife-dominated; a faded little man at the wheel of his car. Admonished to be sure to get overshoes—"You're not a young man any longer." Woolgathering at the red light—"Pick it up, brother!"

Walter Mitty is not unlike innumerable other adults for whom life has turned out to be a pretty uninspiring affair. Not everyone for whom life has become drab creates for himself Walter Mitty's special substitute for a satisfying reality: he, in the wink of an eye, could be out of this world doing heroic deeds in the never-never land of his imagination. But other disappointed adults get their own substitute satisfactions in their own various ways.

The strong tendency of every defeated human being is to compensate for his defeats. Alfred Adler showed that this is often true in the case of the physically handicapped: that a deaf person may cultivate a preternatural keenness of vision, a blind person a high sensitivity of touch. This kind of compensation—unlike the daydreaming of Walter Mitty—remains within the realm of reality. It represents an actual rearing of the individual to handle life situations with the equipment at his command—and in spite of his being denied other equipment. In the case of Walter Mitty, and of all his defeated kind, the compensation is made in a world of unreality. It does not relate him to things as they are—nor to

<sup>3</sup> James Thurber, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," from the *New Yorker*. Copyright 1939 by James Thurber.

himself as he is. Instead, it makes briefly tolerable to him the lot that is his because he has failed thus to relate himself. The peril of his estate lies in the fact that reality remains tenaciously there and ready to break in upon his daydreaming—whether in the guise of a Mrs. Mitty, a bored policeman, or a superior on the job.

Thus, an adult who is unable to achieve the success he looked forward to in his youth may learn to think of himself as the lifelong victim of unfairness. He is, so he is convinced, a far better man than anyone recognizes him to be. Practically every time he has entered upon a job, he tells you, he has run into a bunch of bastards. Always he has had to keep his mouth shut; for they have always been so hipped on their own opinions they wouldn't listen to him. Or they've planned to slip some teacher's pet of their own over his head.

Some fraction of what he says may be true; or all of it may be untrue. The point is that the average defeated individual makes no serious effort to check on the truth of his self-justifications; for emotionally he cannot afford even to glimpse the possibility of their not being true. Out of his hurt feelings and lifelong disappointments he has built a self-image that has little or no relationship to reality but that is nonetheless his indispensable ego support.

Such an individual tends to bolster his necessary fictions by two processes: one is the building of fantasies about himself; the other, a selective attention to other people's misbehaviors. His fantasies may take the form of daydreams untouchably lodged within his own private mind—dreams, for example, in which he "tells his boss off" and sets him back on his heels with barbed words. Or they may take the form of long, boring

monologues in which he repetitively pours out to his family and friends the story of the world's misappreciation of him. His selective attention will make him pick out of all the multitude of human behaviors—good, bad, and indifferent—instances that support his contention that people are a pretty rotten lot. These instances he promptly generalizes into covering comments upon the human situation, while instances of decent, kindly, honest behavior are likely to pass unnoticed or to rate in his mind as exceptions, as selfishness in disguise, or as examples of the sort of thing that doesn't get you anywhere in this kind of world.

The unreality of such a person's self-image becomes to him so powerful a reality that it dominates his life. It builds in him, many times, a habit of bitterness that makes him unable to relax among his fellows, take them as they are, and enjoy them. He becomes the chip-on-the-shoulder man; the grouch; the seer-of-evil-in-others; the picker of flaws; the general deplorer. He is the one who, in his deep unconscious, has said, "Unreality, be thou my reality."

#### I V

We need, therefore, if we are to be soundly related to our world, to come to terms with our own self-image; for this image becomes a chief determinant of the way we see that world and therefore of the way we respond to its situations.

If the treatment we receive from the world confirms, in a general way, our self-image, we can go on the working assumption that our image has a fair reality content. With this assurance, we can emotionally afford to look for the reason when we come an occasional cropper. We can even afford to

find that reason in our own blundering behavior. But what if the treatment we receive contradicts our self-image? Then we either have to say, "My fault"—never an easy thing for the human being to say, and progressively difficult where failure is habitual—or we have to discover reasons for believing ourselves right and the world wrong. These reasons we tend to find in so describing the world that it becomes the sort of place in which no decent and sensitive person could establish and maintain a happy relationship.

This does not imply, of course, that we always have to take the world's estimate of us and of our ideas and projects as automatically sound. It does imply that if we *consistently* get from others responses that we take to be far below our deserts, we need to do more than leap to our own self-defense; we need to try to search out the reasons. Those who have gone the way of compensatory daydreaming often come to feel that their rejection by the world puts them into the company of all great persons who have been misunderstood. Conspicuously, however, the genuine social innovator, unlike the average daydreamer, is more interested in his work than in himself. Also, even when the world rejects him, he manages to maintain a sufficient faith in human beings, and a sufficient liking for them, to make his efforts seem to him worth while. In this he stands in marked contrast to the unhappy failure who is emotionally compelled to see himself in the right and others in the wrong.

Even if our emotions are reasonably sound, we face an obstacle, however, when it comes to putting our own self-image to a reality test. This obstacle lies in the fact that most of us are unconscious of having a self-image and of the pos-



sibility that there may be a discrepancy between what we are and what we think we are. We intimately feel ourselves to be a certain sort of person; and this feeling constitutes for us such strong evidence that we *are* that kind of person that even contradictory behaviors on our own part seem to us mere surface affairs. They show that we are only human, and that nobody's perfect; but they do not, as a rule, make us re-examine our basic belief as to the sort of person we are.

Rebecca McCann expresses this in the pained words of the *Cheerful Cherub*:

I'm sure I have a noble mind  
And honesty and tact  
And no one's more surprised than I  
To see the way I act.<sup>4</sup>

If, in such an instance, surprise is permitted to grow into a new and more modest self-appraisal, it may lead to a happier relationship with life; for the first prerequisite of such a relationship is that we know, more or less realistically, whether our "noble" minds are as noble as we like to think they are.

## V

We have all come across the individual who overestimates himself—his unselfishness; generosity; thoughtfulness; artistic ability; business acumen; patriotism; clarity of judgment. We all know, likewise, the individual who grossly underestimates himself—who goes through life with inferiority feelings not justified by his real abilities. In both cases, the individual re-

<sup>4</sup> Rebecca McCann, *The Cheerful Cherub*. Chicago: Washington Book Co., 1923.

mains unaware of the fact that the estimate he places upon himself does not comport with reality. Therefore, he acts *as if* he were what he really is not.

Such actions, obviously, involve hazards. If a person overestimates his physical powers—thinks he can lift a huge weight when he cannot—he is brought up sharply. Puffing and straining, he will soon have to acknowledge his muscular limitations or his misjudgment of the weight. But if he overestimates his mental or moral powers, he may go along for a lifetime without being brought to any sharp, clarifying realization that the frictions between him and his world come from his own false self-appraisals.

One example of this self-overestimating type of individual is the person who has an I-know-better-than-others image: I-am-a-superior-mind. He is found in many homes as a parent; or he may be an executive in an office or a completely self-assured I-know-the-answer member of a club, church, or college faculty. Shakespeare has provided this Sir Oracle with the appropriate slogan: "When I ope my lips, let no dog bark."

How he got to be thus overly impressed with himself is a various and often pathetic psychological story. Life has many ways of creating in us false self-images: from the overindulgences and overpettings that shape the intolerably conceited child to the overcompensations we make to ease our failures and rejections. Part of the business of relating ourselves to life is to search out the causes of such distorted self-judgments. In most cases, however, we make no such search, for the simple reason that we think we are what we think we are.

Consider the I-know-better-than-others type. Believing

himself to have a superior mind, he expects others to recognize his superiority. If a criticism of him is made, he is able neither to appraise it realistically nor to accommodate the possibility that it is justified. Instead, to use Karen Horney's expression, he turns his *need* into a *claim*.<sup>5</sup> Because he has a driving need to feel himself accepted as superior, he makes claims upon others to accept him as superior. If they fail him—if instead of bowing before his judgment, they question it, or even expose it as absurd—he goes into an emotional tailspin: becomes enraged; broods over his “humiliation” and seeks ways in which to show up his critic and revenge himself by humiliating *him*. Or he may brush the criticism aside as of no moment: as the unimportant buzzing of an inferior mind. By one device or another, he escapes the hazard of self-facing. To such a person one might say, as Timberlake said to Matthias,

“Your God, if you may still believe in him,  
Created you so wrapped in rectitude  
That even your eyes are filmed a little with it.  
Like a benignant sort of cataract,  
It spares your vision many distances  
That you have not explored.”<sup>6</sup>

And though he might listen with what he took to be the courtesy becoming to one of his stature, he would hear as little as Matthias heard of what was actually being said.

Unfortunately, an individual of this type does not merely lose out on his own reality relationships. He is a danger to

<sup>5</sup> Karen Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth*, Chapter II. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1950.

<sup>6</sup> Edwin Arlington Robinson, *Matthias at the Door*, pp. 11–12. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931.

others. He can be an intolerable tyrant in the home, where others cannot gainsay him; or as an executive in an office; or as a person in any other position of authority. His emotional inability to acknowledge error—or even, in many instances, to conceive of himself as in error—makes it impossible for him to join in a generous give-and-take with other minds. Hence, others must be subservient in his presence—or escape his presence—or be cast out. Obviously, where such a mind is in a position to determine the atmosphere in which others live and work, there can be little chance for those reality relationships that make for mental and emotional maturing.

To deceive ourselves into thinking we are greater or better than we are is one way of living with ourselves without living with reality. It is not a way that makes us particularly attractive to others—a fact wryly illustrated by the recent story of a man who went to the office of a psychiatrist with word that his wife had developed an inferiority complex. “How,” he asked, “can I be sure she’ll keep it?”

There is something heart-warming, on the other hand—as this story also illustrates—about the person who underestimates himself. He “walks humbly”—if not with his God, at least with the rest of us. This, however, we know: he must not walk too humbly if he is to maintain his emotional health; for where self-depreciation is out of all proportion to the individual’s real shortcomings, he is paralyzed in the use of his genuine powers.

We begin to know something, now, about how self-depreciation can get its start. A child may be born, for example, into a family that rejects him. Because he is not wanted, nothing he can do is appreciated. The drawing he

takes to his mother for her praise is treated with indifference or disdain. The thing he struggles to say at the table is cast back in his teeth. Such a child is likely to grow up distrusting himself because he has no way of knowing what powers he actually possesses. Even in his adulthood—when he has theoretically escaped the distorting domination of his parents—he will be at the mercy of the image he carries of himself as a person of small capacities and of small worth. Thus he will hold back from many undertakings that lie well within his actual capacity.

Or the child may be born to parents too quick and impatient in their efficiency. If the child tries to make something, his father takes the tools from his hand and, under the guise of teaching, makes the thing himself. If the girl child tries to help her mother in the kitchen, the mother shoos her away—often with some deprecatory remark: "I can't stand watching you do that! You're so clumsy." Many a girl has grown up into a baffled sense of domestic incompetence and into a hatred of her homemaking function because her mother was impatiently overefficient. Many a boy has grown self-distrustful because he has too often seen his father do deftly what he himself longs to do but is given no free chance to do.

Or the child may be born to parents who set for him standards higher than he can possibly meet. We see this, for example, in the case where an intense family pride—perhaps based upon a long tradition of real achievement and social contribution—makes the parents lay upon the child a responsibility beyond his years. He is made to feel that he is no average child in an average home. He is someone special: special in his capacities; special in his opportunities; special in his back-

ground; therefore, special in his obligations. Everything he does is measured by whether or not it is up to family tradition and family expectation. Such a child often becomes the sort of adult who, no matter how well he performs, feels diffident and guilty—for no performance can feel to him good enough.

Recently a friend we were visiting pointed to a letter she had just received. "There's a heartbreaking case," she said. "This letter is from a woman of grand capabilities and character. She could do anything—except anything shoddy. Yet somewhere in life she's picked up such a distrust of herself that she won't undertake responsibilities well within her competence. Even in her present work—which is far below the level of her powers—she can't make the slightest mistake without being overwhelmed with self-reproach and a feeling that here again is proof of her inability: proof that she should give up the job to someone more capable."

Such underestimation of the self is as tragic as overestimation—though rarely as harmful to other people. Both types render unlikely the building of sound, realistic relationships.

## VI

Those who live with such false images of themselves are completely sincere. In fact, we have learned to our sorrow that sincerity is never in itself a safe test of the truth or rightness of a person's behavior. Those who have committed the greatest crimes in history—the torturers of the Inquisition, say, or the keepers of the ghastly Buchenwalds—have been fiercely sincere. They have prided themselves upon carrying out a great mission. It is a fair guess that the image they have had of themselves—as "soldiers of God" or as "crusaders for

race purity"—has been in each instance an unconscious rationalization. There is every psychological indication that as they have hated, tortured, and killed, they have done so for reasons quite other than those they have proclaimed; reasons too deeply sunk in their unconsciousness for them to detect. The lusts of cruelty and the bitternesses of inferiority have had a way of justifying themselves as the service of the Highest.

One puzzling case in our democratic society is that of the average "machine politician." Most of us do not particularly like him as a type—even when we go on electing him to "represent" us. But he likes himself. In his more articulate moments, he warmly justifies himself. He is a man, he tells us, who never lets his constituents down. If someone in his precinct is in trouble, he is quick to help. He has sympathy for the poor; gets jobs for them; straightens them out with the police. In a big democracy like ours, he reminds us, the little people are lost and helpless. The political machine and the machine politicians are there to bring friendliness and hope to people otherwise forgotten. Besides, he tells us, most of the people who criticize him have no practical sense of politics—of choosing candidates, getting out the vote, and so on. Most "good people" are sideline players: ready enough to damn those who are in the game, but unwilling themselves to do the hard work of door-to-door canvassing, organizing, and all the other boring details that go with a political campaign.

He makes out a plausible case for himself. Yet one wonders whether his self-image—as a kind of Sir Galahad of the Slums, and a conscientious doer of jobs that need to be done—is an

altogether accurate counterpart of his real self. More deeply seen, perhaps, he would appear as a man who likes power and its perquisites and likes in particular office-holding power. Driven by his emotional need, he turns his need into a claim: pointing to his good services, he makes it clear—at least to himself—that he deserves the confidence of the people.

It is unlikely that any machine politician—even the most flagrantly corrupt of old-line “bosses”—ever thinks of himself as a social menace. He has built so appealing an image of himself as a little brother of the poor, a friendly guy in an unfriendly world, a practical man among impractical idealists, and a man loyal to his party through thick and thin, that the profound cynicism of his political behavior is pushed out of his own sight. Even when he is exposed as having connived with the underworld—and as having reaped rich profits from his connection—he has his answer to give, one that apparently rings convincingly in his own ears: “There are things you have to do to stay in politics.”

“Although it cannot be claimed that psychological insight is any guarantee of insight into society, there is ample evidence that people who have the greatest difficulty in facing themselves are the least able to see the way the world is made. Resistance to self-insight and resistance to social facts are contrived, most essentially, of the same stuff.”<sup>7</sup> Whether, therefore, we concern ourselves about the social health of individuals or the health of our society as a whole, we cannot remain indifferent to the influence of the self-image upon

<sup>7</sup> T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality*, p. 976. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950.



the relationships that the human being establishes and maintains.

William Steig, in his *About People*, has drawn in caricature the various masks and false fronts that many of us put on. Whatever disguise it is that we employ, we put it on with some purpose. Consciously or unconsciously, we wish to hide our real self and to win applause for a self that is not there; or we wish to make ourselves more impressive—or tolerable—to ourselves. Perhaps in most cases we wish to do both. But whatever our reasons—and rationalizations—we will do little to develop healthy relations with our world until we begin to look at the self behind the mask.

## T H R E E

### IMAGES OF OTHERS

A SECOND way in which we import unreality into our relationships is through *false images of others*. In certain of its aspects, our tragic capacity to see others as they are not—and to fail to see them as they are—is merely an extension of our need to see ourselves as we are not. The person who is defending some cherished image of himself against all contrary evidence—and particularly against the evidence inherent in other people's responses to him—will, as we have already noted, tend so to describe others that their responses can be dismissed as irrelevant. To take an almost classic instance of this sort of thing, the individual who has come to think of himself as “good” but “unappreciated” is almost inevitably driven by this self-image to think of others as unappreciative.

This is by no means, however, the whole story of our false images of others. In part, that story grows out of our simple preoccupations and self-preoccupation: we do not take the

trouble to know people as they are because they do not figure as important in our frame of reference. When one human being sees another "only as a motion on the landscape,"<sup>1</sup> it is, as often as not, because his mind is on something else. Since selective attention is a necessary art in a world where we cannot respond to everything in our complex environment, there is nothing inherently wrong in our not making responses-in-depth to every fellow human who crosses our path. Interpersonal relations are disrupted only when we convert our obtuseness into action: when we begin to *treat* others as mere motions on the landscape in situations where we and they are both involved. I recall the bitter description that one secretary, in a certain office where morale was notoriously low, gave of her boss: "The only difference he sees between me and a filing case is that he paid cash down for the filing case but has to go on paying me a salary." It is all too easy for us, busy and preoccupied, to develop the habit of treating people as mere physical objects; and wherever this habit grows, sound interpersonal relations become impossible.

Again, our failure to see people as they are may come from the fact that we see them only through the lens of our own hopes, expectations, or disappointments. Sometimes it is almost as though we saw them, not at all as individuals unique in their own right, but *as appendages to ourselves*. Many of the false images that distort our intimate relationships—between parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife—are of this sort. I think, for example, of a certain woman who, in her youth, was a famous beauty and the darling of

<sup>1</sup> Edwin Arlington Robinson, "Roman Bartholow," *Collected Poems*, p. 739. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930.

her social set. Her only daughter, now herself a grown woman, is a plain sort of person, averagely attractive but not likely to outshine others in any social gathering. Never in her life has this daughter been treated by her mother as anything else than a disappointment and an unkind trick of fate. She has never been seen *as she is*. Instead, her mother has looked at her as she might look at a distorting scar on one of her own beautiful hands. Seeing the girl, in short, not as a separate individual to be judged on her own merits, but simply *as part of herself*—and an unsuitable and humiliating part—she has rated as ugly, clumsy, grossly unattractive a person who is, in fact, a quite acceptable sample of the human race.

Many of the false images we have of others are, however, less our own invention than the invention of the group to which we belong: the racial, national, economic, or religious group. We grow up, all of us, within cultural environments that encourage us to distinguish various “in-groups” from “out-groups” and to limit the amount of appreciation and understanding that we even try to have where “out-groups” are concerned. This means that while we tend to *individuate* the members of our own group, seeing this person as different from that, we tend to *stereotype* the members of other groups—and usually to their disadvantage. These false images that are *group creations directed toward other groups* and that are hostile rather than friendly must be counted as prime causes of man’s long inhumanity to man and of much of the world’s present terror.

## II

Since sound interpersonal and intergroup relations are impossible where false images prevail and become chief determining factors in our treatment of one another, whatever will we have to achieve psychological maturity must carry with it a will to understand and correct the misconceptions we hold with regard to other people. Three reasons for such misconceptions are obvious.

The first is plain ignorance. I remember how, as a boy, I made my first venture into San Francisco's Chinatown. Having crossed the boundary street between Occidental and Oriental San Francisco, I entered a region of utter strangeness. Chattering, pigtailed Chinese crowded the streets. I looked furtively into doorways of shops and saw groups of Orientals sitting, to my eyes, like groups of conspirators in the rear of these shops. I saw strange foods and heard weird music. Fear gripped me as I looked at these strangers through the eyes of my ignorance: an ignorance made up both of my own lack of experience and of untruths I had been told as truths. These were surely dangerous people, ready to stick a knife into my back or to kidnap me. They *must* be dangerous—for they were strikingly different from the familiar, presumably undangerous people with whom I had exclusively moved up to that time. I hurried through as fast as my small-boy legs and courage would permit; and I did not breathe freely until I had regained my long-known, and now fiercely appreciated, Occident.

Multiply that small boy I once was into many millions who walk in ignorance of one another, and we have part of the

answer to the question of why the world suffers so deeply from the tragedy of unfriendliness. In a world as insecure as ours, the unknown is the unpredictable. Anything may pop out at us. We have learned to feel even relatively safe only within the areas of the familiar. There we know what to expect. We can have our responses ready.

Most of us even in our adult years exhibit an ignorance of our remote fellow men not unlike the ignorance I exhibited, and turned into fear and hostility, that day in Chinatown. The distances that keep us ignorant may be geographic: we may never see these other people and, never seeing them, have no sure way of knowing them. Or the distances may be cultural. These people may dress differently; have different voices, intonations, gestures; have different manners and motivations. Distance may indeed, as the poet Campbell wrote, "lend enchantment"; but it does so chiefly where it frees us from the obligation to do anything about that which is distant. It is easy to feel romantic about a period of history in which we do not have to live, a South Sea island we are never likely to visit, a "noble savage" who is the figment of our imagination, or even an eccentric uncle to whose monologues we no longer have to listen. But distance—whether of geography, culture, or philosophy—is likely to be experienced as threat rather than enchantment if we and those who are distant from us are so involved in the same situation that we have to make responses to them that we are not prepared to make wisely because we are blocked by ignorance.

Our ignorance of others takes many forms. An individual, for example, who has never seen a Negro in any but a menial position learns mistakenly to take it for granted that Negroes

are fit only for menial positions. Such an individual would have queer, startled feelings at seeing a Negro publicly honored for outstanding scientific service to his country; or at seeing a Negro dining with the nation's President. In all likelihood, his first spontaneous reaction would be that the Negro had stepped out of "his place"; and this reaction might fuse dangerously with anger at such an untoward event. It would be all the more likely to do so if he himself, instead of being merely an onlooker, was so involved that he had to decide how to behave in the unprecedented situation. His own embarrassment, then, his sense of being put on the spot, would tend to heighten his anger against the Negro. Only the rare individual would be moved to question the accuracy of his own hitherto unquestioned image of the Negro as a "natural" inferior.

I remember my own utter astonishment when, as a university student, I saw a group of distinguished Chinese mount the platform as guests of the university. I had grown up in an environment where Chinese were laundrymen, fruit peddlers, and cooks—but not scholars. In my vocabulary, and in the vocabularies of my boyhood associates, the word *Chinaman*—or more often *Chink*—had been synonymous with *menial*. A non-menial Chinese, had I encountered one in my young years, would have had to be accounted for as an oddity, not as a natural phenomenon that put my own preconception to the test. The sight of those Chinese scholars mounting the platform required of me, therefore, a hard readjustment of image. That readjustment, however, had to be made, and made time and again until it was secure. For in the years that followed that first experience, I, myself a teacher by then, not only had in my classes brilliant Chinese

students but, in my professional organizations, was repeatedly privileged to associate with Chinese scholars to whom the word *menial* could not remotely apply.

To the extent that we walk in ignorance of others we create our images of them out of our ignorance. We see them not as they are but as our ignorance fabricates.

### III

A second breeder of our false images of others is competition with those others—or, rather, certain kinds of competition.

In our culture we have been led to believe, and to an extent rightly, that competition is the life of alertness and that it is therefore a major force for improving our lot. Where there is no competition nothing moves ahead. Moving ahead requires deviation from the customary. Someone—even at his peril—must show a better way of doing things. He must, in short, compete with the repetitive past.

Competition in this sense is obviously a healthy force in life; but we know that there are also forms of competition that are extremely unhealthy. These latter forms create such hostile feelings among us that they lead to grave emotional conflicts and image falsifications. We must make note of three of these unhealthy forms of competition.

The first is that form of competition where *no accurate proof of the better or worse is possible*. We can take a typical example. Where two men who compete for a position take a carefully prepared, standard examination to prove their respective fitness, the chances for bitterness and the imputation of unfairness are at a minimum. There is in this situation



an objective way of establishing who has the greater fitness for the job. The man who fails may feel impelled to self-defensive explanation—may say, for example, that he was not feeling up to par; but there will be a minimum likelihood of his building hostile fantasies about the man who succeeds. Where, on the other hand, one of these men is selected merely because the executive who does the promoting prefers him—with however good reason—there is large chance for imputation of unfairness. Out of his disappointment, the defeated candidate may create the image of the other candidate as an apple-polisher, a double-faced carrier of tales, a teacher's pet, or what not; and of the man who does the promoting as one who plays favorites.

It is this "no proof" kind of competition that has chiefly prevailed in the areas of religion, politics, and racial relations—in contrast to the economic area of marketable goods or the area of scientific research, where the proof of the pudding has, by and large, been in the eating. In the case of the mutually hating Mohammedans and Christians, for example, neither could "prove"—by standards acceptable to both—that his religion was the true one. To each adherent, the "truth" of his religion was "proved" by the deep satisfaction that he himself found in that particular faith. Here was a *competition of convictions* but no *objective proof*.

The situation was entirely different when Galileo, setting up his own scientific view in competition with that of the Aristotelian-minded scholars of his day, asserted that two unequal weights dropped from a height would reach the ground at the same moment. Had no accurate experiment been possible, the argument might have gone on endlessly—as it did

in the case of the angels who were presumed to dance on the point of a needle. Fortunately, in this case, an accurate experiment was possible. Galileo climbed to the top of the Leaning Tower and dropped two unequal weights. When they reached the ground at exactly the same moment, that was that. There was no longer legitimate room for argument. The proof was in. To be sure, there were grumblings. For a short time there were even fantastic pseudo-explanations. Devils were even imported into the two weights to account for their erratic behavior. But such measures were merely the reluctant final gasp of an ancient "truth" on its way out. The proof of Galileo's view was incontrovertible. In no long time, good feeling was restored; and even the disaffected went along with the newly demonstrated scientific law.

Most politics is carried on under conditions of "no proof." This undoubtedly accounts for the vast amount of vituperation, misrepresentation, and mutual belittling among politicians everywhere. Only a small part of politics comes within the range of scientific demonstration—as it did in the case of the TVA. Most of it remains bare assertion. Political skill, therefore, has come to be chiefly a skill in rhetoric—an adroit business of pointing with pride and viewing with alarm. Politicians make speeches and promises; they seldom make controlled experiments. Politics, in short, remains mostly in the realm of what Plato called "opinion." Hence it continues to be a fertile seed-bed for the mutual animosities and misjudgments of men.

The same, even more obviously, is true in the area of race relations. Here, for the most part, individuals judge one another without any careful appraisal of the truth. The belief,

for example, among many white men that the Negro is mentally inferior, oversexed, and lazy is invariably a belief, not a proof. Holders of the belief have a way of declaring that they *know* because they have *seen*, asserting that having lived with Negroes, they have knowledge that comes out of direct experience. What they mean, of course, is that they have lived *in sight of* Negroes who were themselves living under certain culturally determined limitations. Obviously, such spatial nearness is no guarantee of psychological nearness. In fact, between even the most generous-minded of white men in a privileged status and Negroes in a fixed lower status there are psychological distances too wide to be spanned except by determined, sustained, conscious effort; and even where such effort is put forth, the span may remain flimsy and artificial if the differences of status remain unchanged.

Hence, race relations continue to be fertile soil in which fears, enmities, and mutual misunderstandings take root and grow. It is encouraging to know that, thanks to psychological and anthropological researches, we are now able, with increasing accuracy, to appraise racial abilities and disabilities. We have, therefore, at last, a chance to subject our judgments to proof—and to remake the false images of the people of other races that have been constructed largely, not out of their characteristics, but out of our own habits and preferences.

A second kind of competition is of the form *where no multiple choice is possible*. Where choice is severely limited—as, for example, between two competing religions, or political systems, or economic organizations—enmity is apt to run high. Where the choice is wider—as between many religions

and between many gradations of political and economic philosophy—tolerance and a will to understand have a better chance.

The peculiar health of a democratic economy lies in the multiplicity of choices it allows. All kinds of goods of life—things, ideas, occupations, religions—are permitted to compete for favor. No governmental monopoly prescribes what course in life must be chosen; what articles must be bought; what newspaper must be read; what religion or non-religion must be embraced; what governmental policies must be approved; what enemies must be hated. Where a democratic nation begins to curtail competitive freedom—particularly in the area of ideas—and to put a premium upon conformity, it becomes to that extent less characteristically itself and less able to cope flexibly with the problems it faces.

Religions, also, as we know, have had a long and unhappy history of rejecting multiple choice. Each of the crusading religions has opposed other religions on a fixed assumption: there is no truth but ours. Each of these religions has, in characteristic fashion, lowered its curtain, refusing to let its adherents know other religions except to condemn them. The result has been a tragic history of animosity: a history that has vastly lessened the socially reconstructive power of organized religion as a whole.

Finally, competition is unhealthy when it is *unproductive*. A number of years ago, the economist Thomas Nixon Carver showed with clarity the difference between productive and destructive competition. Let us suppose, he said, there are two neighboring farmers. One of them, as the time for harvest approaches, goes to his local freight agent and, covertly hand-

ing over a bribe, gets an agreement that when he ships his crop his freight rates will be "adjusted." He gets his "secret rebate." At harvest's end, this farmer has more to show for his year's work than his neighbors. He has successfully competed—by a short-range, strictly monetary standard.

The second farmer goes about it differently. He studies his soil and the lay of his land; searches out the most advanced knowledge he can find about the best practices of farming. At harvest time, with a better quality of wheat and more bushels to the acre, this farmer too has more to show for his year's work than his neighbors. He, too, has successfully competed.

The moral of the example, if it needs one, is clear. The second form of competition is productive, the first destructive. Substitute, now, for "secret rebate" any number of similar shady practices—adulteration, short weight, shoddy, false advertising—and we have those destructive forms of competition that have made the word stand, in many minds, not for a creative effort to produce the better but for an irresponsible effort, by fair means or foul, to outsmart the other fellow.

Competition, then, is neither good nor bad. In situations where no accurate and accepted proof of the better or worse is possible, it may become simply a trial of opposing strengths in which men learn to hate and to build false conceptions of one another. Again, under conditions of "no choice but one" men are denied those multiple choices that keep their minds alert and friendly. Finally, when competition uses means that undermine human integrity, it destroys the very basis of our living together and forces us into an attitude of suspicious self-defense that precludes all likelihood of our seeing other people as they individually are.

## IV

A third major cause of our false images of one another is our widespread inability to place ourselves vividly and sensitively at the point of view of other people.

At the moment when this is being written, the Western nations are facing one of the most bitter accusations in all their history: they are being accused of a long mistreatment of the "backward" peoples of the world. The challenge comes most truculently from a newcomer in the company of power nations: Russia. But it comes also—and more impressively—from peoples throughout the non-Western world who feel themselves to have been ruthlessly exploited. How much truth is there in this accusation?

"There is enough vivid history in recent years," write the American publicists Dewey Anderson and Stephen Raushenbush, "to show . . . that the old ways of dealing with the world and its people have failed. . . . No longer can any stricken nation safely be allowed to starve with the confident assurance that its misery will, after all, leave the rest of the world very much where it was before. It may have been that way half a century ago, but it is not that way now.

"A whole cycle of indifference is coming to an end. . . .

"People in every underdeveloped area, in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, are determined to improve their lot. They think of better agriculture. They think of more industry. They think of education and health. . . . It is to our interest as well as theirs for us to bring sufficient imagination, leadership and effectiveness to the job that a halt will be called, by the

people themselves, to any further shrinking of the free world.”<sup>2</sup>

These writers accuse the Western nations of a “cycle of indifference.” But what is indifference but an inability to place oneself, with keen imagination, at the point of view of others? We might call it *emotional impercipient*. Under its influence, we see people, not as they see themselves, and not as they objectively are, but as our own preoccupation and advantage may dictate.

Alan Paton has described this “indifference” in his poignant novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. He has shown with dramatic force how the uprooting of native cultures and the demoralization of native peoples has been carried on by men who, fervently believing that they were bearing “the white man’s burden” and bringing the blessings of civilization, have had not the slightest notion that they were bringing the white man’s curse. The Union of South Africa is a living testimony to an almost complete inability on the part of the white invaders to feel what was happening inside the skin of their darker fellow men or to look at their own behaviors in any light that would render their own prosperity less morally palatable. The same is true wherever race relations have been cast in the pattern of “superior race” and “inferior race”: to the normal difficulties that always stand in the way of mutual understanding are added the special difficulties that come out of an artificial design of advantage and disadvantage.

We need not multiply examples. Where, in any life relation-

<sup>2</sup> *Bold New Program Series*, No. 1, p. 9. *The Public Affairs Institute*, Washington, D.C., 1950.

ship, men are unable imaginatively to place themselves at the point of other men's interests and needs, they are more than likely, under the pressure of their own egoistic impulses, to do less than justice to others and to shape such images of these others as will make their own practices seem right and reasonable. Only those who treat other people with justice and good will can afford—having to live with themselves—to see these others as deserving of justice and good will. Every treatment that we mete out to a fellow human being will tend, to the extent that it is unjust and ill-willed, to distort our image of that other and thereby provide a justification-in-advance for yet further obtuse actions.

“The ways of unimaginative men are singularly fierce.”<sup>3</sup> Of necessity this is so. For only as men feel as others feel can they do to others, and for and with others, what those others need to have done. Where men cannot feel as others feel, the likelihood is that they will—out of egocentricity or even out of blundering good intentions—do to others exactly what should not be done.

To know these things about ourselves is to get to the roots—or toward the roots—of our human perplexities. Where men are ignorant of one another, they had best not make judgments upon one another. The old admonition, “Count ten before speaking in anger,” might be paraphrased to read, “Get knowledge before starting to hate.” Again, where men compete with one another, they need to be sure the competing is healthy—lest, seeing their fellow man as *competitor*, they

<sup>3</sup> Edwin Arlington Robinson, “Captain Craig,” *Collected Poems*, p. 147. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930.



become unable to see him as *human being*. To know how to distinguish between the competitions that make us more truly and creatively alive and those that distort and kill is to put the great force of competition into its proper place: as a stimulus to man's genius, not as a tyrant over him.

Finally, we need to know how devastating the mind can be that is unable to move over into other people's minds and look at life from their angle. Wordsworth called imagination "the mightiest lever known to the moral world." The metaphor is an arresting one. It suggests that the power to feel as others feel, if widely used, could lift the world.

Knowledge; a healthy and productive involvement in situations; imagination: these are the three forces that can keep us in touch with reality, and in particular, with the reality that is embodied in other human beings.

## F O U R

# THE EGOCENTRIC TRAP

NATURE'S most important gift to us has been our rich tissue of nerve interconnections. The lower animals have been, in this respect, far less lucky than we. In the long process of evolution, they have not developed the amazing neural interweavings with which even the least of us, if he is even approximately normal, has been endowed. This is why lower animals have far less ability than we to survive under changed conditions. It is why they cannot invent; cannot prevision the future except in limited and stereotyped ways; cannot make broad policies and plans. They often have far better special organs. "A man can hardly boast of much nimbler fingers than an ape's, much better vocal parts than a parrot's, much more acute distance vision than the eagle's, nor a keener sense of smell than the dog's; yet his capacities for surviving under complex and novel conditions by adapting himself to them or reshaping them to fit his own needs are enormously greater."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Frederick Dashiell, *Fundamentals of General Psychology*, p. 258. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937.

The reason for this greater adaptability and resourcefulness is simple to state, though vastly intricate in its reality: man has these greater powers "just because his fingers and voice and feet, his eyes and nose and skin and muscle senses, are so much more richly interconnected."<sup>2</sup>

Among humans, we sometimes find unfortunate individuals who never develop beyond a fixed point: morons, imbeciles, idiots. Here, too, the same pattern holds. "The muscles and glands of an idiot may not be greatly defective, and his eyes, ears, skin, and muscular sense organs may be almost as good as those of the average person; but with his pitifully inadequate connecting mechanisms he remains nothing but a grimacing, twisting, monkey-like human body."<sup>3</sup>

This whole phenomenon of neural interconnections was unknown to us before physiologists were able to study the microscopic elements of nerve structure. Nerve tissue, we now know, is built out of individual cells that are distinguishable from all other cells of the body by their long branches. These branches are of two kinds, axons and dendrites. The axon is single and usually long, but itself has branches. The dendrites ramify, broadly and densely like a tree. The neuron, with its axons and dendrites, is the central theme in the whole story of our physiological and psychological development. How the neuron sends out its threadlike branches; how these interconnect; how neurons form junctions or synapses; how impulses are excited at the receptive points of neurons and are carried in various directions and under various conditions of resistance and facilitation, through one or more synapses, to

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

the points where action takes place: this is the amazing story of our neural selves, and one that is just beginning to be told.

Much of it still remains in the realm of theory—albeit theory that is held stringently within bounds. Much of it is tested fact. This much, in any event, we know: the basic stimulus-response pattern of our life is that of neural interconnections. Without the individual cell—the neuron—there could be no life of stimulus and response; but without the widely ramifying axons and dendrites there could be only the most rudimentary, point-contained system of response.

Out of this new physiological knowledge, certain facts about our maturing have become plain. The growth of our conscious life goes hand in hand with the growth of nerve connections. It is for this reason that the infant is as yet unable to have firm control of his muscular system. So far as his native equipment is concerned, he may be a perfect specimen. In him there is no lack of anything a human infant should have. Yet no matter how hard we might try to train, say, this two-weeks-old baby to grasp a spoon or to walk, we should fail. The baby's neural system is still incomplete. In the same manner, any effort to teach a two-year-old the intricacies of calculus would certainly fail. Axons and dendrites that will later be formed and that will proliferate into a nerve tissue are still unformed.

Our growing powers, in short, must wait upon the growth of the appropriate nerve connections. Human tragedy comes when this growth is never accomplished. This, as we have seen, is the fate of the idiot. His nerve cells have not been able to ramify into wide connections. Each cell, so to speak, is trapped within its cellular isolation. The wide community of

cells which is the health of the body-mind is never achieved. This, then, is the story of ourselves read in physiological terms: the process of life is fundamentally an interconnection of neural impulses, and the richness of life depends upon the breadth and complexity of this interconnection.

The evolution of the human individual has been marked by an emergence out of the single cell of protoplasmic stuff into the many-celled tissue of the intricate creature that is a grown person. In this evolutionary process the drama has lain in the power of separate cells to send forth their delicate, threadlike substance and make strong contact with one another.

## II

We have been writing, here, of what takes place within each individual. With amazing parallelism, the pattern holds for what takes place between the individual and his world. Here, too, the essential story of our human growth is that of our growing interconnections.

There was psychological prevision in the Biblical story of a Creator who looked upon the first man and said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." To be sure, the Biblical account does not go beyond the Creator's determination to give Adam a wife. But the insight was there.

The story of the growth into richness of our psychological life is the story of our growing interconnections. Precisely as the neuron sends forth its threadlike substance to make contact with other neurons, so the individual person sends forth the "substance" of his mind to make contact with other minds. If this sending forth is a continuous and widening process, he builds, in the end, a social tissue rich with insight and power.

Tragedy ensues where there is no sending forth of the mind to make contact with other minds. We have noted the plight of the idiot. There is a less conspicuous but scarcely less tragic plight where the individual of normal neural equipment is, for one reason or another, unable to connect himself with the world of his fellow humans, or where his connection with them is rudely broken. Again, there is psychological prevision in the story of Cain, who, because he slew his brother, heard his Creator's curse: "A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." Cain himself spoke with psychological insight when he replied, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Quite literally, the punishment of isolation from his kind—whether that isolation stem from his own emotional incapacity to make contact or from the overt rejection of him by society—is greater than the human being can long bear without suffering a distortion of his humanhood.

This insight—now so strongly affirmed by psychological and psychiatric experience—puts us under obligation to review some of the oldest of man's practices. Take, for example, our long-established practices of punishment. Among the most common of these, even today, is that of forcibly disconnecting the social transgressor from his human fellows: putting him into a cell isolation that almost guarantees the further impoverishment of his mental, emotional, and moral tissue. Almost by definition the criminal is an individual who, having failed to build an adequate web of relationships with his society, is trying to satisfy his ego needs by means that take too little account of the rights and needs of others. To attempt to cure his criminality by condemning him to a situation in which

no web of relationships *can* be built is to be curiously blind to psychological cause and effect.

Large numbers of the public—as well as of prison authorities—are afflicted with such blindness. Unable to realize the psychological impoverishment that inevitably results from an abrupt and humiliating disconnection of any human being from the normal life processes, they insist that such disconnection, in the case of the criminal, be as severe, forcible, isolating, and degrading as possible. Those who have studied the manner in which our bodies respond to our emotions state that the folk phrase “blind with rage” can have literal accuracy. Perhaps what we are dealing with in the traditional attitude of society toward the transgressor is a psychological blindness induced by rage: by the immature retaliatory impulse to hit back rather than by the mature impulse to heal.

Warden Clinton T. Duffy, in *The San Quentin Story*, tells of the efforts of John Wilkins, a new member of the Prison Board, who was “fifty years ahead of his time,” to bring about healthier psychological conditions for prisoners; and he quotes the puzzled words Wilkins wrote after retiring, defeated in his purposes: “It is hard to understand the bitterness of the public against any intelligent measure of prison reform. The whole attitude was one of uncompromising vengeance against criminals.

“Granting of credits upon good conduct aroused the wrath of the State. . . . An earnest protest was raised when the whipping post was abolished. . . .

“The man who had received a jolt of several years in the degenerating atmosphere of San Quentin . . . found himself

a pariah against whom avenues of respectable employment were closed. He was dogged by officers of the law, and if by some chance he secured employment under an alias, his former record was inevitably revealed.”<sup>4</sup>

A judge, in short, might pronounce upon an offender a sentence of a few months or years; but society, grim with fear and rage, would convert it into a life sentence. Something of this kind tends to happen, though less conspicuously, in a multitude of instances where—in home, classroom, or office—the offender against his kind is, by isolating punishment, turned into a pariah. The period of enforced “disconnection” may end; but the stigma and the inner frustration linger on. Here is something about psychological cause and effect that parents need to know if the punishments to which they resort are to be character-building rather than character-destroying. It is something that principals and teachers need to know; that army officers need to know; that, above all, prison guards and wardens, keepers of juvenile delinquents, and caretakers of the mentally ill must know. All of us need to know the basic psychological truth that in the degree that we disconnect man from his fellow man we make him less a man.

### III

Not all the cells, however, within which individuals suffer solitary confinement are made of brick and stone. A great many of them are made of the intangible stuff of human emotion. The past several decades have taught us much on this score. During those decades a whole avalanche of research

<sup>4</sup> Warden Clinton T. Duffy, *The San Quentin Story (As Told to Dean Jennings)*, p. 93. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1950.



about the "psychic wounds" of childhood has been shaken down on our heads. Freud started this research by demonstrating that many of our adult maladjustments have their origins in childhood experience. Following his pioneering insight, psychologists and psychiatrists have explored the many ways in which the sensitivity of the child is shocked into defensiveness—and isolation.

The child comes into the world with outreaching as well as self-defensive powers—or more accurately, potentialities. Given half a chance—with no adults rebuffing him with their indifference, saying constant "Noes," or bringing the sudden surprise of slappings and spankings—the child will normally set out to explore, as his powers develop, the new territory into which he has arrived. That is, he will begin to connect himself with it. But these outreaching powers which, in a permissive atmosphere of love and interest, would develop a rich network of connections with life—people to love and things to learn and materials to use—are in many cases so discouraged by what adults do to the child that they are overmastered by opposite impulses. The outreach toward affection is turned into the fight or flight of hostility; the outreach toward learning is turned into self-defensive withdrawal or rebellious refusal to learn. The tragedy thus initiated tends to compound as the years go by; for the powers of approach-to-life, of connecting up with life, become virtually unavailable for use if they go long unused. In their stead, the powers of defensiveness take over; so that the individual's attitudes are, so to speak, saturated with "againstness" even when, in his loneliness and isolation, he most deeply hungers to be with others and to have their approval confirm his ego-significance.

Much research in this area has centered on the rejected child. Where parents, by conscious or unconscious antagonism to him, "disconnect" a child—that is, hold him off and force him into emotional seclusion by their own indifference and disapproval—they prevent the growth in him of those positive relations to people and things that are essential to confident and happy life. The home of such a child is not called a prison; nor are his parents thought of as prison guards who forcibly lock their hapless victim within the cell of his anxious, resentful, isolated ego. But such a home, psychologically viewed, is as much a prison as though it had visible bars.

Much research, also, has centered upon the dominated child. Over-commanding parents, dictating every choice and action of a child, prevent that young human from reaching out toward life on his own and weaving a world of meanings for himself. Where, in a home of this type, the child does send forth the delicate tendrils of his curiosity, inventiveness, and affection, they are snipped back by parents who already have in mind their own fixed pattern for the child's growth.

Similar "disconnection" occurs in the case of the over-indulged child. The piling on of attentions; constant and exaggerated praisings; the doing for the child of things that he, in his exploratory years, should be learning to do for himself; the smothering of him with goodies and gifts—these tend to keep him a passive, spoon-fed receiver and prevent his making the effort to relate himself *on his own* to people and things. For all the apparent affection that envelops him, he remains isolated from life: locked up within his ego, with tenderly solicitous parents as guards.

Finally, there is the child whose parents build him up in his own eyes as different from other children and better than they: the product of a finer background; or distinguished by brilliance, sensitivity, originality, or good looks. Human beings are alike in far more ways than they are different from one another; and a healthy recognition of this fact is requisite to a sound, comfortable relationship with life. This is a fact, however, that a child has little chance to glimpse if he is kept so constantly aware of his differences—real or assumed—that he exaggerates these out of all proportion. Never sensing what he has in common with others, he remains emotionally isolated from them—within an ego-trap stoutly barred with his sense of uniqueness.

#### I V

Not all egocentricity, however, can be attributed to parental mistakes. Much of it creeps up on us out of the various conditions of our life. One of the early and continuing needs of the self is to protect itself against undue invasion. "We see children," writes James Plant, "who have the problem of building an ego that is a sort of castle and of protecting this ego from intruders of all kinds by means of a sort of 'wall,' the height and thickness of which are apparently dependent upon the character of the assaults the ego experiences or looks forward to."<sup>5</sup> This is a wall *to keep others out*, so that the individual can go at his own internal problems without undue interference.

Plant calls this "wall" we build around ourselves—when

<sup>5</sup> James S. Plant, *The Envelope*, p. 46. New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1950.

“the world is too much with us”—a “status-preserving mechanism.” It is a “fending-off affair,” operating to rebuff or parry. Built up in fear of meddlesome approach, or simply as a defense against the impingement of too many stimuli, it tends to develop in the child as a various negativism.

The most interesting place to observe this process of “fending off” is, according to Plant, in a kindergarten or first grade “where, as children gather about anything of interest, they pack in together like so many sardines. The negativistic child, the one who has been ‘kept at’ too much, does not sit off in a corner as the shy one does, but he always maintains a little distance between himself and the group. . . . Obviously all through life a person is caught between this basic fear of an intrusion upon his personality and the wide-spread propaganda that the better we know people the better we like them.”<sup>6</sup>

Educationally and socially—with good reason—we make much of the need for “breaking down barriers between people.” But where our efforts become an intrusion upon personality they will be more likely to foster negativism than cordiality. We see this sometimes, for example, in the case of a small boy who, having impulsively confided his dearest secret to his father, hears that father retail his secret at the family table. We see it, again, in the case of the adolescent girl who is allowed no privacy of thought or possession. Thus I recall the instance of a mother who surreptitiously read her teenage daughter’s diary—and was caught in the act. She was tearful, and well-nigh desperate, as she told of the experience: “I only wanted to feel close to her . . . to know what she was

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

thinking . . . and now she's shut me out completely. She won't tell me anything."

Where the fear of intrusion becomes a basic aspect of character structure—as we witness in a small boy who holds himself apart; or in an adult who stands critically aloof from his fellows—there is little chance that a sound connective tissue of relationships can be built between the individual and his world.

We note here a significant difference between the shy child who sits off in a corner and the negativistic child who merely holds himself apart. The shy child *wants to be with the others*; but his fear holds him back. The negativistic child holds off because, afraid of having his inner self meddled with, he is wary of others; he prefers having a gap between them and himself. The shy child is potentially non-egoistic. He would come out of his corner if he could. His character trend is *toward others*. The negativistic child is primarily ego-centered. Since he is most concerned about keeping his ego inviolate, his attitude toward others is one of suspicious fear. He *expects* them to be invaders of his cherished privacy. His character trend, therefore, is inward—toward himself, with a repelling gesture toward his world.

To preserve one's inner life from undue intrusion is essential to a vigorously structured individuality. But to build too thick a wall, and to be constantly on the alert lest intruders penetrate one's defenses, is not only to create an excessive preoccupation with one's own ego but to cast others, without respect to their individual qualities and differences, in the role of enemies.

Such exaggerated ego protection, since it always implies

an enemy present or anticipated, inevitably takes the form of hostility. Thus Plant rightly concludes, with respect to the kind of egocentricity that is bred of negativism, that it "is fertile soil for paranoia, so that one is not surprised at the marked paranoid swings . . . reducing everything that is said or done to terms relative to the self." Under this condition of extreme self-centeredness, he continues, "we see an increase in 'touchiness' and in all those phrases that connote suspicious sensitivity ('I know you really mean me when you talk that way'). Some individuals never grow beyond this—in a few instances eventually developing a true paranoid psychosis."<sup>7</sup>

Besides this self-protective form of egocentricity—wholly legitimate where there is too much intrusion from others, but always in danger of getting out of bounds—there is the self-demanding form. A child who has been ill for a long time may develop a habit of expecting attention to center on himself. He may go into tantrums or prolonged sullenness when attention is withdrawn. He likes others around him; and appears, superficially, therefore, to be an affectionate, social-minded youngster. But closer observation of his behavior reveals that he likes these others not for themselves but for himself: their wishes and unique characteristics mean nothing to him except as they can be made to serve his wish for companionship and attention. While the movement of his interest seems to be outward, toward others, so that he is patently restless and miserable if left alone, the real movement of his interest is inward—toward himself.

A similar demand to be the center of attention is often

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

evinced by grown-ups. Not infrequently we see it in the case of a man who was the only brother of several sisters or in the case of a woman who was the only sister of several brothers. The individual who, through his growing years, is distinguished by sex from the family majority may have a much harder time learning the equality practices of give-and-take than does the individual who is merely one among several of his own sexual kind. Thus, the only brother of several sisters may suffer a double disadvantage in the maturing process. Lacking a companion of his own sex within the family circle, he is made anxious about many aspects of his sexuality that would be less disturbing if they were apparent also in a brother or two; and being the only young male, he is the receiver of more attention from his sisters and, in all likelihood, his mother, than if he were one of several boys.

The difficulty of his maturing is further exaggerated if his father exerts arbitrary authority in the home. Not only, then, is the growing boy tempted to retreat into the comforting companionship of the women of the family, but the sisters and mother tend to focus on him much of the feeling and attention they would like to give to the father but are unable to give. A boy who has grown up under such circumstances often undergoes a kind of delayed shock when his sisters, having become adult, marry and focus their affection and attention upon their husbands; or when his mother begins treating him as a man instead of a boy. He experiences a sense of rejection in his grown-up years not unlike that often experienced by a small child who is not able to win or command the attention he needs to support his ego; and he tends to regress toward childhood in his acute self-attention and demandingness. He

simply cannot perceive as anything except acute injustice his being expected to stand on his own emotional feet and shape up an independent life for himself. Even if he marries he finds it hard to accept as sufficient to his needs the ministrations of one woman: he still tends, many times, to yearn backward toward the period of his life when several women clustered affectionately around him.

Like the child whose demandingness stems from long illness, such an adult may seem to be full of affection: for his wish is to have people around him and have them pay attention to him. But like the demanding child, he is actually centered on himself: other people are not real or important to him if they go about living their own independent lives; they are real and important only to the extent that they prevent his feeling lonely and unimportant.

Self-demanding egocentricity takes a multitude of forms. In each of them it widens the gap between the individual and his fellows. Frustration of his demands creates resentment and hostility on his part and, on the part of his "unaccommodating" fellows, either a self-defensive wish to escape his demands by escaping his presence or a wish to retaliate. Fulfillment of his demands creates temporary gratification, but no genuine warmth of gratitude or affection. The self-demanding egocentric is essentially the exploiter of others, not their equal companion.

## V

Deeply characteristic of the individual human being is his tendency to gain strength by identifying himself with some group. The child who is accepted by the family gains through



his family association a sense that he himself is big enough to cope with life. The family becomes, as it were, a larger self that supports his small separate self. When he goes to school—providing he is accepted by the “gang”—he identifies with the classroom group or even the total school. He swings along through life the more jauntily for having made this wide identification.

So it goes. Later, he may identify with his labor or management group; with church or political party; with service club or fraternal order. The magnifying and strengthening of the ego through some group is essential if the individual is not forever, in Uncle Remus’s words, to be all by his “own-alone self.”

The statement “where two or three are gathered together” in a common commitment (“in my name”) moves forward to the conclusion, “there am I in their midst.” This is psychologically sound. In a group like that, each individual identifies with the total fellowship and with what that total fellowship envisages. Thus the group becomes the individual’s larger self. Such a lifting up of the self into the group brings about a magnifying and strengthening of the individual, so that he feels a presence and a power that, in his separateness, he could not feel: “there am I *in their midst*.”

This magnifying and strengthening of the individual ego through the group is a deeply essential process. Much of the loneliness and sense of futility in urban life comes from the fact that the individual finds no group with which to identify. He finds himself among people in multitude, without feeling himself close to any of them through shared participation in a group. Such isolation is particularly in evidence, nowadays,

among the people we call "intellectuals." Like the "status-preserving child," the "intellectual" tends to stand off by himself, unwilling to suffer the intrusion of ideas or relationships that his mind would label as naïve, vulgar, mediocre, or false. Such an individual, in his lonely aloofness, suffers the lack of a strengthening fellowship. His relatively high development of the human power of rationality makes it hard for him to find satisfaction "with the gang"; yet his uniqueness in no wise makes him immune to the human need to belong and to be bolstered by the group. Turned back upon himself, he may become negativistic—"touchy" in defense of his own views; captious of the views of others; intolerant and misanthropic toward the "vulgar herd." Where this takes place, a double tragedy occurs: the individual suffers "acute disconnection," and becomes to that extent a distorted human being; and society loses the creative contribution such an individual could make if his rationality, warmed by a sense of belongingness, were infused with wide-ranging good will and an active conviction as to the worth of making an effort for the common welfare.

Here again the ego, turned back upon itself, with no chance for a healthy ramifying of itself into others—and of those others into itself—gets locked up within its own egocentric trap.

The magnifying of the ego through the group is not always, however, a healthy process. It may take ugly forms. Where the character structure of the individual is a hostile one, marked by a quick suspicion of others, a dislike of them, and a readiness to see them as enemies, and marked at the same time by a strong urge toward dependence, the individual will

tend to magnify and strengthen his ego by identifying with hostility groups that have a strong status pattern. The classic example in our own country has been the Ku Klux Klan. No person whose basic impulses were generous and friendly could possibly find his own deep need confirmed and satisfied by such a group. Those who join the Klan demonstrate by their joining that some deep hostility within themselves is demanding group justification and enhancement.

In Germany, in the years that led up to the Second World War and spanned that war, the ugly example of hostility-born "groupness" was to be found in the Hitler crowd. This group swept into its ranks millions of frustrated individuals who, through their life-defeats, had developed grudges against the world. Provided by Party dictum with scapegoats on whom to vent their grudges, and given a chance to magnify their insignificant selves into powerful significance by the goose-step march of the Party, they achieved a kind of hateful glory by mystical identification with their Fuehrer.

A similar process is in evidence today among Communist groups. Here again the motive of group identification is hostility. Belonging to the Party, and following the party line, the individual member can revel in "holy hate." In the early days of the Russian Revolution the motive seemed to be otherwise. It seemed to be the positive one of creating a better world. But in the years that have succeeded the "ten days that shook the world" the motive has changed into one of primary antagonism. Hence the individual who today serves the Party is chiefly engaged in invective, in spying out and capitalizing every weakness of the Party's enemies, in framing useful misrepresentations of those enemies, and in being

morbidly preoccupied with an eventual showdown between his Party and the rest of the world. Also, as in the case of the followers of Hitler, he wins glory for his own ego by mystical identification with the Leader.

Thus the magnifying and strengthening of the self through identification with a group, necessary as it is, may be good or bad so far as the maturing of the individual is concerned. Whether it is the one or the other depends upon the basic trend of the egos that form the group. If the trend is one of moving toward others, the strengthening of each through the group will be to the good of all—and to the common social good. If, on the contrary, the basic trend is one of moving away from others, overcoming others, or repelling others, the strengthening of this hostile trend through the group will be dangerously to the bad. Then we have what has brought so much disaster to the world: the “many-headed monster thing.”

## VI

It would seem, then, that the true direction of ego development is not away from others, as in egocentricity, but toward others. The climax of this movement of the self is found in that intensity of understanding and feeling which we call *empathy*: the power to place oneself at the center point of other people's experience and emotion. To see ourselves as others see us is, indeed, one part of our human obligation; to see others *as they see themselves* is another. For the most part, we still fail in both. We see ourselves as *we* see ourselves; and we see others as *we* see them. Thus we know neither ourselves nor others.

With such psychological ignorance at work, it is little wonder that life goes strangely and bewilderingly wrong. We have developed a habit of looking for institutional scapegoats for our human mistakes and of visiting our wrath upon them. The schools, we stoutly declare, do a bad job of educating our children; or the economic system is all wrong; or this or that political party, or this or that nation, aims too unscrupulously at power; or our churches have "sold out" to materialism. There is, in truth, never a time when our institutions do not need bettering—and need it badly. Yet each of these institutions is but the lengthened shadow of the individuals who cause them to be and who perpetuate them in their being. Where these lengthened shadows are chiefly those of egocentric absorptions, the world lies in the darkness of those shadows.

Physiologically, as we have seen, the growth of ourselves is through the growth of our neurons into wide connections with one another. One neuron-centered cell—content with itself, as it were, and determined not to connect with others—would be a physiological monstrosity. Happily, the deep forces resident within our physiological life prevent any such monstrous development. Deep forces within our psychological life are likewise at work to prevent the psychological individual from building walls about himself and locking himself within the tight, narrow compartment of the ego.

Life at its best, whether physiological or psychological, is a *tissue of life*. The wider the ramifications and connections, the richer and stronger the tissue. Thus to grow outward is to grow richly and strongly inward.

## F I V E

### OVER-UNDER RELATIONS

**O**NE RELATIONSHIP that none of us can escape is what I shall here call the over-under relationship. Every one of us comes into life subject to some power. At the beginning, authority is vested in parents or parent-substitutes. The first (still unconscious) problem of the newborn is to learn to adjust to the regulatory pattern laid down by these powerful ones who are strategically placed to control him. He may never adequately solve this first of his psychological problems. If the parent or parent-substitute is harsh, cruel, unimaginative, or ignorantly perverse, the child may develop fears and resistances that will harden into a settled pattern of hostility. Thus the rich promise of his life—the development of outreach, affection, and generous give-and-take—may at the very beginning be defeated.

Throughout the psychiatric drama there stalks one villain of peculiarly sinister mien, albeit a villain who may act with the best of intentions: the dominating adult who puts the

fear of himself into the child. Perhaps more misery has come from such domination than from any other one human source. It is not, we now know, a misery that the child can escape by merely moving out of the parental presence. He cannot escape it by growing up to the point where he himself has all the outward appearance of adulthood and all the theoretical freedom of the adult status. For if the twig that is the child is bent toward fear and hostility, it will be toward fear and hostility that the grown tree will incline.

As the infant becomes the child, other adults enter the picture. Teachers take over: tell the child what he must and must not do. And again the child has his problem of adjustment. Added to teachers are other authorities: club leaders; truant officers; policemen; traffic officers—each with power at his command. If, for any one of many possible reasons, the child cannot happily adjust to the powerful ones, if he seeks chiefly to escape or circumvent them, he may early in life develop a pattern of delinquency that may mark the beginning of his life defeat.

As the child grows into young adulthood, he enters the world of work authority. Again, the same old problem is posed: how to relate himself to those who command his days. Here, also, the old condition holds: if there is a dominating villain in the picture (a factory boss or office executive who throws his weight around), or if the individual carries along with him the deep-graven memory of a parental tyrant, his work relationships will suffer. Moving through his days ready to wince, or with his psychological fist forever clenched, he will work warily, poised for retreat or counterattack. The pattern of his life will be self-defensive, and therefore self-

centered. A wrong authority relationship, in short, will tend to turn the potentially healthy outreach of his work life into an unhealthy preoccupation with his own rights and resentments.

Throughout his adulthood, the individual encounters yet other authority: that of community, state, and nation. He meets the tax collector; contemplates bills to pay; finds himself variously hedged about by laws. In short, he becomes a citizen, bound by the authority of organized society. Whether, in this adult relation, he will move happily and productively, or unhappily and with destructive venom, will largely depend on whether or not he is able to make proper adjustment to these wider authoritative powers that encircle his life. The phrase "proper adjustment" must not here be taken to mean a mere giving up, a childlike submission, a passive acquiescence. On the contrary, it must signify a rational appraisal of the regulations laid down by authority; an acceptance of those that appear to be for the common good; and a responsible, realistic willingness to question those that seem destructive of the common good. Only where this type of adjustment is made does the individual maturely relate himself to the principle of government by "consent of the governed."

No normal individual, however, spends his whole life on the receiving end of authority. As he grows into command of his adult resources, he also, in at least a few areas, exerts authority. He moves over, so to speak, to the power side of the picture. Now he is no longer exclusively *under* but also *over*. Now he himself becomes fate in the lives of certain other individuals: his own children, for example; his subordinates



in the work life. Whether the fate he creates for them will be growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting will depend upon how he himself, in general, conceives the relationship of the powerful to those under them; and this conception will, in turn, depend upon how he has maintained his ego integrity during the years of being chiefly *under*.

## II

The history of man's civilizing of himself is largely the history of the maturing of his concept of over-under relationships. Nothing more clearly reveals the psychological level of individual and cultural life than does the attitude held toward these relationships. Whether they be between husband and wife, parent and child, teacher and student, officer and private, employer and employee, government and governed, or one race and another, the way that authoritative power is conceived and exercised is the touchstone of maturity or immaturity.

Obviously, there can be wisdom in the exercise of power. A child, ignorant of consequences, may easily do things that endanger his own life or that of someone else. While he continues in ignorance, authority must be exercised over him. The parent's "No" need represent no selfish, ignorant, or villainous domination; it may be a wise prohibition in the child's behalf.

Or it may, of course, be a foolish prohibition in the child's behalf. While not ego-centered, it may nonetheless be ignorant. Thus the mother who, for her child's safety, holds him back from everything she considers dangerous—swimming,

or climbing trees, or using a chisel—may through her very solicitude prevent the child's growing up into happy self-reliance.

The over-under relation is destructive of the life potential where it is ego-centered (where the dominating person exercises power for his own ends); where it is patterned in ignorance (where the person who gives orders has too little knowledge of the situation and too little insight into psychological cause and effect to know what orders should and should not be given); and where it is too unsteady to create a "universe of order" (where the person in authority is so lacking in self-confidence that he creates insecurity for those under him out of his own inability to make up his mind what he wants and does not want them to do). To the extent that any or all of these conditions prevail, power over others will be a power that defeats and embitters.

The wise person knows that the exercise of power is a hazard. He knows it is dangerously easy to develop a taste for power. He knows, also, that it is easy for the person under him to feel that his ego is being violated; easy for him, likewise, to accept obedience as his lot and to renounce the independence that becomes him as a human being. The person wise in authority, therefore, will show a various wisdom: he will guard the self-respect of the person under him; he will provide opportunity for that person's growth into self-determination and co-operative equality; he will keep his own authority within limits that comport both with human dignity and with his own competence; and he will anticipate and move toward the relinquishment of authority to the extent that it is no longer needed.

## III

The story of human distortion that psychiatry reports is largely that of arbitrary power that has been exercised by someone over someone else. The Biblical statement might be re-expressed in modern terms: "The fathers have dominated their children, and the children's psyches are set on edge." To fathers, we can add mothers, teachers, factory bosses, executives, sergeants, policemen, prison guards, colonial governors, and innumerable others. What we now begin to realize is how enormous has been the amount of ego-centered and ignorant power-over-others that our culture has tolerated or encouraged.

We need not recall the story. Knowledge of it has become part of our psychological climate of opinion. The right of some to dominate others—put the screws on them; slap them down; bark them into submission; hold them in terror—still too widely exists; but it is not the unquestioned right it once was. Egocentric and ignorant "power over," we begin to know, defeats the best promise of life—and defeats that promise not only in the person who is forced to submit but also in the one who does the forcing. Arbitrary power—in sharp contrast to the "quality of mercy"—curses him that gives and him that takes.

It is easy to see how it defeats the victim of power. We are only beginning to understand how it defeats the victor. Dominating others is the best possible way to consolidate a false image of the self; and it is likewise the best way not to learn about others. Thus it is doubly the foe of the reality orientation.

The slave driver takes time out neither to estimate objectively his own qualifications for power nor to study the sensitivities of the slaves he drives. Neither does the barking parent, nor the peremptory boss, nor the sarcastic teacher, nor the trigger-happy guard. Each walls himself up within egocentric ignorance. Each prevents his own growth into an understanding of life and a happy relationship with it. This is the sense in which power is said to corrupt, and absolute power to corrupt absolutely. The defeat is to the victor no less than to the victim.

Today, the study of "power over" is being extended beyond the relations of individuals to the relations of groups. Where hitherto we have chiefly studied the dominating individual as the villain of the psychic drama, we now begin to study the dominating group—class, nation, or race.

Perhaps the most far-reaching socio-psychological revolution of our day is in the pretty complete revision of our attitudes toward group domination. We of the Western world, of the white race, and of the Christian profession have long been able to rationalize our acts of domination—from racial suppression within our own democracy to imperialism throughout the world. Believing in the benevolent superiority of our own culture and skin color, we have been blind to the evils we have committed. Western, white, Christian people have simply not known the deep distresses they have brought to peoples for whom they were ostensibly "caring": the breakup of native cultures; contamination of these cultures by the worst of Western goods and practices; reduction of native peoples to a condition of servitude; even the re-enslaving of those whom we ourselves have freed from other domi-

nation. At the same time that we have sent missionaries, we have remained ignorant of what the secular processes that have supported the missionaries have been doing to the souls that the missionaries have been trying to save.

Today a strong light is being turned upon many of our former practices; and we are appalled at what the cultures and races that have been self-designated as superior have done to the cultures and races they have categorically designated as inferior. The light of self-revelation comes not a moment too soon—if, indeed, it comes in time; for the evils we have wrought upon others are now boomeranging upon ourselves. As the old native minister points out in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, the danger is that by the time "they" (the Western rulers) have learned to love, "we" (the native victims of their rule) will have learned to hate.

Where relations between economic classes are concerned, insight has likewise come tardily—and almost too late. To the extent, for example, that organized labor is today recalcitrant, power-minded, and egocentric, it acts precisely as it might be expected to act in terms of how it was treated in its beginnings. It was, so to speak, the rejected child of our economic family; and the marks of its rejection are still upon it.

We are moving today from exclusively individual psychiatry to what might be called group psychiatry. "From concern with the individual as a biological unit psychiatry has progressed to a consideration of him as a social unit. More than any other branch of medicine, psychiatry has to be interested in the environment in which a person functions, as well as in the person himself. . . . Psychiatry has become a social

science as well as a medical science.”<sup>1</sup> Whole groups of people, we might say—races, tribes, and classes—now crowd the psychiatrist’s office, telling the story of the conscienceless domination by which they have been distorted. While the power-minded go on believing that turbulence must be, and can be, met by force, the psychiatric-minded warn us that it must be met by understanding. The age in which we now live may turn out to be the age of Western man’s awakening. We of the Christian West may at last be moving out of the immaturity of “over” relationships into the maturity of “with” relationships.

#### IV

That such a movement can take place has already been demonstrated here and there. I remember, for example, the account given me by an educator who for two years was superintendent of schools in American Samoa.<sup>2</sup> Education, like other public affairs in American Samoa, was under the control of the Navy; and the policy of the Navy, in this instance, according to Drees, was the sensitive, unusual one of doing nothing to startle, offend, or even prod into abnormally quick action the ancient native culture. In certain urgent matters of health and sanitation, to be sure, Western practices were introduced as rapidly as possible. But in such deeply cultural matters as education, the Navy proceeded only as fast as the Samoans were ready to receive and assimilate.

<sup>1</sup> William Menninger, “Mental Illness,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1948.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Drees, now Director of Adult Education, Department of Public Instruction, Territory of Hawaii.

Drees tells of the endless patience that he himself, under Navy guidance, had to learn to show. Arriving at a Samoan village, he and his Navy associates, if invited to the "kava" ceremony, would sit down with the chieftain and his fellows in authority. The refusal of the village to serve kava to visitors was an indication of dislike and rejection: the visitors in that case could only depart at their earliest convenience. After the "kava" ceremony, which took approximately two hours to complete, they would slowly and simply begin to talk about the education of the young. This was ticklish business; for the education of the young was a deep-graven habit in the village—one that involved age-old ceremonials, traditional expectations among pre-adolescents and adolescents, and particularly the vested pride of the elders. It would not have done to hurry matters; and for some inscrutable reason a Navy personnel born and bred in the American tradition of getting things done quickly was willing to let them get done slowly; willing to let a subordinate people take their own characteristic time. That "time" might, on a given visit to a village, turn out to be days or even weeks. It might be occupied as much with silence as with words. Yet the Navy did not presume itself free to act until those in proper authority gave consent.

It took time. The pay-off, however, as Drees reports it, was magnificent. When the ceremonial drink was ultimately passed around, it was not done in reluctant and resentful acquiescence to a power too strong to resist. It was a symbol of understanding. It was also a symbol of pride uninvaded.

So solicitous was the Navy about respecting the native culture that it restricted the free coming and going of tourists.

For tourists in general, the naval authorities found, bring their sense of superiority with them to the place they visit; they had to be kept away lest they import the contamination of a too quick intolerance, a too visible condescension, and a too quick readiness to move in and take over.

This story is one that needs to be told, and retold, in these days when very different procedures are the rule in South Africa, Indo-China, and other colonial possessions of Western powers. Perhaps no more profoundly anti-human attitude toward native peoples could be found anywhere today than that prevailing in the Union of South Africa; and to the extent that it is ruthlessly anti-human, this attitude works toward the destruction of governed and governing alike.<sup>3</sup> Without exaggeration, in fact, this South African policy could be called neurotic; for it is the creation of fear, cultural and economic egocentricity, and—as in all neurosis—an inability to face the deep realities of a situation. We have here, in fact, a cultural parallel of the neurotic's tendency to compartmentalize: to apply one standard in one area, and a contradictory standard in another area, and never to let the two disturbingly meet in consciousness.

Years ago, when the world was younger and more light-some, and when the problem of how "advanced" nations could know whether they were acting rightly toward "backward" peoples was just beginning to trouble our Western conscience, I recall a crucial test proposed by one writer. We can tell, he said in effect, whether we are acting justly or not by imagining how the backward peoples we are now ruling

<sup>3</sup> See Anne Bauer, "South Africa's New Racial Order," *The American Scholar*, Winter, 1951-52, p. 33.



will think of us when they have grown out of their present backwardness and taken their full and equal place in the world. Will they then cast bitter words in our teeth? Will they show us, by chapter and verse, how atrociously we have acted toward them? Or will they be warm and affectionate friends, thanking us for doing things that many times must have been hard to do?

What he was asking for was a high degree of imagination on the part of the "advanced" nations. The joker, from a strictly logical point of view, lay in this: a nation that could thus place itself imaginatively and with full understanding at the *future* viewpoint of a backward people would probably not need to do so; for with that much maturity of imagination, it would already be placing itself at the *present* viewpoint of those people. To be maturely imaginative, in short, is to be maturely imaginative—and the trouble in the imperialistic tradition has been that "advanced" nations have been immature in their imagination about both the present and the future. If we recall the unusual policy of the Navy in American Samoa, we see that what made it unique was mature imagination *in the present*, applied to *the present*. The consideration that was shown was shown to *living* natives and to the traditions those natives actually cherished. It was not a consideration abstractly shown to generations not yet born.

Nevertheless, the test that the writer in question proposed has a certain shock value; for it reminds us of the possibility of later hatreds wherever present exploitations exist. Most governors of colonial peoples and, for the most part, the general citizenry of power-nations, have been markedly willing

to "take the cash and let the credit go"—and few among them have been sensitive enough to "heed the rumble of a distant Drum." Today, the Drum is less distant; and we of the Western nations hear the rumble whether we will or not. Backward peoples everywhere are rising up to claim their right to political freedom and practical well-being. The question that sharply confronts us now is whether we can develop a mature imagination about under-over relationships rapidly enough to win as friends those whom we have habitually thought of as subordinates; or whether they are to be enemies, and the friends of our enemies, in this time of world crisis.

## V

The more we look into the matter, the more we discover that immaturity in over-under relationships has been the source of a vast number of our human troubles. In fact, we realize that immaturity in this relationship has infected even our basic value system: our religion.

In every culture, from primitive times on, religions have grown out of men's conceptions of their relations to the great forces controlling their lives. Almost without exception—and particularly as we move back toward the infancy of the race—these forces have been conceived in the over-under pattern, with the strong emphasis upon the *over*. Gods were *over* men. Even today, we *look up* to our One God. The One God, we sometimes say, is in Heaven *above*, while we are on earth *below*.

This over-under relationship has from the beginning carried its emotional charge. In primitive times, men un-

ashamedly and openly feared their gods: they did not love them. Many men still fear their One God—"the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"—and with good logic, since they conceive of their God as able and willing to inflict the most drastic punishment. There are still those among us who believe that God consigns sinners to a prolonged, literal burning in Hell.

In *My Six Convicts*, the psychologist Donald Powell Wilson has given a revealing description of the religious views he found among prisoners in Leavenworth—and has noted that they were not too different from views frequently encountered outside prison walls. "There were few real atheists among them. However, their God was a very vengeful Gentleman indeed. They believed in God as they believed in the law—because they had offended it. But they wanted no traffic with either the law or God, if possible. They believed in hell and the Judgment, too. But they thought of hell in reference to someone they wanted very much to send there, rather than with any thought of going there themselves. They had their own eyes on a deathbed repentance to take care of their personal destinies. Anything ahead of that was definitely premature.

"However, in disaster or epidemic or fire in the cell block, or the illness of someone's child, God would be ordered to come running on the double."<sup>4</sup>

In such religion God is both power-over and "giver of all good things"; and the object of religious practice is to avert the anger of this all-powerful ruler and to induce Him to

<sup>4</sup> Donald Powell Wilson, *My Six Convicts*, p. 254. New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1951.

shower his gifts. This is the child's still immature attitude toward the parent. Also, it is the immature attitude that totalitarian governments engender in their people.

"In the receptive orientation"—a mark of childhood that may prolong itself into adulthood—"a person feels 'the source of all good' to be outside. . . . If religious, these persons have a concept of God in which they expect everything from God and nothing from their own activity."<sup>5</sup>

Franz Alexander's description of political immaturity may be applied to the religious field as well. "Politically immature nations which have never assimilated the principles of democracy perpetuate in their subjects the attitude of blind obedience and fear demanded by a strict father. In their heart they despise the inefficiency of the democracies and consider them the incarnation of disorder and corruption. They feel secure only in an authoritarian state with its family discipline enforced with punishment by a strict father. The sacrifices and restrictions imposed by a regimented state are willingly endured for the privilege of continuing the carefree, irresponsible security of childhood. Punishment brings not only suffering but security and indicates that someone is taking care of us and that sin can be absolved through suffering."<sup>6</sup>

Compare the personality orientation that Alexander here describes as typical of the authoritarian state with that revealed in such avowedly religious statements as "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him"; and "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." Compare it, also,

<sup>5</sup> Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p. 62. New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1947.

<sup>6</sup> Franz Alexander, *Our Age of Unreason*, p. 211. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1951 (revised edition).

with the dependence expressed in the frightened words, "Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me; fight against them that fight against me."

The emotionally immature make immature gods: gods that want from their subjects more of blind obedience than of independent insight, more of subservience than of companionship; gods with power, and unpredictable emotional readiness, to punish or to bestow; gods that may, on occasion, exhibit parental rage, but behind whom the "child" can nonetheless hide when pursued by an enemy.

The socially mature personality exhibits three characteristics in all his dealings with life; and these will mark his religious attitudes no less than his political, economic, social, and parental: he detests arbitrary power; he detests blind obedience; and he likes to work "with" rather than "over." Frankly and unresentfully he recognizes the need in our world for a various exercise of authority; but the authority he accepts and respects—and exercises in his turn—is on a "truth" and "competence" basis rather than merely on a "power" basis. Thus as a parent he exerts authority over a child because, knowing more than the child, he is more nearly a "source of understanding"; but he exerts such authority in a manner that encourages the child to become progressively independent and deserving of independence.

This was the attitude of the Hebrew poet who wrote (in contrast to the childish pleading quoted above), "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son." (Psalms 72:1) Here God was thought of *as a source of truth and understanding*. A God like that need not inspire fear; need not be blindly obeyed. Rather, he was a

source of wisdom *to grow up to*. He would be, then, not just a giver (as to a dependent child), but a setter-of-truth-standards and justice-standards (for a mature mind). What we received from Him, then, would not be simply something to take, but something to live up to and work with in fashioning a life.

So this poet goes on to say that if God will give his righteousness unto the king's son, that king's son will, in turn, judge (his) people with righteousness, and his poor with judgment. In short, he will, because of his contact with this kind of God, express more of the truth of things in his own behavior.

The meaning of God in our culture still remains the most obscure and ambiguous of all meanings. Hence, religion continues to be many things to many men. But at least two contrasted meanings can now be clearly seen: God as arbitrary power; and God as source of truth. The immature person clings to the former and shapes religions of strict obedience and magical bounty; the mature person relates himself to the latter and shapes religions that draw inspiration for active living out of the everlasting source of truth. The former creates the image of an unreachable God; the latter of a God that invites us to move up as far as we possibly can to the level of His insight and understanding. The former creates religions of fear; the latter, of love. For where God is conceived as the source of truth, men are encouraged to exhibit in all their relationships the love of truth.

Thus in his religion, as in his other relationships, the socially mature person passes beyond the "receptive orienta-

tion" of the child into the "active orientation" of a responsible and rational engagement with life.

## VI

One sure sign of social maturity is a liking for equality. This is why we rate it one of the greatest moments in the world's advance when Thomas Jefferson wrote the line that has become the watchword of democracy: ". . . all men are created equal." The laughter and scorn that met his statement were the voice of the immaturities still resident in men who—like their fathers before them—had known chiefly arbitrary rule.

Other great moments in the world's advance toward maturity have been marked by the coming of new conceptions of God's nature. Thus the Quaker, George Fox, challenging the prevalent Calvinist concept of God as arbitrary dictator of men's present and eternal fates, expressed his belief in God as the "inner light" in all men. Like Thomas Jefferson, he invited the scorn and hatred of those who had lived so long with their minds fettered that they had come to love the perverse security of their chains.

Fox's antipathy to a God of arbitrary power led him to oppose also the earthly power-procedures of war and slavery. His own consequent sufferings in prison at the hands of brutal authority created in him, not a desire for revenge, but a passion for prison reform; and his pity for the helpless insane led him to advocate mental hospitals at a time when the mentally deranged were treated as criminals.

If, in short, God was the light within, then he was the light

in even the meanest of human beings. Slavery, brutality, war—these things were wrong and were to be vigorously opposed for the simple reason that the practice of them was an affront to the human being in whom God dwelt. Every man was equal because every man possessed his portion of the “light.”

Today the old struggle goes on: between those whose liking is for “power over,” and who create gods and social systems in their own image; and those whose liking is for equality, and who may yet be destined to create a religion, a politics, an educational system, and an economic order in their own image. The hunger for “power over,” we begin to understand, has all the marks of grave disease. Only through a liking for equality do we achieve relationships with our world that are creatively healthy.



## S I X

# THE FEELING FOR POTENTIALITY

**H**OW A creature relates itself to “the possible” is one measure of the richness or poverty of its life. The amoeba, for example, can relate itself in only the narrowest way. Chiefly it does one kind of thing over and over. Coming upon edible substance, it extends its pseudopods, surrounds the substance, and ingests it into itself. Add up all its pseudopodic extendings and ingestings through all its existence, and we have the fairly monotonous story of the life and adventures of the amoeba. Obviously, within so limited a range of activity, this creature has slight scope for creativeness; no chance for novelty and experiment. Its life is cast in a stereotype. Until some major biological change—cellular fission—makes it cease to be the particular amoeba it is, it exhibits an unvarying repetition of a single type of behavior.

This is life at an extremely low level. On higher levels we find a greater multiformity of response. The ant, for example, does a score of different things to the amoeba’s one. But the

ant, too, relates itself to "the possible" in only limited ways. Almost wholly governed by instinct, it cannot deviate from the strictly patterned ways of ant life. It has no power to invent new responses.

On the human level, in contrast, a large measure of variation is possible. Things can be done by the individual that have never been done before. Instead of the rigidity of instinct, there is the flexibility of the feeling, thinking, imagining, purposing, and planning mind.

We have here a yardstick for measuring the relative levels of life. To the degree that life is rigidly confined, fixed in pattern, we rate it as lower. To the degree that it is flexible in response, capable of creating new patterns of behavior, we rate it as higher. We can apply this yardstick not only to the various species that share the planet as a life space, but to our individual selves. We rate as highest among us the mind that is creative: that sees possibilities unseen by others; that ventures confidently and effectively into the hitherto unknown. We rate as lowest the mind that is inflexibly repetitive: obtuse to possibilities; confident only in doing today what it did yesterday.<sup>1</sup>

This distinction between higher and lower is not an arbitrary one. It is based upon the fact that all life has to cope with an environment not primarily designed to meet its needs: that can either sustain or destroy it. Every environment, when measured by the needs of any given species, or any given individual, is to some extent inadequate. We define as *lower* those forms of life, and those forms of human behavior, that

<sup>1</sup> For a penetrating discussion of the biological significance of fixity and change, see Bentley Glass, "A Biologic View of Human History," *Scientific Monthly*, December, 1951, p. 363.

expend themselves wholly in adjustment to things as they are: that, simply repeating a pattern of minimal survival, challenge no inadequacy; work no transformation upon the environment. We define as *higher* those forms of life and behavior that take the initiative against inadequacy: cope with the environment in new ways; utilize more of its life-sustaining, life-enriching possibilities.

If we ask, then, what is most essentially characteristic of the maturing mind, the answer would seem to be this: a mind grows toward its maturity *as it widens its relations to the not yet realized*. On the child level, the mind has a very limited relation to potentiality. There are multitudes of possible things it cannot yet do. The child, with only a few words at his command, is unable as yet to enter into the rich experience of symbolic communication that language makes possible; with only a few tools he can safely handle, he is unable to make the many objects he will later be able to make; with only a few primary sensations out of which to build ideas, he is unable as yet to think thoughts he will later be able to think. Growth toward psychological maturity means, then, an increase in power to relate ourselves to potentiality. It is growth out of the narrow repetitiveness of the "is" and "was" into the wide multiformity of the "may be."

For every child, one kind of growth toward the possible—one kind of maturing—consists in the progressive mastery of facts and skills already known to his elders. He learns to handle words as they handle them; to handle tools as they handle them; to handle human relationships as they handle them. He may do all this, however, and yet live out his life on a fairly low level. If he is to live it on a higher level, there

must be, in addition to this primary kind of maturing, a second kind: a progressive capacity to see possibilities that take him beyond the repetitive pattern of his group; a progressive capacity to individuate his relationship to his environment by evoking new forms and new behavior patterns out of his insights and resources.

## II

Through clinical experience, we have come to recognize one invariable characteristic of that sick condition of the mind we call neurosis: namely, *rigidity*. The neurotic person behaves in the same way over and over again, even in circumstances that in no wise call for such behavior. "The normal person, for example, is suspicious where he senses or sees reasons for being so; a neurotic person may be suspicious regardless of the situation, all the time, whether he is aware of his state or not." <sup>2</sup> Place this neurotic individual in any situation where there are new people to meet and he will automatically fall into his pattern of suspiciousness.

Another neurotic may invariably respond with overt hostility. The chip on his shoulder is always in evidence; and he is forever taking a stance for you to knock it off. "A normal person," writes Karen Horney, continuing her examples, "will be spiteful if he feels an unwarranted imposition; a neurotic will act with spite to any insinuation, even if he realizes that it is in his own interest. A normal person may be undecided, at times, in a matter important and difficult to decide; a neurotic may be undecided at all times."

<sup>2</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, p. 22. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1937.

Such rigidity, clearly, is a condition of lessened potentiality. The person who is invariably suspicious not only limits his ways of behaving toward others (he is never carefree and confident in their presence), but he evokes from them, in turn, only a limited range of responses. His unvarying suspiciousness makes it well-nigh impossible for them to feel warm affection for him or to co-operate with him in any extended project. Hence he cuts himself off from many of the most delightful and rewarding experiences open to less fixated minds. The same is true in the case of other forms of neurotic rigidity. To the extent that a person is confined within an inflexible pattern of response, he is shut out from life. One of the most extreme forms of mind-sickness—catatonic insanity—illustrates and emphasizes this point: here the individual may remain in a kind of stupor, hour after hour, cut off completely from his environment and unable to respond to its varying stimuli.

What is thus seen in the large among the neurotic and the insane may be seen in the small among so-called normal people. In one way or another, we all tend to become rigid in some areas of our thoughts and emotions. Thus a person brought up within a certain environment may take on some major attitude that prevails there and may never seek to determine whether or not it is validated by reality. This is one source of what we call provincialism. The inhabitant of a small village in the hinterland, for example, may learn to think of Wall Street as a "den of thieves." This becomes his stereotype, to which he automatically reverts whenever high finance is mentioned. The baffling complexities of the financial problems of an industrial society are lost upon him. It is

useless to argue with him or to try to explain. The thing is final. His mind is set. If he has a remedy to propose for our financial and economic ills, it is likely to be as oversimplified and rigidly stereotyped—as blind to multifarious possibilities—as is his definition of those ills.

What we witness in such a case is an “area rigidity.” A person may be flexible-minded about many things—open to suggestion, hospitable to new evidence, even eager for new ideas—and yet clamp shut his mind in some certain area. There he responds automatically—without the delayed action we call thinking—and always in the same way, with the same emotional coloring. In contrast to the character neurosis with which psychiatrists deal—the inflexibilities that permeate the whole personality—we might call this kind of fixity an “area neurosis.”

Every one of us, if he has kept on maturing in his judgments, can recall areas in which his own thinking was once stereotyped. If this were a confessional, I might begin with my own *mea culpa* and go through a list of my mental and emotional sins of stubborn rigidity. But lest I expose too wide a guilt, I shall refer to only one of my area neuroses.

For a long time, in my younger years, I lived within the rigid pattern of a “labor-management” stereotype: a pattern of the God-devil variety. In the true fashion of neurosis, I was wholly unaware of this area rigidity in myself. I did not know the fixity *as a fixity*. I thought I was whole and sane of mind whenever, as I invariably did, I responded to “management” with suspicion and hostility and to “labor” with friendliness. Looking back, I have a guilty feeling that I must, during those years, have said many things out of sheer ignorance and out

of a stubborn unwillingness either to ferret out the facts or to acknowledge the complexity of economic problems. Why should I ferret out the facts when I thought I already knew them?

It was a fortunate circumstance that I was enabled, finally, to have an experience that literally forced me to think with discrimination instead of according to stereotype. Through a period of direct contact with the world of labor and management, I came to see that the real conflict lay not between these two groups as such—one of them all and always right, and the other all and always wrong—but between social intelligence and social unintelligence—in both areas. Since then I have been wary of at least this one economic stereotype. I recognize that my sympathies still spontaneously attach themselves, in time of economic conflict, to the side of labor; but for precisely this reason, I try to explore the pertinent facts before I deliver a judgment. In other words, I no longer vote “straight”—either for labor or for management. I split my ballot.

### III

It is within such area rigidities that prejudice thrives. I can now say to myself, “I was a confoundedly prejudiced young man.” But I can soften the blow to my self-esteem by adding, “*in that area.*” To discover whether I am still prejudiced in other areas, I can begin by examining my typical automatic responses in the various regions of experience. How do I behave in the area of politics? Do I make stereotyped reactions—with trigger-quickness? Do I invariably react in the same way when certain political figures are mentioned—Franklin

Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, Harry Truman, Robert Taft? Do I invariably and automatically react in the same way toward certain political policies—the New Deal, the Fair Deal, British socialism, the TVA, Social Security, socialized medicine? Or toward my own and the opposing party—Democratic or Republican? To be sure, we all need to have reactions that will enable us, in our citizen role, to take some stand; but are my reactions so completely inflexible and predictable that they are bound to be oversimplifications in a complex world; and are they so heavily charged with emotion that I “see red” if they are challenged?

How do I react—and what emotion underlies my reaction—when people talk about the public schools, the church, modern art, the press, advertising, the movies, television, military preparedness, race relations, world government, the Point Four Program, marriage, divorce? The list of areas is a long one. In each of them I must ask myself whether I react with the closed rigidity of the neurotic or with the considering flexibility of the healthy mind. I doubt whether any one of us would come scot-free out of such self-examination. Certainly not I. Area rigidity is one touch of nature that makes us all akin.

In some persons the rigidity is in one special area and apparently not, in like degree, in any other. When—once, perhaps, in a long time—we come upon this one area of a person's fixity, we are taken by surprise. “Strange,” we think, “that a man of such invariable openness and flexibility of mind should suddenly close up tight and show hot prejudice where that one particular subject is concerned.” Only a deeper knowledge of his emotional past than any casual outsider is



likely to possess—and deeper, perhaps, than he possesses himself—would explain such an individual's special vulnerability.

In other persons, the rigidity is found in several areas. In each of these we can predict that the individual will respond with trigger-quickness and in exactly the same way. Sometimes, it appears, such persons have *constellations* of prejudice areas. A man, for example, may be angrily against race equality, public housing, the TVA, financial and technical aid to backward countries, organized labor, and the preaching of social rather than salvational religion. These intense dislikes, though they may seem to crop up separately, suggest a personality orientation. They add up to a kind of collective evidence that the man has identified himself, for his own ego reasons, with certain individuals and groups that have power and prestige; and that he is emotionally on the defensive against anything that would close the status-gap between his group and "lower" groups. He is less disturbed emotionally by evidence that people are in need than by evidence that they are "getting something for nothing"; are "being pampered."

In some people the areas of rigidity are so numerous and contiguous that we can only speak of these individuals as *prejudiced persons*. Try as we may, we can scarcely open up a subject that does not tap their permeative, automatic "againstness." Such people may appear "normal" in the sense that they are able to hold a job and otherwise maintain their status as members of society; but they are, we now recognize, well along the road toward mental illness.

How, it might be asked, can we distinguish the firmness

that comes from rational conviction from the firmness of neurotic rigidity? Do we not expect a person with a rational conviction to act always in the same way in the region of that conviction? How does this predictable mode of response differ from the predictable invariance of the prejudiced person? Is your firm response to the threat of Communism the firmness of rational conviction or the firmness (fixity) of a prejudice? *Per contra*, is the firm response of the Communist to what he calls the threat of capitalist democracy the firmness of prejudice or of rational conviction?

The answer would seem to be that the firmness of rational conviction always comes *after* an attempt to examine all the pertinent facts; while the firmness (fixity) of prejudice comes *before* or *without* examination of the pertinent facts, and is, moreover, on guard against such examination. A prejudice, as the derivation makes clear, is *prae iudicium*—a prejudging. Whereas rational judgment is a cool and often prolonged process of reaching a conclusion (after the conclusion is reached one can stand firm as a rock), prejudiced judgment is a hot process of leaping to a conclusion. It has been suggested that one sure test of the presence of prejudice is whether the person we are observing—and it may well be the self—gets “hot under the collar” whenever a certain individual or policy is mentioned. Hotness under the collar seems to be in contradiction to coolness of the forebrain.

There is also this other difference: the person of firm rational conviction is less likely than the neurotically rigid and prejudiced person to create stereotypes. To take one example, a person who has a rational belief that Negroes should have equal political, educational, and economic rights with white

persons does not have to support that belief by pretending that all Negroes are alike: that they would all be angels if they had a chance. He can rest his case on the assumption that Negroes are, like white people, individuals; and that if they had the same chance that is given to white people, they would be intelligent and stupid, honest and dishonest, industrious and lazy in much the same proportion as their white fellows. The person who is prejudiced *against* Negroes, on the other hand, has to assume that they are different from white people *as a group*: that they can all, so far as capacity and character are concerned, be brought under one label. The person who is prejudiced *for* Negroes—and we meet this sentimental phenomenon now and then—also builds a stereotype. He sees all Negroes as better than their white fellows: more kindly, less corrupted by materialism, naturally happy and full of song, patient and loyal.

Finally, a person of rational conviction, even though he has made up his mind and is now apparently adamant, still relates himself to *the possible*. If new evidence is presented he will listen. If the evidence demands it, he will modify his view. The person of prejudice, on the other hand, will not even listen. His view is to him the one and only unchangeably true view. Thus he rules out all relation to the possible. He lives in a mental world of fixity and finality.

#### IV

Many years ago (September 21, 1876), in a letter printed in the *Nation*, William James wrote one of his characteristically William Jamesian sentences. Speaking of the need for educating young men in the colleges for a "wider openness of

mind and more flexible way of thinking," he proposed this test of a healthy mind: "Is there air and space in your mind, or must your companions gasp for breath when they talk with you?"

The airlessness of the rigid mind is that of closed doors and windows. Too much of life is shut out. The cramping narrowness is that of the in-drawing self—a self too little outreaching and outgoing. When we talk with a person rigid with prejudice we have the oppressed feeling of being unable to take deep mental breaths. We cannot say the things we want to say or feel the things we want to feel. A forbidding and hostile "Thus far and no farther" hangs heavy in the atmosphere. We cannot move about freely with our minds. We have to watch our step. If, by happy chance, we can leave this constricting presence and come suddenly into the presence of a free and flexible mind, we draw deep, thankful breaths and stretch out our mental arms as far as they can go.

In less than half a sentence, in the letter from which we have quoted, James gives a program for keeping the mind unrigidly alive. It calls for the building of four essential habits.

The first is the habit "of always seeing an alternative." There is deep psychological pertinence in this. The person tied to a dogma—whether religious, political, economic, medical, educational, or what not—sees no alternatives. The dogma is his "one and only." For him, then, no further thinking is called for. His mind checks out.

The history of our human advance has been chiefly one of seeing alternatives to the dogmas which, one after another, have held us in mental and emotional thrall. Columbus saw

an alternative to the dogma of the flat earth; Copernicus to that of an earth-centered universe. Darwin saw the evolutionary origin of species as an alternative to the dogma of special creation. Christ conceived of human brotherhood as an alternative to the dogma of man's incurable enmities. Thomas Jefferson saw the political equality of all men as an alternative to the ancient dogma of divinely sanctioned inequality. Such dogma-correcting history goes on. Today, many of us are venturing an alternative to the rigid dogma of the sovereign state. Tomorrow, yet other alternatives will challenge ways of life that have hardened into inflexibility.

Zest of intellectual, emotional, and social life, James would say, comes when we give our mind freedom to range beyond the commonly agreed-upon certainties. The skeptic about the dogmas of our age will, to be sure, be skeptical at his own peril; but at least he will be alive while he lives.

The second habit James called necessary is that "of not taking the usual for granted." Alexander Pope gave classic expression to what we might call the "law of being taken in by the usual" when he wrote of vice,

Yet seen too oft, familiar with its face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Familiarity tends to blunt our sense of possibilities. There it is, the familiar thing—the business system we have; or school system; or medical, or political, or religious system. After a while, when we have built enough habits, plans, and loyalties around any one of these systems, we simply take it for granted as the "right" kind of thing. It feels right and natural because we are not caught off guard by its demands: we have behavior

patterns to fit the situations it poses. Break this habit of submission to the usual, advises James. Cultivate the suspicion that, smoothly familiar as our systems are, there may be better ways of doing business, or educating ourselves, or governing, or curing, or uplifting ourselves.

The third habit James advised was that “of making conventionalities fluid again.” Emerson was apparently suggesting much the same thing when he wrote, in his essay, “Manners”: “Society . . . being in its nature a convention, it loves what is conventional.” Both James and Emerson imply that it is best not to be trapped by the conventional. Conventions are man-made; however mandatory they may become, they have no sacrosanct authority. Once they were fluid. Make them fluid again. To do in Rome as the Romans do may, for a temporary visitor, be both expedient and courteous. But to live as a Roman citizen and accept all that one’s fellow Romans do as the permanent standard of good taste and good sense is to be a stuffy provincial—and even to contribute to the long-range decline of the society one thus passively accepts as finished once for all. The creative mind looks upon social conventions as conveniences; as agreements that men have made in order to reduce the friction of life, like shaking hands as a matter of course and not having to think each separate time whether one might not more appropriately raise the arm in salute. When, however, a convention is no longer a convenience but a nuisance—as the silk hat in business hours once proved to be—the healthy mind will bow it out. The healthy mind is able to live within many conventions without forgetting that conventions are made for man, not man for conventions. With his caring focused upon human

welfare, he is able, when that welfare demands, to make conventionalities fluid again.

Finally, James advised that we should form the habit "of imagining foreign states of mind." This is perhaps the hardest suggestion of all. It is not easy for us to think ourselves into the thinking of other people; and it is particularly difficult if they are far removed from us in status, age, culture, or life philosophy. Yet it is obvious, for example, that the parent who cannot place himself at the viewpoint of his adolescent son or daughter is almost certain to fumble the business of parenting. The employer who cannot sense the needs, anxieties, and life goals of his employees is almost certain to have labor troubles. The white man who cannot place himself at the center-point of the colored man's sensitivities will hardly advance the cause of human brotherhood. Nor will the statesman who sees only with the eyes of his own nation be likely to go down in history as one of the co-creators of the City of Man.

To imagine foreign states of mind is to move beyond the confinements of our limited experience into wider spaces. This, perhaps, is the deepest of all our human needs: to be empathic in imagination. When we can imaginatively move inside the lives of others, we add a powerful new dimension to our being. All kinds of creative relationships are then possible that are impossible so long as our mental life is confined strictly to ourselves and our precise kind.

In these four habits, then, William James suggested the equipment for an open and flexible mind. A similar, even briefer, program for the unrigid mind was once given me by a friend who himself had it from an old sea captain. I cannot

refrain from passing it on. What we need if we want to stay flexible and young in our minds, the old captain said, is to be "limber, loving, and a little loony."

## V

In the matter of mental flexibility, as in other matters, the individual is in large measure a cultural product. If, by some concourse of influences, he becomes sensitive to the consequences of rigidity, he may, to be sure, work out for himself a limited independence of the cultural pattern. If his independence is cast in a small mold, and if it has more of negativity than of creativeness in it, he may be simply the misfit or the eccentric. If his independence is cast in larger mold and is charged with insightful creativity, he may become one of the landmark figures of human history. He may help other people to rediscover in themselves possibilities that have lain dormant because there was no cultural invitation to release them.

Even limited independence and mental flexibility are hard won, and are won by comparatively few, in a culture that sets slight premium upon them. It becomes a matter of prime importance, accordingly, for us to ask how effectively our own present culture is promoting the development of the open and flexible mind.

The outlook is not altogether encouraging. "Many writers have been struck by the widespread existence of neurotic elements in our culture."<sup>3</sup> In fact, this writer goes on to say, "there has been a growing tendency to speak of the neurosis

<sup>3</sup> Gordon Rattray Taylor, *Conditions of Happiness*, p. 111. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin and Company, 1951.



of a whole culture"—our own among others. When psychiatrists venture to speak of *cultural neurosis*, they are not using a mere figure of speech; nor are they trying to startle us by making an analogy with individual neurosis. They are pointing to a fact that stands in its own right: namely, that the influence of a culture upon its members is so potent that if—by ordinance, custom, or standards of success and prestige—it sets a premium upon neurotic behaviors, calling them right and natural, it will foster those behaviors in such multitude that they will increasingly dominate the culture and fixate it in a neurotic pattern. A culture that can be characterized as neurotic will, therefore, be one that has fixated in custom and institution behavior patterns that halt and distort the growth of mature personalities and of sound interpersonal relations. These behavior patterns will, moreover, be rigid—as are those of all neuroses.

Karen Horney entitles one of her books *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*. Her title implies both that there is a neurotic pattern characteristic of our age and culture—as surely as suspiciousness is characteristic of the Dobu—and that this pattern is widespread among us. Rollo May entitles his most recent book *The Meaning of Anxiety* and writes, "Every alert citizen of our society realizes on the basis of his own experience as well as the observation of his fellow men, that anxiety is a pervasive and profound phenomenon of the 20th century . . . the present phase of our century may well be called . . . 'the age of overt anxiety.'" <sup>4</sup> This is tantamount to saying that modern man is strongly marked by a neurotic trait; for in the fully matured, healthily functioning condition

<sup>4</sup> Rollo May, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, p. 3. New York: Ronald Press, 1950.

of life, as Leon Saul has shown, "anxiety is at a minimum."<sup>5</sup> Franz Alexander calls one of his books *Our Age of Unreason*, indicating by the title a certain compulsive irrationality that holds our age and culture in thrall. "It is an era characterized by the deterioration of international relations by a defeatist pessimism about democratic principles and by a belief in violence as the ultimate arbiter of human affairs."<sup>6</sup>

Why the pervasive anxiety? Why the defeatist pessimism? Why the resort to violence? Why a neurotic personality of our time? An arresting answer is given by Gordon Rattray Taylor. It is an answer which he sifts out of the more recent conclusions of psychologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists. "The most prominent of several neurotic elements in our culture is . . . the need to validate the ego."<sup>7</sup> This need he finds to be even more marked in the United States than elsewhere in the Western world. Explaining why he feels this to be true, he measures the American preoccupation with work, and writes, "It is quite normal and unneurotic to work and make money with which to support one's family. But to work incessantly, subordinating all other interests and modes of activity, to work with frenzied application, day after day, is distinctly neurotic . . . and in a wider sense so is the preoccupation with accumulating goods neurotic. Western man's frenzied pursuit . . . is as suggestive of neurosis as are the ruinous potlatches of the Kwakiutl, the exhausting prestige

<sup>5</sup> Leon Saul, *Emotional Maturity*, p. 17. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947.

<sup>6</sup> Franz Alexander, *Our Age of Unreason*, p. 9. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1951 (revised edition).

<sup>7</sup> Gordon Rattray Taylor, *The Conditions of Happiness*, p. 112. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1951.

wars of many Indian tribes, or the dangerous self-mutilations of the Australian aborigines.”<sup>8</sup>

This frenzied effort, we now begin to see, has its roots in a widespread sense of insecurity that is in turn the product of an intensely competitive milieu. In such a milieu, where failure is always possible, the individual feels he must prove himself by making good within the competitive pattern. There is upon him, in short, the compulsive need to “validate the ego.” Hence anxiety; hence an overstraining to defeat those who might defeat him. In its normal manifestations—meaning, here, by “normal” those that are now culturally accepted—this takes the form of outworking or outsmarting rivals; in its pathological manifestations, the form of bribery, stealing, and even murder. The recent investigations of the Kefauver Committee and of the Fulbright Sub-committee on the Reconstruction Finance Corporation have shockingly revealed how crime, outsmarting rivals, and government go widely hand in hand.

These are precisely the psychological phenomena that our most thoughtful novelists have for a number of decades been exploring. Frank Norris’s *Octopus* was the story of the compulsive greed of the men of a powerful railroad corporation directed relentlessly toward squeezing out of the farmers of California “all that the traffic would bear.” It is not surprising that this high-handed use of corporation power brought widespread insecurity among the farmers of the state; nor is it surprising that there was the consequent scramble among the insecure to win the favor of the powerful. Later, a similar

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

thing occurred in the success-through-power of the elder Rockefeller's Standard Oil Corporation. Here, too, out of insecurity and anxiety, there grew up among small businessmen a scramble for safety that often involved the giving of bribes for secret rebates. When we think of the mental and emotional atmosphere engendered by these exploitations of power, on the one hand, and, on the other, these anxious scramblings for security, we realize how a compulsive need not to fail can become not only "frenzied" but all-consuming.

This same phenomenon of preoccupation with "outsmarting" is explored to its last ugliness in such novels as Dreiser's *The Financier*; Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*; Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?*; Wakeman's *The Hucksters*; Weidman's *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*; and Marquand's *Point of No Return*. In the last-mentioned novel, the deterioration of character brought about by intense rivalry for promotion is peculiarly revealing because it afflicts men in one of the most respected occupations of our culture: banking. Among these men the effort to "validate the ego" is pursued, politely and unviolently, to be sure, but with the ruthlessness of a total hostile preoccupation. Such envy and competitiveness, as Leon Saul observes, "generate a hostility which is usually deep-going and can be of murderous intensity."<sup>9</sup>

Just as our fiction writers have given us, in novel after novel, the tragic consequences of long-sustained, hostile competitiveness, so our psychiatrists have reported such consequences in case studies. In one typical case, for example, Leon Saul reports the problem of a young man he was called upon to

<sup>9</sup> Leon Saul, *Emotional Maturity*, p. 74. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947.

treat for acute palpitations that had their source, not in any organic heart condition, but in a consuming anxiety about economic success. By all objective standards, this young man, at the age of thirty, was already a brilliant success. He had everything that would ostensibly make for a happy life: sufficient income for all reasonable needs; a lovely wife and children; social popularity; membership in church and in the best clubs. But there was one thing he yet lacked: the capacity to feel successful, and therefore to relax from the tension of trying to prove himself on a competitive standard. So intense and compulsive was his urge to self-proving that it not only prevented his savoring his own successes but made it impossible for him to tolerate, emotionally, the success of anyone—even a friend and neighbor—whom he had cast in the role of competitor.<sup>10</sup>

If such a case were an oddity in psychiatric annals, it would not be relevant here. But the tragic fact is that it represents one of the most common types of cases that psychiatrists in our culture have to deal with. Countless lives are being emotionally destroyed by the inflexible compulsion to “validate the ego” by a struggle for success that has its goal not in a healthy sufficiency but in constant overcoming of others.

Franz Alexander sums up the problem when he writes, “The analyst sees his patients—physicians, lawyers, engineers, bankers, advertising men, teachers, and laboratory research men of the universities, students and clerks—engaged in a marathon race. . . . They would all like to stop but dare not as long as the others are running. What makes them run so frantically, as though they were driven by the threatening

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79 ff.

swish of an invisible whip wielded by an invisible slave driver? The driver and the whip they carry in their own minds. . . . All of them would like to stop—ask each other questions, sit down to a chat about futilities—they would all like to belong to each other because they all feel desperately alone—chasing on in a never-ending chase. They do not dare to stop until the rest stop lest they lose all their self-respect, because they know only one value—that of running—running for its own sake.”<sup>11</sup>

Friendliness and neighborliness are essential to a healthy mind and a healthy culture. Hostility is the breeder of mental unhealth. If, as seems to be true, we are largely fixated within a compulsive pattern of competitive hostility, the chances for those wide, relaxed generousities of mind to which James referred—seeing alternatives, not taking the usual for granted, making conventionalities fluid again, and imagining foreign states of mind—would seem to be slender indeed.

## VI

All this has much to do with the basic question of this chapter: How do we relate ourselves to potentiality? Growth toward maturity, as we have noted, is evidenced by the extent to which we widen our relations to the still possible: the not yet achieved, the not yet known, the not yet created. If the dominant urge of our culture—that of ego validation by competitive success—traps millions of individuals within one rigid pattern of behavior, forbidding them the free chance to

<sup>11</sup> Franz Alexander, *Our Age of Unreason*, p. 259. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1951 (revised edition).

consider other possibilities of life fulfillment, then it does not foster maturity.

Our democratic culture and our economic system both represented a break with the narrow rigidities of feudalism. Have they fallen into new rigidities—those of material-minded, hostile competitiveness? Is a large part of our individual and cultural unhealth, in short, to be attributed to the fact that for the old rigidities of status by birth we have substituted the new rigidity of status by material success?

This, to be sure, is by no means the total story of our culture. Within the major pattern of success-making, there are other patterns, still minor, that may be destined to grow stronger as the inherent self-defeat of the major pattern becomes increasingly apparent. These others are the patterns of happiness through fellowship, help-giving, voluntary service to the community, and creativeness. These are patterns that invite man to an ever wider and deeper awareness of possibilities. Still minor though they may be, in them lies the promise of a freer culture of the future.

## S E V E N

### THE REVEALING READINESS

WE HAVE seen in the foregoing pages that there are at least five factors that both determine and reflect our social maturity: (1) our self-image; (2) our images of others; (3) the extent to which we do or do not center in our own egos; (4) the nature of our over-under relations; and (5) our sense of potentiality—our relation to life and the world as not yet finished.

Suppose, now, that in a certain individual all these factors are in a healthy state. So far as his self-estimate is concerned, he has come to think of himself as pretty much like other people, neither much better than they nor worse, but, like most of them, a fair sample of the human race. He has come to think of others, therefore, as much like himself, with faults and virtues pretty evenly distributed: with troubles of their own, where they appreciate help; and triumphs where they like to be approved and admired. He has a way of snapping out of himself and placing himself at the center of other peo-



ple's concerns, so that when he judges what situations call for, he takes into account other people's rights and needs as well as his own. He has a genuine taste for equality. He likes people, and prefers in general to be on the same level with them rather than to dominate them or to be either meekly or sullenly submissive. This taste for equality shows itself in a quiet continuity of self-respect and respect for others that runs through even those relationships where he is overtly under authority or in authority. He has a keen interest in figuring out the still better ways of doing things, whether in the simple matters of physical arrangements, as in home or office or other work place, or in the more complex matters of community and national and international life. In fact, he feels positive pleasure when discoveries or inventions are made, either physical or social, that can be of advantage to everyone.

Thus he is not torn by inner doubts and conflicts, guilt feelings, and animosities, but moves with a quiet assurance in doing, with a minimum of inner tension, the things he is convinced are worth doing. Having enough self-confidence to make the experience of being himself an emotionally acceptable one, he is able to have, also, a warm sort of confidence in his human fellows and in the universe—almost, one might without sentimentality say, an affection for them.

This individual is in good social health. His fundamental relationships are to reality, not to ego-bolstering fictions. His attitudes are characteristically outreaching, generous, and productive. As Marcus Aurelius would say, he is "arched and buttressed from within." Outer circumstances may batter against him—a tragic crisis in employment which he cannot by his own efforts avert; or a war that carries him off into

service, or carries away a son or daughter. But even when outer circumstances are against him, this individual, with his healthy attitudes and motivations, will have a fair chance to stand up against the battering. His "temple" will not "waver to the dust."

What, now, will be the major sign of this individual's well-being? Is there an easily detectable sign by which we can recognize him? The sign of his mental health, we would say, is to be found in a certain kind of *readiness of response*.

For example, we can count upon such an individual to respond to human situations with friendliness rather than hostility; and with an inclination toward helpfulness rather than toward opposition. There is in him, in short, a readiness for positive rather than negative responses; for generous rather than ungenerous; and for productive rather than destructive.

He responds in these healthy ways because, in a profound sense, his own life is successful. He has in marked degree escaped making the false self-estimates that men so easily make. Hence he has no need to be bitter against those who refuse to take him at his own exaggerated self-rating. He therefore escapes the animosities, born of fear, anger, and envy, that go with defending a fictional self. Again, his estimates of others are on the realistic side. To be sure, he makes mistakes about them. He is by no means all-knowing. But having learned to judge others to be much like himself, he can treat them as he treats his own imperfect, but not disastrously nor unforgivably imperfect, self. Moreover, he has learned to move out of his limited ego and to take a genuine interest in others, so that he accumulates, gradually, enough

knowledge about them to make judgments that have reality in them. Feeling at home with them, as fellow human beings, he has no compulsive need to wish them ill. Neither does he have a compulsive need to exert power over them—to build himself up by pulling them down. Having escaped the deadly temptation to *power over*, he is able to find honest pleasure in treating others as equals. Finally, he has escaped the self-defensiveness that comes from being afraid of new ways of doing things—because they may upset his own precious apple-cart. In fact, he likes new ways of doing things when they seem to promise that they are not only new but better; and he even invents some of them himself. Hence, he is cordial toward the ongoingness and better-goingness of life. The human future is zestfully real to him.

Such an individual can be counted upon, in all life situations, to make his instant responses in ways that are cordial; and because they are cordial, co-operative. This does not in any sense mean that he will be at all times blatantly cheerful. Neither does it mean that, in treating all men as equal, he will treat all their attitudes and behaviors as equally deserving of support. He may, on many occasions, find himself having to be an active opponent of those attitudes and behaviors. Yet even under that circumstance his basic cordiality toward life will show itself. Where there is conflict he will want to resolve the conflict, not by the total victory of his side and the total humiliation of the other side, but by finding a way in which the self-respect of everyone can be preserved at the same time that positive values are served and consolidated.

## II

We can compare the characteristic readiness of such an individual with that of others who differ from him and who, in their differences, reveal various kinds of social ill-health and ill-being. For example, we may ask an individual in our club to take on a responsible office. Instantly he retreats into himself. "Thanks awfully," he says, "for asking me. But I couldn't take that job. Ask So-and-So. He's good at things like that." If this is the sort of withdrawing, self-deprecatory, almost frightened response we are accustomed to get from this individual whenever we ask him to take on any responsibility, we have a clue to a certain defeat in the man. Somewhere along the line of his life he has developed an estimate of himself too low for his own good and the good of others. He has learned to be wary of life because he does not trust himself to meet its demands. He cannot, therefore, move toward it with a friendly, spontaneous will to take part.

Another type of individual may, by a different typical response, reveal a different defeat of character. On numerous occasions this man is heard to say of one person or another this or something similar: "Yeah—give him an inch and he'll take a mile." Somewhere along the line of life, this man has learned to be chiefly suspicious of others and to judge their intentions less highly than he judges his own—at least on the conscious level. (It well may be, we have learned, that his deprecatory attitude toward others is a projection of his unconscious self-distrust; but that is another story.) To his inflated self-estimate, he has added a deflated estimate of others, so that his instant readiness is to respond with distrust.

Or here, again, is an individual in a discussion group who never enters into any quick give-and-take of opinion but who periodically makes a solemn and definitive speech. What does this habitual readiness for solemn definitiveness reveal? It might mean that he has learned to hold too high an estimate of his own mind; yet not so high but that he is afraid his superior mind may be unseated in the rough-and-tumble of argument. His unwillingness to take part in the hazards of give-and-take may thus be born of fear. Apparently, he waits for the propitious moment when he can have the stage to himself; overpower with a verbal flow; and then retreat quickly and safely into silence.

This may not be the correct diagnosis. It may be that we have here a case of excessive shyness; or of a too low estimate by the individual of his own quickness of mind; or even, in contrast, of an overweening conceit. In any event, whatever the correct diagnosis, this manner of invariable behavior indicates that there is some defeat in the individual's character. In one way or another, he has failed to come to satisfactory terms with reality.

Finally, we have the type of individual whose instant response to practically every situation is hostile. He meets other people with suspicion; is never willing to take what they say at face value: "There's a catch in it somewhere." He goes around with an interior glower at life and people. The votes he casts and the organizations he joins are characterized more by what they are *against* than by what they are *for*. We call such an individual a "hostile personality."

Such readiness to respond with antagonism reveals something profoundly unhealthy in the character structure. When

we go back over the five factors we have explored, we may suspect an unhealthiness in all of them. Something has gone wrong with this person's self-image. Either he has been too unmercifully battered into submission, so that he has developed too low an estimate of himself, or he has perhaps been overindulged, so that he has developed too high an estimate. (We are, of course, speaking broadly here, without reference to complicating details or the subtlety of conditioning.) In the first case, he will have learned hatred of others and rebellion against them; in the second, a scorn of others, yet a dependence upon them, and a bitterness against them for their unwillingness to appreciate him. Because of his false self-estimate, something has gone wrong likewise with his estimate of others. Filled with resentments, and even hatreds, he has learned to project these upon others, so that he sees these others not as they are but as his own distorted emotions make them appear.

In his unfulfilled state, he is thrown back upon himself, so that he learns to live absorbedly within himself and to be unable to move over, with imagination and appreciation, into the lives of others. Dominated or overindulged—made lower than others or far higher—he has not learned the fine fellowships of equality, so that he either fears and hates and longs for power; or scorns and yearns and longs for power. The rigidity of these attitudes has cast his life into stereotypes of antagonism; and he is unable, therefore, to move freely and flexibly into the creative possibilities of his world.

## III

Individuals, thus, are best revealed by their characteristic readinesses of response. If we look for these, we have a fair chance to judge, quickly and with some degree of accuracy, the quality of their character and the type of relationships they are likely to establish.

This brings into sharp focus the central problem of our age and culture. What kind of *readiness* should we seek to develop in ourselves and others?

Out of a half-century of psychological and psychiatric research, one major contrast in personality has emerged into clarity: the contrast, namely, between the hostile and the friendly personality; between the unhelpful and the helpful; between the personality that distrusts others and tends to push them off or even to hurt them, and the personality that likes and trusts others and tends, with cordiality and co-operation, to unite itself with them.

About these two types of personality, psychiatrists have reached a significant agreement. The chief foe of mental health and well-being, they have concluded, is hostility—hostility within our individual selves; hostility, or a bent toward hostility, within our interpersonal relations. Within ourselves, hostility takes the characteristic form of “inner conflicts,” with the resulting tensions that these generate; within our interpersonal and intergroup relations, it takes the various forms of social conflict with which we are all too familiar.

The most tragic form that intergroup hostility has taken has been war and a kind of perpetual obsession with war—talking about it; planning for it; reading the newspapers

about it; devoting incredible numbers of hours to preparing for its strategies; giving over our legislative halls to speeches about it; preparing vast expenditures for it; hounding one another because of different opinions about it; and time after time bringing it to murderous climax. "War," said Heraclitus, "is the father of men." The father has had an enormous progeny. When, today, a five-star general tells us that war must be eliminated, we applaud; and then helplessly settle down to new preparations for war.

Another of our hostility-breeding—and hostility-bred—attitudes has been racial superiority: the making of rules to keep racial "inferiors" in their place; the denying of jobs to them except on the level of the menial; the putting on of the uniforms of hatred and the bringing of terror in the night.

Another deep-seated hostility has had its roots, and found its expression, in religious bigotries—the claiming of exclusive possession of Divine Truth; the damning to perdition of all who claim a truth that is not ours; the turning of the infinite potentialities of man's spiritual life into petty struggles in defense of fallible creeds and fixated practices.

Another type of hostility is rooted in the daily intense rivalries of men that find expression, not in a competitive producing of the better and yet better, but in outsmartings and double-crossings. Among the hostile, certainly, we must number the ambulance chasers; shyster lawyers; adulterers of goods; the tax evaders; the respectable, unjailed thieves; the political corruptionists; the smearers of character.

Our half-century of psychological and psychiatric research has, however, made one discovery: namely, that these two types of personality—hostile and friendly—are not just



“born.” They are “made” by the conditions we ourselves make. If, therefore, ours is a world in which hostility is still far too pervasive and powerful, it is, in all likelihood, because we have, out of our ignorance about the conditionings of people, created too large a proportion among us of hostile individuals. The hope of achieving a less hostile society lies in our discovering how, in far larger measure, to create generous and co-operative personalities.

“Goodness, cordiality, and unselfishness,” writes Dr. L. Moreno, “. . . are weakly developed in our interpersonal relations. But in a favorable soil, they can be cultivated.”<sup>1</sup> Our problem, then, is how to prepare a soil favorable for the growth of the kind of personality that goes *toward* life instead of *away from* life or *against* life.

“In order that the human race may survive on this planet, it is necessary that there should be enough people in enough places of the world who do not have to fight each other, who are not the kind of people who will fight each other, and who are the kinds of people who will take effective measures to prevent other people fighting.”<sup>2</sup>

Gordon Lynn Foster has called this the attitude of “sustained good will.” It is, as he sees it, and as he believes Jesus saw it, not merely an attitude of good will toward those we like (“And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?”), but of good will toward those whom we do not like; even toward those who actively dislike *us*. “How shall we treat our *enemy*, the one who bears hostility toward

<sup>1</sup> “Preliminary Notes” International Congress on Mental Health, *Bulletin* No. 1, July, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> G. Brock Chisholm, “On the March for Mental Health,” *Survey Graphic*, October, 1947.

us, who seeks perhaps to do us active harm? We cannot command ourselves to like him, for this would be emotional insincerity on our part.”<sup>3</sup>

This, according to Gordon Foster, is the test of good will. Do we limit it by selecting as the objects of our favorable attitude only those whom we love, or think worthy, or who do us good; or do we extend our good will “toward men”?

“Human understanding is possible,” Foster concludes, “only so long as channels of communication are kept open. This is the deeper psychological meaning of unlimited good will. Any disagreement between two individuals can be resolved only if the door is kept open. Unless we can communicate with our neighbor we stand no chance of understanding him, or he us. When, however, we set limits to our outreaching good-will we are in fact slamming shut the door. . . . Sustained good-will keeps the door open—at least on our side. It means that we make it known to the other side that we are still open, that we regard the situation as still capable of change. The receiver is off the hook at our end of the line; all the other needs to do is to lift the receiver on his end and we can communicate again.”

With a clear logic, then, we move into Part Two of this book. The most needed enterprise of our age is to discover how to create such environments that the generous and constructive pattern of personality—one that relates itself affirmatively to all its fellows—will become the predominating pattern of our culture.

<sup>3</sup> From an unpublished sermon, “The Extravagance of Love,” delivered Oct. 21, 1950, at the Community Church, Mill Valley, California.

P A R T T W O

THE SELF IN THE WORLD



## E I G H T

### IN THIS TIME OF TENSION

WE HAVE lived for years now under social tension; and there is every reason to believe that we shall continue to do so for a long time to come. A period of social tension, with its fears, antagonisms, hatreds, acts of violence, and the rest, puts a severe strain on people, even the most mature and stable. Strange abnormalities of behavior appear. The upward curve of life is halted.

The fact is that no one is completely and invulnerably entrenched in his maturity. Everyone, however grown up he may have become, carries into his adult years childhood tendencies he has never wholly outgrown. When social crisis comes—war, or riot, or economic disaster, or political revolution, or other threats to security—he is cast back into the original childhood predicament.

The child comes into the world isolated and insecure by reason of ignorance and helplessness. In the normal course of life, he gradually learns, through affection and a growing

competence, to relate himself variously to his world so that he comes to live in that world with confidence and success. By the time he reaches adulthood, he has achieved his particular small areas of affection and mastery; and within these small areas he experiences enough day-to-day satisfaction to make him feel that life is reasonably well in hand. Social crisis tends to disrupt all this. It comes as a sudden invasion from the outside. Like a tornado sweeping out of the sky, it uproots and destroys, maims and kills. The terrors of original helplessness return; and the individual is again like a child facing an immensity of threat he cannot seem to master.

In a time of severe social tension such as we live in today, the individual needs to know what is happening within himself and within others—and what, under the abnormal circumstances, is likely to happen. He needs to understand how social crisis puts a strain on the tenuous and limited maturity of everyone; and how, by its seen and unseen threats, it makes far too many revert to attitudes and behaviors disastrously immature.

## II

What we note in today's world of tension is that an accumulation of crisis-born attitudes and behaviors has created a kind of stormy "climate of immaturity." The characteristics of this "climate" are not difficult to discover. Everywhere, today, we note a frightening tendency toward destructive aggression. Where great issues are at stake, violence is increasingly relied upon as the effective way to get things done. The "Come, let us reason together" attitude—of patient listening and trying to understand—which is the mark of the mature

mind when it confronts a conflict, is pushed abruptly aside, and men call for still more powerful forces of offense and defense. There is in our time a widespread reliance upon brute force out of all proportion to what brute force can ever accomplish. The wisdom of the Shakespeare lines,

“Your gentleness shall force,  
More than your force move us to gentleness,”

sounds quaintly out of date in today's world, where angry lawmakers call for “preventive” war, and aroused citizens write letters urging the instant use of the atom bomb.

We note a frightening increase of violence in personal life. Newspapers are full of accounts of premeditated as well as impulsive assaults and killings. It is as if a new permission to disregard the dignity of human life had entered our society. In certain cities youth runs wild, stealing automobiles, running people down, ganging up on lone pedestrians, robbing, and killing. Most appalling of all are the crimes of seemingly “normal” youth; a son's murder of his mother; a high school girl's strangling of the baby she has been paid to guard.

Violence, too, extends to property. Reports have come in recent years from all over the land of churches defaced, schools entered, furniture smashed, books torn and papers scattered; in the parks, lights smashed into darkness. A world swept with the passion of violence apparently provides a ready pattern of violent action in those circumstances where emotional life is undisciplined or under strain.

In the second place, we note a large increase in the latent hostilities of men. These latent hostilities may not grow into

overt violence, but they deeply color attitudes and behaviors. A kind of inward rage accompanies much of life today. It may be rage against nations we don't like—Russia, or Communist China, or Socialist Britain, or Egypt, or Iran; or against races we despise, or religions; or against political opponents; or against "subversives." It may even be rage against people in general, who irritate us by simply occupying space in crowded stores and buses, on sidewalks and highways. A time of tension, in short, heightens what we have come to call the "hostility pattern of personality." A person of friendly bent, who still retains his confidence in the common run of men and has a kind of affection for his fellows, seems, in this climate of tension, like an outmoded innocent. "Suspensions," wrote Francis Bacon, ". . . are like bats among birds, they ever fly by twilight." A time of social tension is a time when twilight darkens the mind.

Not surprisingly, in such a time, there is also an increase of the immature tendency toward dependence. When problems are huge and world-wide, as they are today, and the individual's knowledge is pitifully inadequate, men tend to look for parent-substitutes: for the leader who has the answers and who can point the way. They may find their leader in a forceful and opinionated editor; or in an angry, vituperating columnist; or in a haranguing politician; or in an impressive military man. Or they may find this parent-substitute in a political party which seems to speak the decisive and hope-bringing word.

We have long assumed that in a democracy men need to learn to think for themselves on evidence they have intelligently examined. Yet in a time when problems are so com-



plicated that few rightly know what they need to know, it is not surprising that men tend to look to others for opinions and decisions. Those who, even at best, have never been more than uneasily self-reliant in their thinking, tend to give up the struggle of making up their own minds. They surrender with a childlike faith to what, in fact, may be only a louder voice than the rest or a more authoritative gesture.

It follows from all this that times of social tension are inevitably times of heightened suggestibility. What the psychologists call "startle reactions" occur so constantly that men feel themselves always to be on the edge of some new catastrophe. This makes them singularly open to suggestions of danger. They see portents in the heavens and alarms in the headlines. Multitudes of them tend to become "panic-prone"—easily thrown off balance and quick to follow rumor before they ascertain fact.

With such heightened suggestibility goes a throw-back to irresponsibility and planlessness. How can people plan when forces beyond their control make an end of all their reasonable efforts to look ahead? How can they be effectively responsible when the things they can do bear no possible relation to the things they are powerless to prevent?

Out of it all—planlessness, irresponsibility, anxiety about problems they are helpless to solve, suspicion, general hopelessness about the world—grows the tendency toward various forms of escapism. The escape may be to Hollywood or to Heaven. In either case, there is among men a lessening of interest in living life here and now with vigorous and stubborn initiative, and instead, an indulgence in satisfactions—like sentimental movies, soap operas, mystery stories, or flights

into otherworldliness—that bear no relation to the difficult world in which we live. Escapism is the abdication of responsibility by the immature of head and heart.

Other ways of escape are also in evidence. The tendency to find scapegoats and to go witch-hunting reflects the impulse to avoid obligation and put the blame somewhere else. Without any deep searching of themselves, and without making any constructive contribution to the solving of problems, men gain, by the simple process of naming the assumed wrong-doer, a reassuring sense of their own individual rightness. *They*, at least, are the dependable ones. *They* are not like these others.

Stereotyping is perhaps the most prevalent of all ways of escaping the obligation put upon people in time of crisis to think with honesty and perseverance. In stereotyping, the mind oversimplifies. Lumping all individuals of a group or all the various phases of a policy under one blanket term, the stereotype licenses the individual to make an emotional reaction that is decisive, without hesitation or confusion. With one blast of negation, the individual condemns—a whole nation, or sect, or party, or policy, or program; and he feels proud of the uncompromising sweep of his judgment. Just as a greater feeling of muscle-strength comes from making a full-bodied, uninterrupted muscular movement than from making a gesture that is tentative and hesitant, so a greater feeling of ego-strength comes from an emotional response that is forceful and all of one piece than from one that reflects complexity and doubt. Positiveness of itself can produce a conviction of rightness; but a conviction of rightness formed only out of positiveness, and not out of a patient search for

truth, can be a grave danger in a world of gravely complicated problems.

Finally, and most disastrously of all, there tends to grow up in a time of sustained social crisis a corroding distrust of human beings. Not only do individuals look about them with heightened suspicion, fearing even those they have known as friends, but they despair of man himself. Behold these stupid politicians, they cry, who forever plunge us into disaster! Behold these self-seeking men for whom Profit is God! Behold these brainless citizen-neighbors of ours (neighbors of the opposing party) who, like sheep, follow false leaders to their own destruction! Men's distrust of their fellow men, when it becomes distrust of the very human nature that they themselves share with those fellow men, is perhaps the most tragic of the consequences of a world in turmoil.

### III

Such, in part, is the "climate of immaturity" in which men today live and move and try to have their being. Many of them, without their ever intending it, help to create this climate by their inner panics; their sense of helplessness before the rush of events; their aroused suspicions; their quick, unexamined hatreds; their irresponsible accusations; above all, by their inability to get an over-all view and to take calm stock of the total human situation. Under the various strain of things, they tend to revert to the fears and impulsive reactions of childhood. They grow backward instead of forward. And then, too often, the dangerous thing happens: their accumulated reactions take shape in action and they become oppressors of the fellow men whom they suspect.

Today, fear is over the land—fear created on the one hand by the hostile actions of those in various authority; on the other hand, by the encouragement given by those in the ranks who, in the confused hostility of their minds, egg on the men of authority. Again, let it be said that no one is immune to this backward movement of the self into the conditions of childhood. Few are so mature of mind that they are safe against the invasion of social fears and the outcroppings of mind-darkening hatreds.

Yet there are many who do manage, even in a time of severe social crisis, to hold themselves to ways of judgment that have in them wisdom and compassion. In a time when immense issues are at stake, such persons are our best hope; first, because in their maturity of mind they can understand the mistaken ways of their less mature fellows and can seek wisely and compassionately to change these; second, because they can do the clear forward thinking that a confused and fear-ridden age profoundly needs.

#### IV

From all of this it would seem to follow that a number of basic obligations are placed upon the thoughtful individual in today's world. The first of these is to become keenly aware of the psychological hazards of the time in which he lives and to which he is himself subject. He needs to know whether, in subtle and unnoticed ways, he has himself been led to grow backward into childish ways; or whether, under the challenge of his day, he has grown forward into a more dependable maturity of mind.

Perhaps the greatest of all the psychological hazards the

individual faces today is loss of faith in the democratic process—which is, in effect, a loss of faith in man himself. In the midst of the endless antagonisms of people, and in view of their apparent inability to understand one another and to co-operate with one another for a common welfare, he may gradually, or with a sudden despair, come to believe that the democratic processes will not work. Human beings, apparently, are not up to them. Hence, he may be led reluctantly to agree, for the time being, to the surrender of basic human rights—freedom of individual opinion; freedom to speak one's mind; freedom to criticize those in authority; freedom to associate with others; freedom to learn and to teach; freedom to be regarded as innocent until legally proved guilty. He may be led to agree to the surrender of these at the very time when they are most needed to fulfill our democratic role in the world. Overimpressed by the repeated warning, "This is a time of national emergency," he may be led to give support to anti-democratic ways of getting things done, until he actually comes to look without too much anguish at methods of repression, of compelled conformity, of screenings and silencings and signings that would formerly have shocked him into protest. Unconsciously and painlessly, he slips into his seat by the side of the dictators.

Thomas Jefferson had to grapple with this same sort of distrust of man at the time of the American Revolution, when multitudes of individuals felt that the faith he proclaimed in men's basic dignity and power to govern themselves, grand as this faith might seem, was grossly unjustified. Then, as now, the spirits of men sank before the immensity of the task of thinking things out for themselves and of governing them-

selves; and the dependent child-in-man, confronted by too great a challenge to its powers, cried for the parent-substitute.

The ease with which we tend to backslide from our democratic faith was vividly illustrated in 1949, at the time a certain report was presented to its membership by the major educational organization of the land. Deep in our democratic tradition has been a faith in the power of the mind to find its way to solutions of problems *if it is permitted to act freely as a mind*. To fetter the learning mind by doctrines of church or state has been the very antithesis of our democratic educational faith. To bind that learning mind to some temporary policy of the state has been even more unthinkable. "Keep politics out of the schools" has been the forthright demand of all men of democratic conviction. They have believed that the most effective power of democracy lies in minds that have learned to function *as minds*.

In 1949, the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association issued a statement that was overwhelmingly approved by the members present at that year's meeting. One function of education, the report stated, was to serve as an "instrument of national policy." "If the schools develop programs that contribute to the nation's needs in time of crisis . . . then education can command the support it will deserve as an instrument of national policy."

What is significant about this statement is that it received instant and overwhelming support not only among educators but in the press and on the radio. In the clamor of approval, the voice of dissent seemed a still, small voice: the voice of

Edward R. Murrow, for example, who commented, "The purpose of education is to teach people to think in order that they may have informed views on many things including national policy. . . . The concept of education as an instrument of national policy was the dusty contribution of Mussolini and Hitler to the destruction of the freedom of Europe."<sup>1</sup>

This would seem to illustrate the way in which vast numbers of us can slide out of good sense into non-sense without even knowing what we are doing. We want to help our country in its time of need. We want to do something that has large significance. Hence, when a program is presented to us that seems to give us a chance to declare our patriotism, we gratefully join our voices to the chorus of assent: a chorus made up, many times, chiefly of voices that are, like our own, grateful for the chance to make what seems like an affirmation and a dedication. In the joy and relief of affirming, we forget to examine the policy itself and to measure it by the yardstick of our long-range democratic faith. Yet, in the case in point, to make education an instrument of national policy would obviously be as disastrous as to make it an instrument of church policy. In the true democratic faith education serves its function only when, freely and honestly, it seeks to release the mind into its free and honest growth.

Easy is the descent into anti-democracy. The first obligation of the thoughtful person in this time of crisis is to be sure that he himself is not making the descent.

<sup>1</sup> For the foregoing I am indebted to the article, "Realism and the Intellectual in a Time of Crisis," by Helen M. Lynd, *The American Scholar*, Winter 1951-52, p. 21.

## V

The second obligation placed upon the individual in this time of tension is, wherever possible, to create situations that strengthen the democratic faith. A great spiritual danger threatens the land. Men tend with increasing emphasis to divide themselves into opposing camps: liberals and anti-liberals. Liberals tend to consider anti-liberals "bad" and "dangerous"; anti-liberals tend to consider liberals "bad" and "dangerous." Each group, drawing back from any contaminating contact with the other, hurls epithets. Neither makes any serious and consistent effort to discover bases for mutual understanding.

What the individual would seem to need today is an attitude mature enough to help bridge this gulf. Such an attitude could be developed if he were to realize the basic psychological fact that all people, however they differ in their views, act *from what to them makes sense*. The most rabid witch-hunter who, to a liberal, seems merely perverted with hatred, is an individual convinced that he is doing what the situation calls for; that, as a patriotic citizen, he is making a wholly commendatory contribution to the safety of his country.

To understand is not only to forgive; it is to know what to do. The individual who sees other individuals not as merely "bad" but as "different in outlook," and who sees them as each in his own way acting out what makes sense to him, comes to a profoundly important conclusion: namely, that his job is not primarily to condemn but to find ways of operating with people. Necessary as it will be for him to appraise different social outlooks so that he can act intelligently with regard to



them, and, if need be, take his stand against them, his further job is to find ways of working even with those whose policies he opposes.

Many individuals have come to the point where they define "loyalty"—whether to nation, race, class, or religion—as an uncompromising determination to have no traffic whatever with anyone on the other side of the fence: not to work with them even in matters that concern all of us. Such a recalcitrant exclusiveness is standard practice in totalitarian countries; for the social process is there conceived to be that of total agreement or total opposition, total victory or total defeat; and the proper fate of the defeated is conceived to be *liquidation*. Few Americans, even among the rabidly partisan, would want to carry their policy of exclusion to its logical ending: the mass liquidation of their opponents. Most Americans who glare ferociously at other Americans across the barriers of party, race, class, and creed take it for granted that they and these others will still continue to live and move and talk and work and vote within the same society. Yet, acting out the psychology of tension, they refuse to search out any basis for such long-range sharing of a social home. They act *as if* they intended the total liquidation of one side or the other to be the final outcome of every major social, economic, and political clash of wills and beliefs. One task that the mature individual must assume, then, is that of exploring fruitful ways in which, with all their differences, men can live and work together.

One way to this would seem to be clear: citizen relationships can and should be many-sided. What a man believes about labor unions may in no way invalidate what he believes

about traffic control or the community chest. It should be quite possible for citizens of a democracy, in spite of differences of outlook, to find areas of common concern and to cooperate within these areas—thereby coming to know one another well enough so that they can take their differences in their stride.

This would seem to open up two possibilities of citizen-relationship. First, the individual can discover things that he himself can approve and support that are being done by people with whom he normally disagrees; and he can join with them in the doing of these things. Second, he can himself initiate projects that not only seem important to him but that invite approval and support even from those who normally disagree with him.

Harping endlessly on disagreements does not get men far. Trying endlessly to argue or coerce others into agreement gets them no farther. The healthy way of life, it would seem, is to try to place differences, wherever possible, within the warm embrace of common undertakings. When men learn to work together, they inch along toward learning to think together.

Finally, a third obligation placed upon the individual today has to do with what he owes to those who are brave enough to keep their sights high. It is easy to forget that in our kind of society there are lonely men and women—made lonely by their own unwillingness to run with the crowd: the minister who speaks what seems to him to be the healing word, but whose word of healing, to hostile minds in his community, becomes a sword of dissension; the teacher who stubbornly holds to his obligation to follow where the truth

leads; the lawyer who dares to reverence the tested equities of the law and refuses to surrender to the prejudices of the mob; the legislator who is courageous enough to serve man even at the cost of losing the support of men; the neighbor who, when the nasty word of accusation is spoken, quietly asks for the evidence.

In this time of the world's deep perplexity and anguish, the individual will need to give the warmth of his approval and support to the men and women of insight and lonely courage.

In Part One of this book we examined the basic psychological equipment that the individual needs for the maturing of his social self. This equipment—a true self-image, true images of others, and so on—is needed in all times and all places. From the foregoing, however, it is plain to see that we live in a special time of the world and a special place on the earth's surface, and that what is happening in this special time and place has profound relation to our social maturing. It is essential, then, that we now explore our own present culture for the insights it offers as well as for the challenges it presents.

## N I N E

# LIVING ON THE SCIENTIFIC FRONTIER

WHEN Columbus came home, bearing the fruits of amazing discoveries, men had to accommodate themselves to a new world. Accommodating oneself to a new world comes hard at times; for the old and familiar tends to become the beloved and secure. But every now and then, in one field of human adventuring or another, a Columbus comes home; and a new world takes over.

This is part of the exploratory rhythm of life. Our minds are restless until they rest in some new, more comprehensive view of things. Then, resting for a moment—but only for a moment—they move on to further searching. We go “from dream to grander dream”—from the inadequately understood to the better understood; from limited knowledge to wider knowledge; from ignorances that restrict to insights that release.

In the past century—and especially in the past half-century

—this moving out beyond the limits of the thus-far-known into areas of new discovery has been so many-directioned and successful that the world to which we must now accommodate ourselves, both of nature and human nature, is vastly different from that of our forefathers.

When Columbus came home, there were those whose immediate impulse was to cast him into chains. These resisters of the mind's discoveries have always been with us. They stood on the rim of the crowd around Socrates, took note of what sounded like subversive utterances, and reported them to the authorities. They watched Galileo drop his two unequal weights from the Leaning Tower of Pisa; and when, contrary to the official view, these reached the ground at the identical moment, they clamored that he was in league with the Devil.

Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, Pasteur, Semmelweis, Darwin, Freud: the story has always been the same. Invariably, somewhere in the crowd, there has been the mind unadventurous and unalive: the mind not yet grown up to the creative courage of maturity.

The story repeats itself today. What the discipline of science has brought to us out of its generations of research is a world in which many old habits of thinking no longer have a rightful place; and again, as in the days of Roger Bacon, the fearful of mind run about screaming, "The Devil is let loose."

To be grown up in mind means that we recognize and accept the mature behaviors of the mind. No history of the mind's behaviors is less tarnished with prejudice, self-seeking, downright deceit, and the wish to injure than is the history of science. Science has indeed made its mistakes; but its mistakes have had honor in them. If we are to trust man's mind,

we must trust it at its disciplined best. Science today has a tale to tell that is perhaps the most reliable and significant that can be told.

## II

Much of it has now become familiar to us. As Lawrence K. Frank has pointed out in *Nature and Human Nature*, this tale, up to recent times, is that of at least two great awakenings: first, in Greece, the awakening to the conception of man as a self-examining and self-criticizing creature—in short, as a rational being; second, in western Europe, the awakening to the conception of man as a creature of unplumbed potentialities. These two awakenings brought far-reaching changes in the lives of man. Each in its way upset the going scheme of things, bringing anxiety to some, and even a sense of doom, as the accustomed world was made over. But to others the new awakenings brought a triumphant sense of the opening up of life.

Now, in our time, we enter a third period of awakening. Again, new ideas make new demands; and when new demands are made, joints of the mind that have grown stiff with habit are reluctant to unlimber. Today, not only the physical universe but even human nature itself, and human culture in all its variety, are being reappraised; and the world of old practices moves creakingly toward an accommodation to new insights.

## III

The first major enterprise of the scientific mind—begun many centuries ago—was to try to rid the world of whim and

caprice. The old classic tales—the *Iliad*, for example; some of the books of the Hebrew Bible; and most of the religious books of the Orient—tell of a time when men actually believed that beings of a superhuman sort—Zeus, Apollo, Athena; the Jehovah of Noah's flood; the Deity that rained fire on Sodom and Gomorrah; the God of Joshua that made the sun stand still; Siva, the dancer and the magician—were as subject as man himself to moods and preferences and that under the influence of these they could and would inject themselves into the affairs of men and nature and twist them to their own use. This most primitive way of men's undisciplined thinking we have come to call "animism." To the scientific mind, from the very outset, animism has been the great enemy. It has conceived the world not only as ruled by whimsical, unreachable, and unpredictable forces but as carried on by them in ways beyond man's rational control.

If the reader wishes to get a vivid feeling of this curious world of animistic caprice, he should read I. A. Richards's recently published, idiomatically vivid translation of the *Iliad*, entitled *The Wrath of Achilles*.<sup>1</sup> He will there enter a world of bewildering unpredictability and of an almost complete powerlessness on the part of men to order their daily affairs because of the "divine" interferences they could not avert. Always, at the crucial moment, some superhuman creature of caprice—playing favorites, working off a tantrum, or trying to outdo some rival deity—would break in and spread confusion. What is amazing to the modern mind, trained even in small measure to the precisions of cause and effect, is that human beings, in older times, not only took for granted such

<sup>1</sup> New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1950.

irrational intrusions but accepted the recurrent overturns and confusions as part of the nature of things.

The effort of the scientific mind all through history has been to discover regularity (what the Greeks, with scientific prescience, dimly perceived as the Fate that is above even the whimsical gods); for without regularity there can be no control, and without control a planned and purposeful life can scarcely be lived.

The search for the great regularities of reality has been one of man's proudest undertakings. As the search has gone on, the animisms have more and more been relegated to oblivion. The unpredictable and capricious gods have been made to go "deathward mournfully"; and the challenge to men has increasingly been to take up their proper business of learning to understand the what and how of things.

While the animisms have thus been made to go deathward, however, they are not yet all dead. They still intrude themselves into men's thinking, particularly in the more primitive contemporary forms of religion and in the more primitive forms of contemporary social and political thinking. Dependence upon authority—even upon capricious authority, like that of a whimsical parent, an intruding deity, or a self-appointed arbitrary ruler—is an old habit. It belongs to the childhood of the race, being one of the oldest ways in which the human being who is a child in years or a child in understanding comes to terms with his own helplessness: dresses up that helplessness in acceptable trappings; justifies his own irresponsibility; makes, even, a kind of security out of feeling that a power stronger and wiser than himself will both keep him in line and look after him. The maturer habit of *searching*



*out the nature of things and of doing only what our disciplined conclusions bid us do* is a habit only lately being formed. It belongs to the growing-up stage of our humanity.

In its search for regularities science has had a various adventure. Its chief difficulty, from the beginning, has lain with the seemingly unreachable and unmanageable mind of man. Sticks and stones could be put in their proper places in the scheme of things; for they had a way of staying put. But the mind of man was as variable and uncontrollable as the wind.

It is not surprising, then, that one of the first great efforts of science was to pin down the mind and make it behave in predictable and governable ways. To the scientist, wary of all the animisms, the "mind's freedom" was no advantage but a handicap. If regularity was to be found, and if whim and caprice were to be removed from the universe, man's mind must yield its "freedom" and become part of the regular and predictable order of things.

The effort thus to get the mind safely "put" began in full earnest with Democritus, the Greek, in his bold attempt to explain everything, including man's mind, in the movement of atoms; and it was brought to its climax in the materialisms of the nineteenth century, when mind, the hitherto sovereign reality, was described as a mere epiphenomenon, a kind of negligible mold on the solid body of the universe.

This was science leaning over backward to make sure that no unpredictable and ungovernable element entered its world. It was the kind of science that greatly perturbed men of idealistic leanings, who saw in the reduction of the mind to matter the end of the soul's great quests. It was the kind of science that widened the rift between itself and religion,

causing religionists to believe that science was the mortal enemy of man's hopes.

What we need now to understand is that this leaning-over-backward phase of science is fairly past. Throughout the ages of irresponsible and intolerant animism, such materialistic science had its profound uses; for it made safe for our exploration a world previously given over to spirits and devils. Throughout century after century, the deliberate refusal of scientists to look upon the world *except as a machine* enabled them to master so many of its secrets that we are able, today, without surrender to the animisms, to learn that it is actually more than a machine.

It is important for the modern individual who, if he is to be mature, must be hospitable to scientific research, to know this; for still, in many quarters, he is warned against science as the arch-enemy of the deeper things he has cared about.

Today we can look upon the traditional rigidities of materialism as having been outgrown. Much has happened in the past half-century to make a place for flexibility and creativeness. The story is a long and complicated one and impossible to set down in full detail. It has to do with what has occurred in science chiefly within the past fifty years. In those years (to put it briefly) two important things have happened: the development of relativity, and the rise of nuclear physics. Out of the two of them scientists have begun to conceive of a different universe: of large regularities but of small irregularities; of large predictabilities (as in the movement of the heavenly bodies) but of small unpredictabilities (as in the emission of electrons in definite quanta). In brief, instead of seeing the universe as rigidly bound in

law and predictability—as totally “unfree”—they have begun to see it as unbelievably plastic and flexible and as having in it immense potentialities of the kind we think of as life.

This is, in fact, the scientific news of our day: that the *livingness* of the universe has been returned to us.

#### IV

It is important to know this about science (that once, in its materialisms, it overreached itself and that it has since modified its point of view) because this is the sort of process upon which the maturing mind can self-respectingly pattern itself: a process that so stoutly aims at truth-finding that it is not halted by an inability to relinquish error—even a favorite error. Science, in short, is no sacrosanct vessel of authority. It holds no absolute and invariant truth. It makes no infallible pronouncements. On the contrary, like our individual selves, it is human and fallible. Its spirit is expressed, not in a “Believe this or perish!” but rather in a “Come, let’s investigate.”

If the human mind is to be mature, and if it is to put its maturity into creative action, it can do no better than to join up with the scientists. They have a way about them that is authentic. Even when they make mistakes, they recover from them in ways that do honor to the mind’s modesty and integrity. When a once-accepted principle is disproved, scientists slough off the error—relegate it to the *history* of science. In this they markedly differ from those guardians of the religious tradition who require a *contemporary* reverence for every insight, from the most primitive to the most mature, that has ever gone into the making of the tradition: so that “believers” are required, for example, to perform the feat of

relating themselves simultaneously to a primitive, partial, animistic God of whim and vengeance and a much later and higher concept of a God of love and of universal significance. To shy away from the scientists because they seem to endanger some of the beliefs we have been taught to accept is merely to refuse to grow up. The business of the maturing mind is to "look see"—and, when necessary, to take a second and third look, or any number of looks that may be called for by the process of correcting error and discovering new truths.

## V

One further insight of modern science deserves attention. It has to do with a new way of seeing causal relationships in our world. For centuries the human mind was conditioned to think in one typical way about the causes of things. Everything was supposed to come by the "one-way" process. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is the first sentence of the book that has had more to do than any other with shaping the mind of Western man. The same sort of sentence, however, can be found in any of the mind-forming books (as well as mind-forming tales) all over the world.

In other words, man's most primitive way of thinking of cause and effect has been *linear*. Somebody (or something) did something; and something happened to a passive object. This linear way of thinking has marked all areas of human concern. Thus the code of morals was supposed to have been "given" to Moses; the Hebrew people were "chosen" by God; the particular form of their society was ordained by God. *From the top down*. Later, in feudal times, kings were thought

of as divinely appointed. Even today, in a return to primitivism, the line of causation in totalitarian lands runs from dictator to people.

In family life, the linear idea has been embodied for centuries in the relation of parent to child: the one has commanded; the other obeyed. In the school, it has been embodied in the relation of teacher to child, the causal force passing down from the one to the other. (It was inconceivable that the line of causation should run counterwise, from child to teacher. Note how differently the causal process is conceived by a scientifically oriented mind of today. In Helen Parkhurst's *Exploring the Child's World* the cause-and-effect relation goes also counterwise from child and teacher to parent. Likewise in Marie Rasey's *Toward Maturity* the causal relations are shown to go back and forth between child, teacher and parent, home, school, and community.)

The most important change in respect to causality that science has introduced into our contemporary thinking is to turn the age-old "linear" conception into a "field" conception. As in a field of force, everything is both cause and effect.

"Who does what to whom" is now, therefore, the most difficult of all questions to answer, for there are many "whos" and many "whats," all interacting. (Take, for example, the problem of the juvenile delinquent. What "makes" the delinquent?) "What is *the* cause" (of crime, divorce, war, inflation, or what not) is one of those monocausal—and really nonsensical—questions that no disciplined mind now asks. In short, in all the areas of science, from physical to biological, to social, to psychological, the image of causality, now, is of a field of interacting causes.

If reality is seen not as shaped *by someone* or *by something* but as *shaping itself out of the interplay of forces*, the conception of the part we play in the process is greatly affected.

Let me illustrate with a homely example. This morning I sat at the kitchen window at our farm and watched a bumblebee work its way in and out of the blossoms of a bed of foxgloves. The bee was the "cause" of the blossoms' being pollinated. But the blossoms, in turn, were the cause of the bee's ingoings and outgoings: they had nectar to "cause" him to enter, so that they were indirectly the "cause" of their own pollination. But my wife and I were also the cause of those ingoings and outgoings: we had planted the foxgloves. And a former owner of the farm was a cause, because he had once prepared the soil in which we planted our seeds. A seed house in New York was also a cause, since it had sent us the seeds by mail. (There enters the post office, too.) Also, swallows were swooping over the foxgloves catching in their flight insects that might, if uncontrolled, have killed the plants—and eventually the rest of us.

The story repeats itself in millionfold form—the story of a universe of interplaying causes. All of these interplaying causes make the world—and keep on making it. Nor does science apprise us of any *one cause* that, linearwise, causes all these interplaying causes to operate. Whether there is a one cause that is the cause of all that creatively happens in our world is a further question—a terribly difficult one—that science, because it is science and recognizes its limitations, lets severely alone. Science goes only so far as to say—but to say this is of immense importance—that causally, in this universe of ours, *we are all members one of another*. Out of

this joint interweaving, this active membership of life, come the things that come.

We ourselves are part of this joint membership. (Did we not plant the foxgloves and fertilize the soil?) Hence, we are not only creatures but co-creators. The world we live in, in short, is being everlastingly made and remade by all of us—from midge to man; from atom to wave length that reaches into the infinite.

The generations that were taught, linearwise, to believe that a Deity was the sole origin of the Ten Commandments was thereby conditioned to believe that what is “right” and “wrong” comes solely from “above.” They had no conception that “right” and “wrong” are the regularities that men themselves have learned to work out in the effort to live their individual and shared social life. Thus the “linear” generations were loath to change even a letter of the code supposedly handed from above. The “field” generations, on the other hand, progressively learn that men, having by their various fumbings created their moral codes, can continuously recreate them nearer to their mind’s new insights.

We are all of us, in short, part of the creative process. That process was not a once-and-for-all affair—“in the beginning.” Apparently it goes on everlastingly; and we, in our brief moments, are creatively part of it.

The deep mystery of life, to be sure—the wherefrom and the whereto—still remains. *What has changed is our relation to the mystery.* Now we know that we are in it and of it; creative partners; participants in the amazing drama; doers of something to our world as well as creatures being done to by our world. In other words, we make as well as take. And—

what is most important—all of us, to the smallest item in our world, are in on the making.

What this means is that a new pattern of thinking is being shaped among us. The old from-the-top-down pattern becomes increasingly unacceptable. Therefore older assumptions and behaviors likewise become unacceptable. We no longer merely “take” the given. We examine it, and if necessary remake it. In other words, this is our world, shared with countless millions of others. We are in this world and of it. There are things we can do within it. Whatever, therefore, the forms of life organization may be—moral, political, social, sexual—we are co-creators of those forms. Our responsibility, then, is not merely to receive and give thanks—or to petition that things be made otherwise—but to evaluate things and make such improvements (co-operating with other forms of life) as lie within our limited but very real insight and power.

If we naturalize ourselves within this newer, multicausal way of thinking, all our relationships change from those of a static acceptance to those of a dynamic creativeness. This is one major change that today marks the scientifically oriented mind.

## VI

This sense of *a joint membership of life* has operated to make the scientist, today, feel a new responsibility for what his science does. Formerly, protected by a theory of scientific “purity,” he could work with small thought of the social consequences of his discoveries. The splitting of the atom helped to change this. Shortly after the bombing of Hiroshima, one of the top nuclear physicists at one of our great universities



is said to have rushed across the campus to the office of one of our top political scientists: "We've made a Frankenstein monster, and you social scientists have got to help us control it!" Nuclear physicists, today, inevitably become social scientists—or seek the co-operation of social scientists; and a gap that has been a fiction observed for the sake of convenience begins to close.

Even before the splitting of the atom, however—and markedly in the years of the great depression—social scientists began to move beyond academic walls to act as business and political advisors and administrators; and in the crucial present years, social scientists of all kinds—economists, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists—become advisors to diplomats, members of national and international commissions, conciliators in disputes, interveners with the mighty. Science has literally become "involved in mankind."

This, to be sure, has its dangers. A profound principle was expressed in the concept of "pure science": the determined affirmation of an integrity too precious to place in peril. It was the scientist's way of saying that he must at all costs refuse to lower his standards of disciplined research. He must remain free to discover what he discovered, and not what some temporary ruler wanted him to discover.

During World War II, we witnessed among the Nazis the spectacle of science outraged. Einstein's mathematics, for example, was denounced as "Jewish mathematics"—a world of noble proportions that had been conceived in aloofness from all the passing prejudices of men thus being dragged down to the level of men's horrible current passions. Today, Lysenkoism, in Russia, repeats the story.

Science, in brief, was justified in asserting that it must keep itself clear of all subjective bias—personal, class, racial, religious, national, ideological. However, there is no contradiction between this assertion of scientific integrity and the kind of involvement in mankind of which we are now speaking. The nuclear scientist realizes that what he discovers enters a world that may not yet be ready for the peril or the promise of his discovery. Caught by a new anxiety, therefore, he moves, not out of science, but into citizenship. He becomes citizen-scientist—one who, while keeping intact the integrity of his specialized research, yet moves into the fellowship of men's concerns.

This is true likewise of the numberless social scientists who, dedicated to their specialties and alert against the invasions of bias or outside pressure, nevertheless move into the places where conflicts multiply and men's passions rage.

The opinionated and the dogmatic, and those who have "special interests" that are more likely to be respected by the ignorant than the informed, are not happy at this entrance of the trained and responsible mind into their domain of half-knowledge and irresponsibility. They hurl epithets of contempt. But those who see less darkly must welcome these disciplined minds into our variously confused world of human affairs.

In every discussion about the nature and function of science someone, sooner or later, is bound to say, "But science has nothing to do with values." What is apparently happening today is that the sciences are so deeply involved in values that they take on the role not merely of rigorous investigators

but of guides. Science, in short, is no longer a pursuit that lies wholly outside the realm of values.

Here, again, an old gap-of-convenience is being closed. Facts, we now learn (like the "fact" of Russian labor camps or the "fact" of racial segregation), are facts that *involve* values; and these not only can but must be explored and appraised. What does it actually do to the personality of an individual to live his life as a member of a segregated group? That is a perfectly legitimate scientific question. If orderly and objective evidence shows that segregation makes for the inhibition and distortion of human powers, then that is "value" evidence: it is distinctly relevant to our persistent spiritual effort to build on earth the "City of Man," the "City of God."

Science, in short, is neutral to values only when it deals with neutral materials, like minerals and star clusters—if, indeed, *any* materials are neutral today, when the newly discovered property of some mineral may suffice to work drastic changes in the economy by which men live. When it deals with materials that are *value-saturated* (like fascism or communism or democracy; or like the plight of the rejected child, or the impact upon men's minds of reiterated falsehoods) its task is to estimate the effect of the assumed values upon the total course of our individual and shared lives.

## VII

New scientific vistas therefore open up before us. It has long been assumed that science stops at the boundaries of the material world and that the world of the moral lies beyond it. This has meant that judgments of right and wrong could

not have scientific validation; and that their formulation and implementation must lie in other hands than those of the scientist.

This point of view is now being seriously challenged. We can best illustrate, perhaps, by a dramatic event that belongs wholly and characteristically to our own time. During the Fourth General Conference of UNESCO,<sup>2</sup> a resolution was passed calling upon the Director-General

1. To collect scientific materials concerning the problems of race;
2. To give wide diffusion to the scientific information collected;
3. To prepare an educational campaign based on this information.

The task of carrying out the resolution was turned over to the Brazilian anthropologist, Dr. Arthur Ramos, whose first step was to call together a committee of experts in the fields of anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and ethnology.<sup>3</sup> A committee of twelve scientists from eight nations was formed, and held its opening meeting on December 12, 1949.

By the end of the first day of the committee's deliberations, a rough statement on race was worked out. The next two days were spent in a painstaking and microscopic going over of this rough draft. By the end of the third day all the members were able to sign the statement without any reservations.

The statement was then sent to a number of top-flight

<sup>2</sup> For a full account of this event, see Ashley Montagu, *Statement on Race*. New York: Henry Schuman, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Ramos unfortunately died shortly thereafter. He was succeeded in the chairmanship by Professor R. C. Angell, of the Department of Sociology, University of Michigan.

scientists representing the fields of genetics, general biology, social psychology, sociology, and economics. Following their suggestions a third draft was drawn up and sent to a still larger group in these same scientific fields. Following the suggestions of this group, a fourth draft was prepared. Then, with the inclusion of a few changes suggested by the Chairman and the Director-General, a fifth and final draft of the *Statement by Experts on Race Problems* was completed.

Seven months were consumed in the drafting; but in the end a statement was completed such as our confused and bewildered world had never known before. *Our top scientists had tackled a problem of profound significance to the value judgments of all of us and had dared to indicate which, in their best judgment, were the true values.*

. . . thus in an area in which emotion and prejudice, injustice and oppression, death and disaster have figured so largely, it was demonstrated that scientists of distant nations can meet, can freely discuss the problems involved, in the language of science, and can arrive at a common agreement.\*

This was a committee formed to make a statement about race. A similar committee might have been formed to make a statement on any of the innumerable problems that clutter up the human scene. (Such committees will unquestionably be formed if UNESCO becomes permanent among us.) For example, there is the widespread problem of emotional maladjustment. What do we know about it, and what might we do about it? There is the problem of crime; of low living standards; of illiteracy; of sexual perversion; of citizen apathy;

\* Montagu, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

of political corruption; of group hostility; of superstition; of ethnocentricity; of religious intolerance.

We now know that the thing can be done. Men of disciplined devotion and of unchallengeable mental and emotional integrity exist, all over the world, who can be brought together to pool what they now know, or who can, along commonly agreed-upon lines, set out to discover what they do not yet know about the matters that concern all of us most deeply.

This is news of the most exciting kind to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. This is man discovering what to do, for the good of man, with the gift of the mind.

### VIII

We now know that there is this disciplined and honorable way of the mind; and we begin to see that the individual who cares about his own creative integrity must join forces with this way. The continuing tragedies of the world arise where this way of the mind is flouted; or where it is not even known for what it is. Most of the conflicts that embitter our days would not arise, or would be less difficult to resolve, if the disciplined will to know were as strong as the undisciplined will to strike out at an opponent.

In his *Nature and Human Nature*, Lawrence K. Frank puts the new challenge to us. The subtitle of the book is *Man's New Image of Himself*. Science, in all its areas, he shows us, is helping to shape this new image: of ourselves in our geographic environment; in our biological environment; in our culture; and in our society. As we saw earlier in this book, a false self-image is one source of many of our ills. Such falsity has widely prevailed in our relations to our enviroing world.

The traditional image of ourselves has been that of creatures helpless before the whims and caprices of irresponsible superhuman powers. It has caused us to accept our cultures, codes, and social arrangements as created by forces outside ourselves; and therefore to put them out of relation to the creative searchings of our minds. It has caused us to belittle powers within ourselves that are part of the glory of our being. Where this inadequate image has been challenged at all, it has, as often as not, been by an image equally inadequate—that of our individual selves as “ruggedly” independent of our environment; able to go it alone without regard for any reality beyond our own ambitions and ingenuities.

The sciences, today, are painstakingly building up for us a new picture of our world and of our human nature. We face, therefore, as Frank indicates, “an extraordinary task of re-orienting ourselves toward nature and man, revising our traditional beliefs and assumptions and, with the new conceptions and the new criteria of credibility . . . , of renewing our culture and reconstructing our social order within a world community.”<sup>5</sup>

This is the new scientific frontier on which we are now privileged to live.

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence K. Frank, *Nature and Human Nature*, p. vi. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1951.

T E N

## LIVING ON THE SPIRITUAL FRONTIER

FOR CENTURIES, in our Christian culture, the question which has spearheaded our spiritual life has been: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Today the question that bids fair to take its place as the number one spiritual question is of a very different character: "*How can we encourage love and diminish hate?*"

It is significant that the earlier question was asked by a young man so spiritually immature that he could not even grasp the import of the answer given him and "went away sorrowful." What seems not to have been realized by many who have read the tale is that, in his spiritual immaturity, the young man did not even know the right question to ask.

Yet this immaturely framed question has expressed for countless numbers of people man's central spiritual concern. Because the question was wrongly asked, it has tended to



evoke answers wrongly conceived. Cast in an ego-centered form—a concern about individual salvation—it has inevitably suggested individual reward or individual punishment. The emphasis in religious quarters has thus traditionally been upon what would happen to the individual if he did not do the things required for election to eternal life. Consequently many of the churches have addressed themselves chiefly to promises and warnings. Speaking a language of exhortation and threat, they have made the spiritual life an anxious obedience to a deity who would punish disobedience. Many a pulpiteer has had a wonderful time holding his congregation suspended over the fires of hell; or, in more generous vein, describing to them the heaven of their reward. Far too few priests and preachers, it would seem, have set themselves the harder task of making real to their people the answer that Christ gave to the young man's question: the answer, namely, that his proper task was not the ego-centered one of concentrating on his own salvation but, rather, the task of getting rid of the trappings of power and privilege that separated him from his human kind and throwing in his lot with those who dared to affirm love and brotherhood as the central realities of existence.

In sharp contrast, the second question was asked, not by an immature and privileged youth, but by a contemporary scientist. It was in his *Love against Hate* that Karl Menninger, out of his many years of serving troubled and suffering minds, asked the question that seemed to him to sum up today's central issue of life: "The practical problem may be stated thus . . . : How can we encourage love and diminish hate?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, p. 5, 1942.

In this different rendering of the life issue, the whole spiritual orientation becomes changed. Here the interest moves outward from the self to fellow selves—as it did in Christ's answer. Here there is a caring about life other than one's own. The scientist who asks the question senses the deep sorrows of his fellow humans: their frustrations; the pitiful defeats they suffer because they do not rightly know, or are not emotionally equipped to know, that love is the way of life we all must learn.

As he puts it, therefore, the question has the beautiful maturity of moving beyond egocentricity and including everybody. "How can we encourage love . . . ?" Once it is asked, the question sets our energies of concern moving outward. *We think about how to save others, and in the process we save ourselves.*

When we learn to ask this outward-directed question, it is obvious what we will set out to do. We will look for ways in which artificial barriers between man and man can be removed; ways in which hate-breeding misunderstandings can be cleared up; ways in which experiences conducive to the growth of affection can be created and widely shared: ways in which people can become involved in concerns that carry them beyond self-interest into humanity-interest. Such encouraging of love and diminishing of hate becomes the main life task. It becomes the most important thing for the spirit of man to care about. And once a man is deeply possessed by the health and joy of such caring, it would scarcely occur to him to ask how he, as a special and separate individual, can best assure his own special and separate salvation.

## II

Perhaps the most profound insight we have gained in recent decades is that the capacity to love is something that has to grow. It has to be prepared for and cultivated—from the beginnings of life and throughout all the life processes. Many a person, we now know, comes to adulthood actually unable to love. There is in him, it may be, a haunting and even anguished sense that he lacks something deeply essential; but, incomplete individual that he is, he is unable to define or supply the lack. To say to him, "If only you would love God," or even to say to him, "If only you would love a friend," or "your wife" or "your child," is futile. The words mean nothing. They evoke no movement in the unstirred inner life. *The man has yet to learn to love.*

Such well-meaning words, in fact, may simply add to his bafflement and therefore to his hostility. For identifying his own desperate need *to receive love* with the emotion of *giving love*, and having no power to disentangle the two because he has never experienced the latter, he may honestly believe that he already is an unusually loving person in a cold world.

For such an individual to learn to love may require, we now know, a deep remaking—or reorientation—of his personality. Or, as we symbolically express it, it may mean that he must be "born again." This is why the scientist's question, "How can we encourage love and diminish hate?" is no simple one that can be answered with an oracular word.

The true answer begins with the realization that all the influences in life that make people uncertain of themselves,

unwanted, fearful of others and of their world, self-defensive, guilty before others, resentful, destructively aggressive, are influences that tend to stultify or kill the love possibilities. To encourage love means, then, to go out into the daily highways and byways of life intent on countering such influences as discourage the growth in human beings of the capacity to move outward toward others.

### III

It is not surprising that a generation that is learning to have this outward-directed concern increasingly turns its eyes to the newborn. For with the newborn all things are at risk. How can we be sure that the environment into which the helpless infant comes will not be a hate-breeding, fear-engendering one? How can we be sure that parents are wise enough to know what is required for the nurturing of their offspring—parents who themselves are often helplessly grappling with fears and hostilities of their own? How can we be sure that we have teachers who, themselves loving, can encourage love and decrease the likelihood that hatreds will form in the classroom and on the playground? In short, the question we are now learning to ask is how we can make all the processes of childhood and youth into processes that promote affection, mutual understanding, and mutual concern.

A generation learning to think in this way becomes sensitive to the many sins against the young that our culture has committed. A caption over the photograph of a little girl war victim reads: "Seven Years I Never Slept in a Bed." And accompanying the picture of a legless Greek boy are the words

he writes to his American foster parents: "I just sit on a chair like a piece of dry wood poked in the earth."

Powerfully moving to our generation is the pent-up anger of Christ when he set a child in the midst of his disciples and said that "whosoever shall offend one of these little ones . . . it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Certainly it is not without significance that what called forth this response was the fact that his disciples had lost sight of the values he taught in an argument as to who among themselves should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Sharply—as with the rich young man—he pulled them back to their proper task of living well in the human scene.

This, then, if we pursue the scientist's question, is one way in which our spiritual concern rightly expresses itself: in an active and intelligent caring about those too helpless as yet to care for themselves. This means that the energy of research spent today in seeking out the needs of the child's life is *spiritually directed energy*. It is a form of caring deeply about life. This energy of research, in short, might be thought of as our culture's belated way of responding to Christ's words by setting the child so plainly in our midst that we shall not again forget.

#### IV

Virgilia Peterson, reviewing J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (a book about a sixteen-year-old prep-school boy), and commenting on this forlorn "portrait of a so-called privileged American youth," writes a sentence that pulls us up short: "In it lies the implication that our youth today have no

moorings, no criterion beyond instinct, no railing to grasp along the steep ascent to maturity.”<sup>2</sup>

If this is even partly true, it would seem to suggest that many adults of our culture—teachers as well as parents—are still inadequately equipped to know the needs of youth. In home, school, and community they do things and leave things undone that discourage in the young the growth of generous, responsible affection and intelligent understanding of their world.

One problem that has perennially beset even the best of parents and teachers, of course, is that the private, inner world of the child is tenaciously inaccessible to the adult. The adult often cannot know what his own words will mean after they have been translated into the child’s frame of reference. Neither, in many instances, can he do more than guess at the emotion-laden reasons for a child’s behavior or misbehavior.

We owe a peculiar gratitude, therefore, to the psychological researchers today who are trying out and constantly improving their methods for effecting a non-offensive entrance into the child’s world; and who are bringing back from that world a store of information invaluable to all of us.

The play therapists, for example, are accomplishing something new under the sun: they are entering into the emotional needs and problems of disturbed children who are too young, as yet, to verbalize their inner experience but who, in a permissive atmosphere, will reveal themselves in their handling of paints and clay. Even with older children—and even with adults, for that matter—the translating of inner emotional states into outer form through the free manipulation of ma-

<sup>2</sup> *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, July 15, 1951.

terials often proves more successful than a verbalization of those states.

The "talking out" process also, however, is developing new subtleties of usefulness. Thus, Helen Parkhurst, for example, has developed a rare art of getting groups of children to talk freely among themselves—and into a microphone—about many subjects that they do not normally or easily talk over with adults: how they feel about punishment; why they lie or steal; how they feel about a new baby in the family; what they mean by fairness; what they actually want to know about birth and death. The questions that Miss Parkhurst asks the children are, as Aldous Huxley writes in his introduction to her book, *Exploring the Child's World*,<sup>3</sup> "so simple that one would think that any fool could ask them." Significantly, however, he goes on to say, "But in fact, of course, any fool would ask them at the wrong time, in the wrong tone, and in conjunction with other questions which should never have been asked. . . . Asked as Miss Parkhurst asks them, these simple questions bring out the Original Virtue in the children. When given a chance, even the youngest of them are amazingly reasonable and clear-sighted. But these reasonable and clear-sighted beings . . . are small and helpless, and all around them prowl enormous grown-ups, capable of loving but also capable of hurting and outraging them."

The work of all those who sensitively enter into the child's private life and interpret that life to those who need to understand it is work that has spiritual stature, for it is done with love and for the sake of helping love to grow. Moreover, it reminds all of us that before we take the easy way of giving

<sup>3</sup> New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951.

so-called spiritual advice to children—"Be loving and kind and obey God and your parents who love you"—we must take the harder way of trying to know what experience *means to children*, so that we can so arrange their environment that it will invite them to love as well as to want love. Whenever we take this harder way, we move into the deep, spiritual service of our human kind.

## V

The great enterprise of life, as it now begins to take shape before our spiritual vision, is to create life that is friendly to fellow life. This vision cannot be fulfilled unless we remove the conditions that make for distrust, fear, and antagonism among men. Chief among these are the racial discriminations, class discriminations, political power-seekings, ideological fanaticisms, and economic exploitations. We can no longer say of these that, because they belong to "Caesar's world," we can leave them to Caesar and still keep our spiritual life intact.

We who cherish spiritual vision are citizens of our world, with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. As citizens, we are makers of secular arrangements; and where secular arrangements are hate-breeding and fear-breeding, so that they distort human personality, the obligation to help change them is a spiritual obligation.

In short, the spiritual life, while still keeping itself "unspotted from the world"—that is, uncorrupted by worldly standards that are too low—takes on, today, as it were, a *spot-removing* task within the world. For it has a test, now, with which it can confidently challenge all secular institutions



and activities: *Do these promote love and diminish hate?*

This is a test which we can now put to every community; to every institution and group within a community; to every business or industrial organization; to every agency of mass communication; to every labor union; to every management group; to every political party; to every school and college; to every home; to every nation. As these different units of our culture—small or large—answer this test question, they show themselves as enemies of man's spirit or affirm themselves as promoters of man's authentic life.

## V I

If this is in truth our spiritual task, then that institution—let us call it broadly the church—which is peculiarly concerned with man's spiritual life has one obvious directive: to create atmospheres—situations, psychic climates—in which love can grow.

The power to love, as we have said, does not come full-grown into our lives. It has to be welcomed into growth. The soil must be right and the care intelligent and resourceful. *Love never comes by mere admonition nor by logical, verbal proof of its importance.* Thus a church may endlessly preach the doctrine that God is love and yet leave its people cold. It may, in fact, arouse in them a delicate aversion to such indiscriminate cosmic amiability. It may teach "brotherhood" and yet leave its people in most unbrotherly mood. To promote love-among-men requires, in short, that we do more than talk about it; that we actually promote situations and create atmospheres in which love will spontaneously flourish without being admonished to do so.

One of the characteristic and fairly mischievous mistakes, it would seem, that most churches have made has been to start out their communicants with adherence to a creed. The creed has been intended to unite them in a common commitment. But while it may, to an extent, have united, it has tended far more deeply to divide, and for a reason that is psychologically obvious: a creed invites people to be more precise and exacting about cosmic matters than it is morally safe to be in an area of vast human ignorance. Whenever a creed, with its presumptive certitude, is uttered, an exclusion is automatically set up: "All you who do not believe as we believe, nor state your belief in our precise terms, be apprised of the fact that you are not of us!"

This has resulted, generation after generation, in getting the spiritual life of communicants off on the wrong foot. It has had too much to do with theological hair-splitting; with the pride of being in on the cosmic "know"; with disputation; and with an unbecoming certainty about the mystery of life. Above all, it has had too little to do with the basic matter of helping people to like one another. As we all too tragically know from the history of religious wars, a man with a creed may be a man with a great hate and very little love.

Creeds, in short, are like definitions: they are best formulated at the end, when we have had the relevant experience out of which to shape them; not at the beginning, when we are just learning to savor that experience.

This does not mean that the spiritual life should be without broad principles of belief. Jesus declared that we must love God and our neighbor as ourselves. This was a profound and necessary belief. But it was not a creed. Rather, it was a deep

conviction born out of his own moving experience of life. He did not say, "You cannot join my group unless you repeat after me these words of infallible truth. . . ." He said, instead, that believers were distinguished from unbelievers by the fruits of their belief: by their actions.

If a profound spiritual belief is to be achieved by a human being, it must come out of his own experience. It cannot be borrowed ready-made. This seems now so obvious as to be axiomatic. We are coming increasingly to believe, then, that the task of the church is to give men, not a creed, but the kind of growth-into-love experience out of which a great "credo" may eventually emerge. Not first the creed and then the life; but first the life and then the creed.

## VII

What kind of experience do men most deeply need if love is to be increased in them and hate diminished?

Perhaps the most powerful nourisher of love among men is the home, when the home is what a home should be. The reason is clear. The home is a place where a certain fellowship prevails that is unlike any other in life. In the first place, it is one that is ours by the mere fact of our existing. We enter the home as helpless infants, and find welcome. As we find welcome, we are able to live without fear. This is where we belong. These others are part of us and we are part of them. Our life goes out toward them and theirs toward us. In the second place, the fellowship is one in which "each practices an unlimited liability for each other."<sup>4</sup> If we are sick or hurt,

<sup>4</sup> Elton Trueblood, *Alternative to Futility*, p. 70. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948.

we know we will be cared for, even up to the limit. No one will say, "Your time for the occupancy of this sickbed has expired." If we are disappointed or crushed by failure, we will be supported by sympathy and help—again, even up to the limit.

In the fellowship of the home, in short, love gets its first and most powerful chance to grow. No other institution is quite like it. No other takes us into an atmosphere and into an association that so profoundly draw out our responses to others and theirs to us. What we know about the home is that, at its best, it exemplifies the best way for life to be lived.

Perhaps a clue may be found here for the church. What we have learned about love is that it grows in an atmosphere of fellow love. It grows where individuals happily do things together: eat together; work together; laugh together; share things together; care about things together. A church, then, it would seem, best promotes love-among-men as it promotes such freely sharing fellowship among men.

This has not been the universally accepted view of the church's main function. Its main function has been conceived, rather, after the teaching pattern or the guidance pattern, or, among the salvation-minded, after the saving-souls-from-perdition pattern. The spiritual leader has exhorted from the high place of authoritative truth; the people, in a lower place, have listened. The teaching or guidance function, to be sure, is an essential one in life: every good home finds a place for it. The church, as a spiritual center, must likewise find a place for it. But it begins to dawn upon many religious people, today, that this pattern of wisdom from above may have over-

shadowed a profounder pattern: namely, that of *love generated through fellowship*.

It is far from likely that the Disciples were forever sitting receptively at the feet of Christ. It is far more likely that when they were sitting they sat around at random, talking and breaking into each other's talk; laughing at a quick rejoinder; asking questions of one another; wondering about things together. With a good deal of the false, hushed piety of the past rubbed off, we now begin to think of Christ and his disciples as a spiritually lusty group. They tramped the roads together; got dusty and hot and hungry; plucked food by the wayside; halloed to one another at some discovery. And as they grew in the warmth of their companionship, the wise and surprising words came; their love grew; and their courage grew accordingly, and their power to be the bearers of a great truth.

This is the kind of experience, we now begin to see, that all of us need and many of us long for. Even those of us who are happy in our homes and our work need a companionship that goes even beyond these. We need, in short, a companionship with those in the wider human community *with whom we can unashamedly care about things we want to care about*. To use Elton Trueblood's fine phrase, we all of us need to belong to some "fellowship of the concerned."

In the average run of life, we are shy and constrained about many of the things we most deeply care about. We can never be quite sure how others will respond if we show our concern. For all we know, these others may care exactly as we do; or they may be miles removed from our caring—so that they could only be puzzled by what we say; or amused; or made cynical.

In his tender and revealing book, *The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith*, Bruce Marshall tells the story of a talk that Father Smith and the Bishop had on a tram in Scotland. Father Smith liked the Bishop and the Bishop liked Father Smith; but they did not often meet. When, therefore, on this particular day, they had seated themselves in the tram, they were soon deep in talk; and, of all things for a tram filled with strangers, in talk about poetry and prayer.

Father Smith could see that people were beginning to stare at the Bishop and himself, popping at them hard glittering hating eyes, like the soda-water bottle stoppers you pressed down with your thumb. He knew, however, that they were staring only because they were so accustomed to hearing people say things which didn't matter that they were shocked when they heard people say things which did. If the Bishop and himself had been talking about steel shares or the price of jute, nobody would have looked at them at all, but because they were talking about the things which alone give meaning to life, their words aroused hatred, anger, and contempt. The priest thought sadly about all the talking that there was in the world each day—about the wind and the rain and gold and Aunt Maggie's new dress—and he thought, too, about all the important things that never seemed to get said.<sup>5</sup>

Father Smith liked the Bishop and the Bishop liked Father Smith; and when they got together they knew the talk between them would be good talk. This is the kind of companionship of which there is all too little in the world, so that there is a great loneliness among people—most of whom have no easy outlet for any other than easy talk about things that

<sup>5</sup> Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945, p. 27.

lie far from their deepest concerns. In a fellowship such as a church might foster, there could be the chance for shyness to be so overcome that even the most casual word could be a word of caring; something not to be ashamed of; not to be aggressive about, as to a hostile listener; not to be self-consciously solemn and rigid about, either. In such an atmosphere of concerned fellowship, deeper and more sustained talk could come as easily as one moves into conversation with a person one loves.

To promote the fellowship of good talk would be no mean function for a church to perform. It would be a distinctly spiritual function, because it would be love-inducing and life-releasing. The "bottled-up" person, we have come to know, who has no one to whom he can talk except on the surface level, suffers distortion of personality. He is blocked in the normal and healthy "outwarding" of himself, with a consequent diminution of his "inner" resources: his spiritual resources.

To encourage this type of fellowship is, however, a function not easily performed—as if a church were to say to its people, "Come, let us now all talk together. In short, let us form discussion groups." The fellowship of good talk comes where there is a still deeper fellowship: one that has grown out of the sustained habit of doing together things that greatly need doing. Father Smith and the Bishop could plunge into their talk not because they liked the sound of their voices or because they were adept at verbalizing but because with both of them their days were filled with doing things they deeply and affectionately believed worth doing.

Young married couples, we increasingly realize, need to be

brought into this kind of fellowship. Marriage, like love, is not a thing that comes full-born. It is a kind of sharing that needs time and opportunity to grow into its full richness. In too many cases marriages turn brittle because the young couples have only themselves to count on; only themselves and perhaps a few friends or business associates as sources of life experience. As often as not, even where these limited companionships are concerned, there is only a stilted imitation of genuine fellowship—for each couple, concerned with making its start in the world or getting ahead, is to some extent absorbed in a competitive process of impression-making. Young married couples need to be welcomed into a fellowship of their own kind that surrounds them with warmth of affection; gives them a chance to be gay in their gaieties and serious in their deeper concerns. They need the wide, supporting friendliness of a group where the talk can be the shop-talk of young married life, yet where they can move happily and helpfully into the wider concerns of the community of life.

“Where two or three are gathered together” still remains, in brief, one of the great phrases of human insight. To have the joy of moving from aloneness into a life of affectionate and understanding give-and-take is to add another cubit to one’s spiritual stature.

This, of course, is not the whole story. “There are, indeed, times,” writes Elton Trueblood, “when we wish to enter a darkened church, pray and leave without speaking to another human being, but such religious experience is not satisfactory as a steady diet. The normal religious experience is that in which the society of worship becomes also a society of friends.



. . . Inner illumination alone, important as it is, may produce the self-centered and the bizarre, with no outside check on either ideas or conduct. The sense of urgency alone may produce unbalanced fanaticism, but men and women who submit to the discipline of fellowship, seeking group guidance in major decisions and recognizing the authority of group experience, are largely saved from these extravagances.”<sup>6</sup>

“Unless it involves *fellowship* that is deep and inclusive,” Trueblood concludes, “church membership is always nominal rather than real. Without genuine fellowship there is no *koinonia*,” no communion, no life in common. Recalling the early Christian fellowship, he writes, “The heart of the idea of membership . . . was that of being members one of another.” This, then, it would seem, is coming to be recognized as one clear pattern of the church—a *place where love is encouraged to grow by the sheer learning to like one another and to be active in a common caring.*

Walls of the church, like the walls of a home, need not be walls of antagonism between those inside and those outside. We rarely think of the walls of a home as shutting those within it away from the world. We think of them, rather, as enclosing a space within which people can learn attitudes and share experiences that will be good anywhere. Where, indeed, the walls of the home are thought of chiefly as protecting those inside and excluding those outside, the home is not performing its proper function of helping people so to grow that they will feel “at home” anywhere in the normal human scene. If a home is a good home, we expect the goodness of it to be manifest in the behaviors of the family members wherever

<sup>6</sup> Trueblood, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

they go. Similarly, the walls of the church should enclose a space within which the members deeply savor experiences that make them more sensitive and emotionally mature in the handling of every human situation they enter.

Sometimes people say that they get less out of going to church than they can get out of going forth into the wide spaces of nature. They may be right about this if the churches they have been accustomed to enter have been filled with the tight spirit of exclusiveness, self-concern, and self-approval; and if the rituals have been mere verbalizations of magic. But it may be that the "seekers of nature" are themselves laboring under a misapprehension. They may be making the kind of mistake we would make if we said that one cannot get the true family spirit shut up within a home, and that the really fine way to raise children is to raise them in a forest under a tree.

There is, in short, a type of enclosure that is freedom. It is one within which people create so contagious an atmosphere of affection and understanding that those who savor it will, as a consequence, behave differently wherever they go.

## VIII

Within the enclosure we call a church, we recognize that another deeply important thing can happen: namely, the making of an atmosphere in which we can, as we say, "find ourselves." Our average life is occupied with a bewildering number of things, from getting out of bed in the morning, face-washing, tooth-brushing, eating breakfast, starting up the car, hurrying the children off to school, to working at the thousand and one things that command us. For most of us,

the experience, in spite of its distressing multiplicity, has a kind of unity of pattern. All these many things seem necessary if we are to come to each evening sufficiently fed, clothed, housed, entertained, and tired to call it a day. Yet doing too much may mean that we do too little. There seems to be a deep need in us to take time out from the doing of many things to savor what we do. "Be still," said the Psalmist.

The church can serve as a place of stillness where the too much distracted, too noisy and clattering self can periodically quiet down. Music helps. The hush of silent prayer enables the self to gather itself to itself; to find meanings and depths in life and in things forgotten; to feel joined with others in sensing mystery, an obligation, and a faith too deep to express in words.

Such times of silence are times when we have a chance to be loosed into affection. Too much noise; too many voices; too many suggestions and countersuggestions; too many calls to do this and that, all tend to put edginess into life. To be still is to give ourselves the chance to recover kinship and friendliness.

We can, to be sure, experience such stillness by ourselves; but there is something about experiencing it with others that adds a dimension—all of us there, small and humble and silent before the ineffable.

Out of the stillness the voice of the minister can fittingly come to remind us of things we tend to forget. We call these the things of God, signifying thereby the things that give meaning, wonder, and outreach to life, that remove our littleness, and that make us strong with the binding power of love. To love God is to love these. To love God is to love the im-

measurable life that creates and sustains us, and within which we in turn create and sustain.

## I X

The spiritual life of man is in its own way a "frontier" life. It is a caring about values not yet realized and a doing of things to bring the as-yet-unrealized into existence. "Thy Kingdom come," in whatever language of religion it is spoken, is a commitment to the unfulfilled.

In its very essence, religion is "a dedication of the entire self to the pursuit of ideal values."<sup>7</sup> In this sense, religion is the most persistently and widely creative of all the enterprises of life. It is life forever looking beyond values already achieved, and forever enlisting itself in behalf of values still to be achieved. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," cried one spiritual genius of the race—and in all the centuries since that cry was uttered, man in his spiritual life has been passionately trying to discover how to do just that.

Also, he has been trying to discover how to do a host of other things that profoundly need doing. "Let judgment run down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream." Here was no smug satisfaction with things as they are. Here was a passion to change the prevailing pattern; to make things new. "Let there be . . ." is the creative language of the spirit.

The fellowship of the spiritual life, then, is the fellowship of those who are dedicated to the creation of the *still better*—not the *still better* for some egocentric use, as when a nation

<sup>7</sup> Ward Madden, *Religious Values in Education*, p. 10. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951.

creates a stronger weapon with which to kill its opponents, or an individual invents a gadget with which to outsmart his competitors, but the *still better for everyone*.

Such creative dedication presupposes a deep faith: the faith that *the universe is on the side of the ideal and inclusive values we pursue*. Madden makes this clear in two contrasted descriptions: of the religious and the irreligious person. "The religious person . . . is one who characteristically approaches life situations with an implicit faith that no matter how good or bad these may be, something can be done to improve them." The irreligious person, in contrast, makes his "approach to life in a spirit of cynicism or futility."<sup>8</sup> To be religious, in short, "is to live with faith in the transformability of existence for the better." It is to live with the faith that the universe is *for us* when we are *for* the values that are authentic in the universe. So we find through all spiritual literature the constant note of trust, confidence, absence of fear. "All things work together for good to those that love the Lord." "In God I have put my trust." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil."

This does not mean that anything men ask for in a religious way will be given them. Men make mistakes about what they need. They cry to their God of magic as children might tug at a parental sleeve and cry for lollipops. Or, often, in their institutional practices they tacitly ask to be exempt from the risks and responsibilities of that very creativeness that lies at the heart of the religious enterprise: they ask to be looked after like children in a world where things stay comfortably the same. What the insight does appear to mean is that Reality

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

has a discoverable structure of values, and that if we can act in harmony with that structure of values we will have the universe on our side in the sense that we experience rich depths of fulfillment.

The role of the spiritual genius in the history of the race has been to discover and affirm the structure of universal values. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," said one spiritual genius. Translated into practice, this would seem to mean that wherever in any problematic situation we put our honest and disciplined minds to work, we are likely to be on the right track; that Reality, in short, supports the truth-seeking mind. On the other hand, whenever we go at a problematic situation with ignorant, prejudiced, truth-avoiding minds, not all our petitions to heaven will move us an inch toward our desire. To the degree, and only to the degree, that we increase the accuracy and honesty of our approach to life situations do we move in harmony with the deep realities.

One striking example of this fact can be found in the field of psychotherapy. The emotionally distorted person—fear-ridden, hostile, at odds with himself and everyone else—may try any of a number of false approaches to his problem before he finally yields to the fact that treatment is called for. He may try to hide his emotional vulnerability from himself by quick resentments against all who threaten his frail self-image. He may seek to work out a permanently dependent relationship to life that will let him avoid issues. He may go the way of destructive aggression, trying to batter down whatever opposes him. Yet no one of these methods will yield him any genuine relief: the agony of being his inadequate self will

continue unabated. Only when he changes his tack and es-says, under conditions of therapy, to "know the truth" will he, in agony of soul, work through to the peace and independence that come from living with reality. Every successful case of psychotherapy, we now realize, terminates with the indi-vidual's having a firmer grasp on reality—knowing both him-self and his world with the sort of accuracy that makes it un-necessary for him to resort to cover-up acts of self-defensive-ness or compensatory daydreams.

All this points to a fact which has been traditionally over-looked or rejected: namely, that the spiritual life, by its own inherent logic, supports what we have come to call "scientific method." Scientific method is the effort, by various means of observation and experiment, to achieve the utmost of accuracy and objectivity. When we use our minds in this way—exalt-ing knowledge rather than ignorance, accuracy rather than slipshod, prejudiced, or merely wishful thinking—we move *with* the deep realities of life rather than against them.

It follows, further, that all processes of genuine education have spiritual—not merely "secular"—import. The very es-sence of sound education is to develop minds that are both in-tellectually and emotionally capable of thinking straight and acting straight in the multitudinous situations of life. Where-ever minds are thus prepared to deal with reality—in home, school, or community; from nursery school to the highest levels of research—the type of growth that is encouraged is essentially spiritual. Both the adults who guide young minds into a love of accuracy and the young who learn to love the uses of accuracy are engaged in the promotion of one of the greatest of ideal values: the pursuit of truth.

To the extent that this process of creating truth-seeking minds goes on in our schools and colleges, religion enters. It enters, not as a doctrine, or sectarian creed, or special dogma—which is how it should *not* enter—but as a deeply significant way of life: for wherever minds dedicate themselves to accuracy and honesty, they *enact* the spiritual life. They are out on the responsible, creative venture of using their minds to achieve intimacy with the universe in which they live and move and have their being.

But it is not only in homes, schools, and colleges that this spiritual quality of truth-mindedness can enter. It can enter into business and politics—into any area, in short, where truth-seeking and truth-telling make a difference. Wherever in industry, for example, management sets out to discover *why* there is chronic discontent in a certain plant—instead of peremptorily firing as a trouble-maker every worker who shows a sign of such discontent—creative spirituality is involved: the kind of freedom that is being sought is the kind that can come only through knowing the truth.

## X

The spiritual geniuses of the race have discovered yet other things about the value structure of the universe. What reality requires of us, said Micah, is “to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly” with our God. Another spiritual genius, standing before the amazingness of the universe, cried, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” One aspect of our human power to live with reality must, in short, be a capacity for reverence. Yet another



spiritual genius packed the whole meaning of life into a single phrase: "God is love."

When, therefore, we teach youngsters in home or school to "play fair" ("to do justly"); when we encourage in them understanding of others and tenderness toward those who suffer ("to love mercy"); when we help them to grow up with the modest and friendly will to acknowledge their own limitations and to admire without envy the sound accomplishments of others ("to walk humbly"); when we give them a chance to savor the beauty and wonder of which they are a part ("The heavens declare the glory . . ."); when we create for them an atmosphere of love in which they in turn can learn to love ("God is love"), we encourage their spiritual growth.

The same can be true in any other area of life: in business, politics, race relations, international relations. Wherever there is a seeking after justice; wherever unfairness is hated; where mercy and modesty are the expected ways of life, and where ruthlessness and arrogance are shunned as the very Devil; where the whole enterprise is suffused with the creative qualities of wonder and affection, the places where these "secular" enterprises are carried on can become veritable temples of man rather than, as has so tragically often been the case, slaughterhouses of man's spirit.

In every case, the language of spiritual discovery has been symbolic; for these are matters that go far beyond the literalness of finite experience. One great tragedy of the spiritual life has been that the symbolic expression has been degraded into literal meanings. Such is the tragedy that lies in all the cruder forms of religion—where, for example, the symbol of

the unreachable God is turned into the concept of a literal "God" (a sort of oversized Papa) who deals out rewards and punishments: or the symbol of Evil is turned into a literal Devil who tempts and tortures. Another tragedy of the spiritual life has lain in the complete and oftentimes arrogant rejection of all symbolic expression. This has been the tragedy of the too hasty and literal-minded intellectual.

When we realize that the great spiritual minds of the race have in every case struggled to say the unsayable—the ever and ever beyond: in brief, to put infinity within the limits of finite expression, we can learn to take the symbols and let them speak a truth they can never wholly speak.

To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour.<sup>9</sup>

We circle back, then, to our initial question: "How can we encourage love and diminish hate?" One answer would seem to be clear: we do it by pursuing the ideal values that are the stuff out of which the living universe is made. These are the "pillar of cloud by night and of fire by day" under whose guidance we go forever forward, trying to create among us the better and the still better.

<sup>9</sup> William Blake, from "Auguries of Innocence."

## E L E V E N

# ATTACKING THE PROBLEM OF HATE

IS IT POSSIBLE to dispose of our aggressions more expediently than by killing ourselves and one another?" Can we find the "sovereign remedy that stills the hate"?<sup>1</sup>

To the psychiatrist, his daily experience proves that the thing can be done—in *the case of a few individuals*. In any authentic account of a psychoanalysis or of counseling in depth one follows the day-by-day process by which a sick, tormented, and hating individual, under the conditions provided by a skilled physician, gradually comes to grips with himself, understands himself, and in the end emerges from his long treatment freed (or comparatively freed) from his sickness of hate. We know, in brief, that the thing can be done, and that wherever it is done a kind of miracle in life is performed.

<sup>1</sup> Karl Menninger, *Love against Hate*, p. 6. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942.

Hating is an ugliness that deforms the whole personality. But what of the hating that makes a collective ugliness of our world? Walter White, reporting a race riot in Cicero, Illinois, portrays both the ugliness and the baffling complexity of the hate situation.<sup>2</sup> Recalling the polyglot nature of Cicero's population—Bohemian, Polish, Dutch, Italian, German, and Greek—he writes: "One would assume that having sought and found greater security and opportunity in the United States, these Ciceronians would not have succumbed to such frenzied prejudices. . . ." Yet their violence to a cultivated Negro and his wife who had moved into their community was greater, he writes, than that of many mobs in the deep South. "Two days after the worst of the rioting, an atmosphere of bitterness and potential renewal of almost insane determination to bomb or destroy brick by brick the attractive twenty-family apartment house . . . was such that it was almost tangible."

Here was individual hatred rolled up into a collective fury far beyond the power of any psychiatrist to handle. Had there ever, in the days and years before, been time and opportunity, each of these hating persons—Bohemian, Polish, Greek, and the rest—might have been liberated from his pent-up hostility. But time and opportunity for such individual treatment had been lacking—as *they are always lacking in this pressured world.*

The Cicero riot is an almost perfect example of the perilous pattern of many minds. "Some 30,000 Negroes travel long distances from Chicago to Cicero each day to work in its several industrial plants. Yet as far as can be learned the owners and managers of these plants have taken no interest

<sup>2</sup> "Disgrace in Cicero," *New York Herald Tribune*, p. 14, July 23, 1951.

whatever in the housing, recreation or other facilities of Cicero." "No interest whatever" is here the clue phrase. "It is reported that the efforts of the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce to get some of the Cicero employers to join in the denunciation of the riot . . . have been totally unsuccessful." The Cicero businessmen, apparently, knew on which side their bread was buttered. Moreover, writes White, gangster leaders, for their own greater intake, had long bought up Cicero politicians, and by their "generous" contributions had silenced Cicero churches. Most confusing of all, citizens of Cicero, "having literally earned their homes by the sweat of their brow . . . [became] easy victims of the deliberate campaign to convince them that property values would tumble disastrously were a single Negro family of whatever excellence of character admitted to live in Cicero."

The government of Cicero—a city long notorious as the headquarters of the gangster, Al Capone—had for years been a thing of shame. "In 1948, decent citizens of Cicero determined to clean up the village and throw out the politicians who were the tools of the gangsters. A campaign was started to do this by changing the village form of government to a city commission system. A few days before the election, it seemed probable that the reform government would be successful. A desperate situation, the old order decided, required desperate measures.

"On the night before the election there was dropped into each Cicero mailbox a handbill purportedly written by Negroes but unsigned by any organization or individual. It declared that the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed Negroes the right to live in Cicero but that legal technicalities and

political pressures prevented them from doing so. It appealed to Cicero voters to vote for the city commission plan to enable Negroes to move into Cicero.

“The stratagem worked. Voters who were pledged to vote for the plan voted against it or remained away from the polls. It so completely silenced the decent element in Cicero and so firmly re-entrenched rule of the city by the criminal element that few Ciceronians dared speak out against the rioting when it occurred.”

As for the behavior of the police at the time of the riot: “When Cicero policemen barred him from moving his furniture into the home and held him in custody for more than two hours until Cicero residents could return from work and form a mob which later burned the Clark furniture and made a shambles of the twenty-apartment building, Mr. Clark became aware of the maelstrom of hate and racial prejudice into which he had been thrown.”

The whole shameful episode reveals a sickening jumble of mental and emotional distortions. Out of it emerges the picture of the confused, ordinarily well-behaved, but hostile-minded citizen who is ready, when his prejudices are aroused, to go berserk and destroy those whom he fears and therefore hates.

Out of it come anxious questions. “How much hidden fury is there in the apparently well-meaning people we pass on the streets?” “How close to the surface of their civilized behavior are prejudices and hates that are ready, on the slightest release of the social pressures, to erupt into murderous aggression?”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## II

In modern times, man has learned in a very remarkable way how to be civilized in his handling of physical materials. Watch a skilled mechanic work at an intricate problem of mechanical adjustment. His mood is calm. He handles his tools swiftly and expertly. With a long, quiet patience he woos the maladjusted parts into such placement that they move at last with a smooth efficiency. Only a mechanical boob kicks and swears at his materials.

Man has not yet learned how to be equally civilized in the handling of human materials. The color of an individual's skin is a problem, since we all have to adjust ourselves to sharp differences in people and have never become quite sure which differences matter; the delicate balance of property values is a problem, since no one wants to lose what he has worked for; the corruption of politicians and police by criminals, and the silencing of churches by virtual bribes—these are sinister problems because they shake our confidence in the law and in the integrity of those who profess to guide our spiritual life. But the mood in which we approach these problems is still far from being the calm mood of competent workmanship. What is it that makes us superb workers with physical materials but often incredibly shabby workers with human materials?

The story of our failures in human relations does not require a long telling. It ranges from such episodes of racial hatred as we have recorded to the stupidity of world war—now almost a habit among us—and the unspeakable cruelties of mass extermination and the slave-labor camp.

What should be most startling to us is that average men, all over the world, now confront their fellow men, even those they have never seen and never known, with the socially sanctioned *intent to kill*. The killing may not take place today; nor may it take place tomorrow, nor for a number of tomorrows. But in the world as the world now is, the expectation is *that the time for the killing will come*. Moral values have become so tangled among us that skill in killing fellow humans is now a competence required of everyone, either directly or indirectly. It is a skill every nation finds that it must deliberately, with conscientious exactitude, with the utmost use of its scientific resources, and with the curtailment of its life-enriching resources, teach its people if it hopes to survive among other nations that similarly feel themselves forced to teach this skill.<sup>4</sup>

Voltaire's ironic quip, "It is said that God is always for the heavy battalions," is no longer a quip. It is Everyman's solemn fact. We gravely speak of the number of "divisions" we must have to keep our "cause" safe in an unsafe world.

In short, in our modern world an enormous amount of destructive hatred is stored up ready to be loosed at a moment's call. This destructive hatred has in the recent past been directed not only against those who bear arms but against those who are completely defenseless. Hitler created the ghastly diversion of mass extermination. Nothing in all man's history was ever quite so terrible as this planned cruelty visited upon millions of innocent people whose bad luck it

<sup>4</sup> "Mr. Sparks, young Wingoo minister, said that at his first lecture the youth (a war-objector) heard a major say, 'Boys, I'm here to make killers of you. I want to make you the worst killers possible.'" (*The Churchman*, October 1, 1951, p. 20.)



was that, living in the supposedly most civilized period of history, they caught the hating eye of a fanatical psychopath.

Today the slave camps of the Russians succeed the Nazi gas chambers. Here, too, hatred takes itself out in countless perverted forms—forms that meticulously justify themselves as patriotic and right. Man's determination to destroy the fellow man whom he hates is so evident that it becomes an unbelievable horror.

### III

If hate were present only in war and in the aftermaths of war, we might concentrate our best intelligence upon these pathological outbreaks and seek to diminish and, if possible, eradicate them. But hate penetrates as well the whole tissue of "peaceful" life. It is like a cancerous growth that proliferates so widely that no surgeon's knife can follow.

Thus in the simple matter of man's daily work hate has left its mark. One would have supposed that men would long ago have been able reasonably and with some measure of mutual generosity to arrange the division and the rewards of their labor. One would have supposed that a friendly spirit of fairness would have long prevailed. But the history of labor relations is a tedious and heartbreaking one of hatreds and violence. In spite of what we think we have accomplished since the days when workers were exiled to a life of penal servitude for daring to speak up in their own behalf, man's hatred of his economic fellow man follows us right up to the present day.

Recently, a preliminary majority report of the Senate Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations investigating the

workings of the Taft-Hartley Act has exposed the "concerted opposition to union organization and collective bargaining" in the Southern textile industry and has revealed the impotence of the act in the face of this opposition.

In a digest of this report, Aleine Austin writes:

One of the cases investigated by the subcommittee was an attempt to organize the American Thread Company's mill in Tallapoosa, Georgia, which employed 500 of the town's 2,000 residents. Dissatisfied with conditions, several employees of the company wrote the Textile Workers' Union (C.I.O.) for assistance in forming a union. Mrs. Edna Martin was assigned to the job and visited the town twice a week for the purpose.

The repercussions were immediate. Mill supervisors and anti-union employees threatened union sympathizers with loss of their jobs, getting into trouble, being run out of town. Excuses were found for discharging the two leading union advocates. Wherever union sympathizers congregated, they were spied upon by the company watchman, who had conveniently been deputized as a part-time city policeman. According to the testimony of a worker from nearby Cedartown, the personnel manager of the Tallapoosa mill asked him to point out the C.I.O. organizers in Cedartown, so that they could be "put out" of Tallapoosa if they came there.

Mrs. Martin, the organizer, now rented a room in Tallapoosa, planning to remain there for several weeks. On the first night four men armed with shotguns and five women burst into her room. With curses and threats the mob bound and gagged her, took her for a harrowing ride through rough back roads, and finally left her in a deserted lane, warning, "Don't ever come back to Tallapoosa or you will be shot on sight."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Aleine Austin, "Footnote to Taft-Hartley," *The Nation*, July 7, 1951, pp. 10-12.

This is the ugly sort of thing we had supposed had been long since outgrown. But as the article records, when the union filed charges against the company with the National Labor Relations Board on the ground that the kidnaping was an "unfair labor practice" traceable to the employer, the Board, under the new wording of the Taft-Hartley Act, ruled that the American Thread Company was in no way responsible for the kidnaping "since the abducters had not been proved to be agents of the company."

Here hatred in labor relations was compounded by legislative ineptitude in drawing up the act. Commenting on this reaction to the law, the subcommittee majority report states, as quoted by Miss Austin:

. . . this requirement that the technical relationship of agency must be established before the acts of subordinates can be imputed to an employer is highly unrealistic in the law of labor-management relations. It disregards the incalculable economic pressure which an employer can exert upon his employees without provable words and acts. . . . The employer's approval of anti-labor acts can be manifested in so many and such subtle ways that his influence on the conduct of his employees can be exerted without leaving admissible evidence. . . . The narrowly amended definition of 'employer,' therefore, is an invitation to the recalcitrant anti-labor employer to evade the intent of Congress.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the most unequivocal expression of the hatred roused in this human-relations situation is found in a speech which the subcommittee of the Senate reports as having been

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

made at a meeting of the employees by the superintendent of the American Thread Company:

We have a nice little mill here, but someone or something is fixing to come in and tear up your playhouse. This outside influence is just a bunch of pot-bellied Yankees with big cigars in their mouths, and the dues they collect will just go up North, and you should want to keep your money in Tallapoosa. If they come in, you will share the same rest rooms with Negroes and work side by side with them. It comes right out of Russia and is pure communism and nothing else.<sup>7</sup>

But the Board ruled that this speech was within the law and without offense, since, in the language of the Taft-Hartley Act, "the words contained no threat of reprisal or force or promise of benefit."

#### IV

These are but a few of the signs of something profoundly unhealthy in our modern mentality. In whole sectors of life, we take animosity for granted as both expected and permitted. The "fight image" rather than the "reason image" prevails. One of the duties of man, now—a duty all too frequently enjoined upon him by his union, or by his management group, or by his white neighbors, or even by his nation—is to hate his neighbor whom he fears. If the young lawyer of the Scriptures were to ask today, "And who is my neighbor?" most of the individuals and agencies intent to influence him would eagerly exonerate him from the obligation to have neighborly feelings toward any save those whose opinions and interests coincided

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

with his own. This would mean in practice that he could feel himself licensed to hate all except these favored ones; for virtually every group now has its hate objects.

When we ask how one can make a mature approach to this widespread hostility, we face one of the most complicated and baffling of all human problems. Perhaps the best initial approach is to reduce the problem to its elements. *All hate centers in haters and in the human arrangements that encourage hating.*

Whether it be Hitler, the individual psychopath, who made a life for himself out of hating Jews (and who was himself the product of human arrangements that fostered such hating); or the superintendent of a Russian slave camp who makes a life for himself out of maltreating those whom his superiors in the Party hate; or the superintendent of a company's mill who hates unions and Negroes and Northerners; or the individual Bohemian or Greek or Pole who, egged on and egging on, sets fire to a Negro family's furniture—each is an individual who, in his individual way, exhibits a hate pattern of personality. Conceive of such hate-patterned individuals multiplied into the hundreds in any middle-sized community, or by the thousands in any great metropolis, or by the millions in a nation; and conceive of some of them, like a Hitler or a Stalin or a Perón or a Franco *permitted to have the power of millions*, and we can understand why hostility rages like a forest fire throughout the world.

This hate pattern of personality is not hard to detect. The superintendent of the mill showed in his reported speech that his basic attitude toward the union was one of hostility. Since he was in authority, he could shape his hostility into a veiled

threat. Hence one speech on his part, in that town of insecure workers, could have the power of a battalion.

If by some miracle of fate, the basic personality pattern of that single individual could have been transformed, a profound change might have been made to take place in the over-all situation. But how to do this? By what process of persuasion or of reconditioning? There seems no ready answer to such a question. Yet the implication is obvious: *If and where, in any hostility situation, any individual, and particularly a key individual, can be changed in his life pattern from hostility to friendliness, a genuine advance is made.*

In view of this, all "redemptive" efforts—that is, all efforts to liberate individuals from their deep-graven hostility and enable them to be "born again" into a friendly relationship to life—are of profound human importance. The psychiatrist at his best is a "healer of the soul." This is what Socrates called himself—a *iatros tes psyches* (whence the word "psychiatrist"). Socrates found individuals distorted in their outlooks; hostile because of their ignorance or their inner self-contradictions; and he conceived of his job in life as that of curing these distorted individuals of their psychic illnesses. With like intent, though in very different manner, the psychiatrist today deals with individuals whose basic outlooks are distorted because of their mental unhealth.

But the tragedy of life is that in far too many cases where help is needed no slightest chance presents itself for the "curer of souls" to get even within speaking distance of the needful ones. Hitler was quite obviously what we would now call an emotionally sick individual. So was Goering; so was Hess; so was Ribbentrop; and so were most of the others.

But who could have persuaded these distorted individuals to subject themselves to the long and painful process of self-acquaintance that is the prescribed medicine for the cure of the mind's sicknesses?

Nevertheless here is one approach to the world's malady of hate that must always be kept in mind. The individual adult who is patterned in hate is a force for evil. *If by any means whatever—and the means now multiply among us—such an individual can be repatterned into friendliness and affection, the force for evil is turned into its opposite.*

This becomes, then, one major interest of all men of human concern: to provide as many opportunities as possible for the repatterning of individuals who have the ill luck to be patterned in hate. It is in the service of this interest that counseling centers, play therapy centers, clinics, and psychiatric offices multiply among us.

A second way of going at the problem is to prevent the hate pattern from forming in the first place. This means that all care must be taken to keep hostility attitudes from taking hold of young life.

Parents, living within social arrangements that they take for granted, have frequently been blind to the ways in which they themselves have built unfriendliness into their children. Take, for example, the following experience of childhood reported to Marie Rasey by one of her adult students: <sup>8</sup> "The men who cared for the horses and drove the big teams on the drays never came farther than the kitchen door. If they received a belated meal or a rare dose of medicine, they waited in the woodshed and made what they could of its cold

<sup>8</sup> Marie Rasey, *Toward Maturity*, p. 5. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1947.

comfort. So far as I understood at the time, the world was made up of a few men, women, and children who lived in large houses, and many who waited at the doors." One suspects that the parents in this case, and in many similar cases, were wholly unaware of the picture of human exclusiveness they were encouraging in their child. They were, we can assume, upright, God-fearing, solid citizens. Probably, like the rich young man who questioned Christ, they had kept all the established moral laws from their youth up and, again like that young man, lacked nothing for "redemption" except one all-necessary thing: an inclusive capacity to feel themselves part and parcel of the human race.

Other stories similarly reported to Miss Rasey show other adult influences playing in upon children, making now for friendliness, now for unfriendliness. Thus one student wrote of a quietly transforming experience of her young years: "What a surprise it was to me to find a Negro child in the seat next to mine. I remained standing beside my seat, expecting the teacher to send him out. 'Sit down, Anna,' she said. I was too young to have any aversion. I was merely confused."

"Whenever the doorbell rang," writes another student with regard to her own implanted suspicion of people, "we heard Grandma from one room or Mother from another, saying, 'Don't open the door unless you know who it is!' Even a telephone bell startles me."

In sharp contrast, yet another writes, "In our house it was always bedlam when the doorbell rang. We converged on the door from all parts of the house. Even the peddlers were welcome. They told us what was going on at the next place. If we bought nothing, we always gave them some fried cakes



or cookies. I still retain an interest and a curiosity about strangers.”

This, then, is part of the answer to our question of what to do about hate in the world: At the very beginning, hostility must be kept from patterning the child's life. The profoundest need, apparently, is for homes and schools, and for all other agencies that exert an influence upon children's lives, to create in them a liking for people and an inclination toward them rather than a fear of them and a moving away from or against them.

## V

Hate, however, centers not only in individuals who hate but in human arrangements that encourage hating.

In the economic world, we are at present in the midst of a long, slow process of liberating ourselves from certain human arrangements that have fostered hostility among men.

As we now begin to realize, the mechanical power of steam and electricity came to our Western world before we were psychologically and socially prepared to receive it. We were, at the beginning of the industrial revolution, a *status* society, with inherited privileges for some and inherited disabilities for others. When the new powers were discovered, we had not yet learned to think of all men as equal in their basic human rights. Those who grasped the new productive energies that had been released into use were, therefore, doubly unhampered in their self-interested excesses: there was nothing in their own individual conditioning to make them think in terms of the common welfare; and there was no legal limit upon what they could do to enhance their private

power. Thus, in our Western culture, we entered an era of immense mechanical progress—with all that this meant in the way of man's power to control the lives of his fellow men by new subtle pressures—with our outlook on human relations lagging far behind.

The process of changing this outlook has been a painfully slow one; and it is still far from being anywhere near completed. But compared with the ruthless unconcern and cruelty of older times, even the halting attempts of today to create generous labor-management relations represent a striking advance. In the report of the episode of the southern mill, it comes as an astonishment that the "personnel manager" was in league with violence. Personnel managers today are, for the most part, a different breed. They are bent on bettering human relations rather than on worsening them.

Stuart Chase writes: <sup>9</sup>

Back in the days of World War I, workers and managers in the Standard Oil refinery at Bayonne, New Jersey, were carrying on a war of their own. In the summer of 1915 there were pitched battles in the streets, with strikers throwing bricks and stones, police and guards shooting revolvers. Fires were set, tank cars of oil, box cars of merchandise, once even the company pump house, went up in flames. . . .

The men complained that foremen mistreated them cruelly, especially by keeping them too long cleaning the hot stills, where temperatures ran up to 250 degrees. They demanded a fifty-hour week and time-and-a-half for overtime. . . .

Trouble flared up again in the following year. Then suddenly

<sup>9</sup> Stuart Chase, *Roads to Agreement*, p. 1. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951.

it stopped. Since that bloody period more than a generation ago, there have been no strikes and no violence at the Bayonne refinery, nor at any large plant of the company's nationwide organization. Why? What happened to the hot tempers, so hot indeed that men and managers were ready to kill one another? Human nature cannot have changed in a generation. The country as a whole has not achieved a society without strikes. The oil industry has seen many labor conflicts; in 1945, for instance, practically all refinery workers were out on strike except those of Jersey Standard.

What did unions and managers do in this company to bring such a long era of peace? The company . . . made one of the first scientific studies of human relations in industry, and as a result drastically changed its policy in the direction of more trust, more security for workers, better communication between men and management, more participation in company affairs. The men responded. A time of violent conflict gave way to a time of accommodation, and after a while to co-operation.

This was one case. Perhaps it is, in a way, a model for all cases. *First, in a hostile situation, the will to find out the reasons for the hostility; then the willingness to apply what we learn.* The process is a slow one; but in an increasing number of cases, we know that it works. As these cases multiply, it may be that the century we are now in will later be spoken of as the century which, in respect to its economic differences, finally gave up the quick, hot way of fighting, for the slow, cool way of investigating.

## V I

In the *New York Herald Tribune* of July 27, 1951, we read a history-making headline:

## U.S. TO DISBAND ALL-NEGRO UNIT IN KOREA

The Army announced today that its last all-Negro regiment, now on duty in Korea, is to be disbanded because the war has demonstrated conclusively that Negro soldiers in combat "serve more effectively in integrated units."

This was no sentimental move on the Army's part. It had been "demonstrated conclusively" that the segregated Negro is of less military use than the non-segregated Negro. The insight has been a long time coming. Penetrating at last into the very citadel of racial conservatism, it brings a gesture of full surrender to what makes psychological sense. It is not good, says the Army in effect, for man to be humiliated before his fellow man. If we want him to join us in a defense of the things we deem to be right, we have to treat him as someone who is as worthy as we are to defend the things we deem right.

This is a new beginning. From now on we can expect things to happen more rapidly; for in our culture, peace-minded and democratic though it is, what the Army says carries weight. The fact will now begin to penetrate our society that white and colored soldiers march side by side, eat together, make merry together, fight together, and die together. Moreover, it will begin to penetrate the consciousness of individual soldiers that Negroes also are individuals and not merely units in an undifferentiated inferior mass.

Of all the hate-breeding arrangements that our civilization has contrived, walling people off has been the worst. From the ghettos of the Jews and the slums of the untouchables to the Harlems of modern cities, putting people apart so that they carry the mark of the outcast has made for the most

furious and continued hatreds that have marred our humanity.

At last, as in this Army case, a mature reasonableness begins to appear. It has already appeared in other quarters. In religion, education, sports, the theater, literature, business and industry, men and women of unprejudiced will have striven for equality of rights so effectively that such equality is no longer a vain Utopia. These individuals, living within a world of racial hatreds, have themselves been free of the traditional hate pattern. What they have already succeeded in doing gives a clear and simple answer to the doubt whether any individual can do anything.

## VII

We have spoken of war as the major breeder of hates. In this same issue of the *New York Herald Tribune*, we find the record of a notable effort to do something about war. The United Nations International Law Commission has submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations the first detailed "code of offenses against the peace and security of mankind."

The cynical reader may pass this over as just another of the hollow gestures our hostile-minded culture makes toward peace. But here is something more than a gesture. Here is a bending of men's minds to a task never before undertaken.

Every great code, whether of morals or of law, has marked an epoch in human history. The "Thou shalt nots" have come with a tremendous force. In each case they have defined the unacceptable life. But no code, hitherto, has dealt with "offenses against peace." Throughout man's history, what we now at last call offenses against peace have been taken for

granted as permissible acts. Nor has any code hitherto envisaged a world-wide criminal court for dealing with such offenses. If and when code and court are established, they will mark the emergence of a culture that says "No" to ways of aggression that have hitherto been as freely open to men as the air they breathed.

This code of twelve major offenses against peace may not be adopted by the General Assembly; or it may be modified; or its adoption may be deferred. But there the thing stands: the first authorized draft in all history of the offenses against peace that no man or nation must ever again be allowed to commit.

The "Thou shalt nots" include: (1) all acts of armed aggression not in self-defense; (2) threats to resort to aggression; (3) preparation, other than by authority of the United Nations, for the employment of armed forces against another state; (4) incursion into the territory of another state of armed bands acting for political purposes; (5) the fomenting of civil strife in another state; (6) encouraging terrorist activities in another state; (7) violating treaty obligations designed to insure international peace and security; (8) annexing territory belonging to another state; (9) destroying, or acting with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group; (10) performing inhuman acts against any civilian population on political, racial, religious, or cultural grounds; (11) acting in violation of the laws or customs of war; (12) conspiring or inciting to any of these offenses.

Here, at last, what we mean by destructive aggression gets clear definition. If and when we adopt this code, we voice

our culture's concerted disapproval of all those behaviors that have hitherto created murderous hatred among men and have implemented their hatred with weapons of destruction.

The problem of diminishing hate in the world is no simple one. And yet it is strikingly simple: whether or not it can be solved depends upon the kind of people we are.

If we are people who almost automatically dislike other people—suspect them, fear them, feel superior to them—we shall simply compound the hatreds. If, on the contrary, we are people who like to have every mother's son and daughter "given the breaks," we shall spontaneously and without strain do the things that diminish hate.

The knowledge we mostly need, then, is how to create the kind of people who do not create hate. This is the job our war-ridden and conflict-ridden century hands to us.

## T W E L V E

# EXPLORING OUR TWENTIETH- CENTURY CRISIS

**A**T A TIME when, thanks to psychological and social insights, we are better prepared than ever to get rid of the hates of prejudice and war, we face a political and military crisis that transcends all crises we have hitherto encountered. The sword of Damocles was a joke compared to the hydrogen bomb and communist imperialism.

How we are to deal maturely with this crisis is today the hardest of all questions to answer. Most of us do not know the answer. We had thought that the last global war had been fought and that a united effort could now be made to form a united world.

What is it that has suddenly broken loose among us; and what are we supposed to do about it? On the one hand, we are made anxious by happenings at home: astronomical ex-



penditures for military preparations; continued increase of taxes; an ominous, seemingly uncontrollable drop in the value of what we earn; the revelation of corruption in office; and most unsteady of all, a widespread distrust: loyalties suspected; activities spied upon; telephones tapped; characters smeared; right of trial denied. As a character in a recent story says, "Everybody's scared now."

We are made even more anxious by affairs abroad: a blockage of communication—"curtains" of various sorts; men face to face in diplomatic conferences, yet unable to make their words make sense to one another; distrust and hatred; a fear of plots; hostility worn as a badge of pride. The hardest thing of all to understand is why, in large sectors of a hitherto fairly friendly world, the traditional atmosphere of good will should suddenly have vanished and the will to be enemies should have taken its place.

Something in it all cries for understanding; and those of us who are too honest to surrender ourselves to hate slogans seek enlightenment. Why this new confusion?

## II

If we examine today's terror, we find it to be unlike any war terror of the past. Today, in fact, the traditional processes of military warfare seem, by comparison, clean and honorable. A soldier had his job cut out for him. He carried a gun, or its equivalent; and his job was to shoot enemies who likewise carried guns. His job was to by-pass the non-military. While he committed depredations, and occasionally, in a spirit of license, burned a house or raped a woman, or, out of regrettable military necessity, laid waste a countryside, for the most

part he held himself to the strict routine of the soldier, which was to kill those who were out to kill him.

War of this sort was, indeed, brutal enough; and as armies grew in size and destructiveness, civilized people increasingly deplored their use and tried in various ways to substitute the means of peace for those of war. But while war of this sort was bad, it was as nothing compared with processes that have grown up during the past few decades.

We began, more or less vaguely and uncertainly, to be aware of new techniques of hostility at the time of Mussolini and his Black Shirts. As we now see in retrospect, they were the techniques of *political hoodlumism*. Black Shirts swarmed through the cities and countrysides terrorizing people right and left. In the first days of the "march on Rome" they carried as their weapons bottles of castor oil (and many people laughed: the thing seemed so frolicsome). Later, roaming in gangs, they maimed and killed with knives, guns, and bombs. They ran down frightened individuals, ferreted them out of their hiding places. Their aim was to coerce individuals into acceptance of their fascist creed. In the best fashion of plug-uglies, they surrounded their victims and commanded, "Your loyalty or your life. . . ."

Here was no soldier's sense of limited military function nor of a soldier's honor. There was no honor. Everyone was fair prey; and everything went. Lies, double-crossings, alley stick-ups, kidnapings—everything was justified so long as it produced the desired result: either the "conversion" of the individual to fascism, or his swift removal.

We in America were slow to realize the full enormity of what was happening. Mussolini's widely publicized success

in getting trains to run on time made the tourist-minded American sigh with satisfaction; and American businessmen made journeys to Rome to congratulate this new "efficiency engineer" on his success in licking into shape the "lazy and inefficient" Italians.

Yet the fascism of Mussolini was actually a hoodlum movement; a movement of unleashed violence to compel people to deliver up their minds. It was a movement, in short, that deliberately intended the death of the free and morally disciplined spirit. That we, here in America, in striking numbers, could have had our minds diverted from this fact by one spectacular piece of publicity—the running of the trains on time—is enough to make us wary.

Now, however, with hindsight, we see the thing plain. For all Mussolini's grandiloquent pronouncements about the Corporative State, and his grandiose avowals of moral rehabilitation of Italian character and culture, his was nothing more than a hoodlum terrorizing of men's minds into conformity. The Corporative State might better have been called the Hoodlum State; and the moral rehabilitation of Italian character, the befouling of the Italian soul.

Perhaps the most sickening display of this befouling was flashed before our minds when Mussolini's son flew his plane over a helpless Ethiopian village, dropped his bombs on the panic-stricken natives, and then wrote about the aesthetic ecstasy with which he watched the beauty of the unfolding smoke-flowers beneath his plane.

Mussolini's fascism was a beginning. But it was far from being the end. Hitlerism was cut from the same cloth, but tougher. It began not with castor oil but with kickings and

head-smashings, window-breakings and Reichstag-burnings. Here, too, the hoodlum gangs swarmed upon the defenseless, dragging them through the streets, beating them, spitting on them, defiling them, knocking them senseless.

Here, too, the movement was to *compel conformity*, and, even beyond that, racial purity. At the height of Hitler's power, the Gestapo was the terror by night and by day. One never knew when the hobnailed boots would be mounting the stairs and the rough knock on the door would summon one to excruciating inquisition and death.

And here again many among us were deceived. "That man Hitler is some leader!" Labor-shy businessmen liked the way in which he put the unions "in their place." Citizens weary of the inefficiency, corruption, and long delays of our democratic system welcomed this "strong man" who could set a nation's house in order. For many people, in short, the consuming question was not how we could rid the earth of this new barbarism but how we could best do business with Hitler.

Now—again in retrospect—we know the story better. Germany, we can now see, was a land that, through one of the most tragic circumstances of history, was taken over by pathological minds. The Nuremberg trials vividly underscored the fact that these men, from Hitler down, far from being intelligent, farseeing patriots, were psychopaths—emotionally distorted, ignorant, perverse personalities who, by a turn of events that gave them enormous powers, wrought unforgettable tragedy.<sup>1</sup> The Nazi terror was not a war of honorable

<sup>1</sup> See G. M. Gilbert, *The Psychology of Dictatorship: Based on an Examination of the Leaders of Nazi Germany*. New York: The Ronald Press, 1950.

soldiers against honorable soldiers. It was an invasion of the civilized world from the moral and spiritual gutters.

### III

In the meantime, and even before these things were happening, another movement of similar and yet dissimilar nature was taking place in Russia. In 1917, we were suddenly electrified by the proletarian revolution. The Czar was overthrown; the moderate government of Kerensky took over, and was itself promptly overthrown; then, in the name of world revolution, control was assumed by an uncompromising body of men who instantly began severing all political and economic connections with the past. A new, proletarian state was promulgated, dedicated to bringing to an end all "classes" and "states" and establishing a classless, communistic society.

To many of us, at that time, the Russian Revolution was the most promising event in history. It foreshadowed—or, rather, seemed to foreshadow—the removal of long-standing evils and the creation of a regenerated humanity.

Remembering its electrifying beginnings, we can now see that the Russian Revolution, because of a profound psychological defect—one that it shared with all other too-hasty social revolutions, like the Paris Commune of 1871—became a tragedy. Seeking by precipitate action to release men from old economic and social chains, it cast them into psychological chains.

Lenin, the founder of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was neither a hoodlum nor a psychopath. He was a highly intelligent and dedicated mind. But he lacked the one

psychological quality that can make an intelligent, dedicated mind into a great constructive force.

Lenin was one of life's "angry men." He had a right to be angry. He had grown up in his native Russia in an atmosphere of protest against social evils. When he was scarcely seventeen, his brother was executed for complicity in an attempt to assassinate the Czar. Without seeming to recognize assassination as a pro-social method, we still have to recall that it was not, in the Russia of those days, a gangster undertaking to try to rid the country of the implacable tyrants who ruled by "divine" succession. Czars had long outlived their usefulness. They were a cruel anachronism in the modern world. Civilized people everywhere acknowledged this fact. Yet there was, in Russia, no means *within the law* by which they could be brought to account. The story of the Czar who, for the sport of his guests, turned out his naked servants in midwinter into the frozen gardens and had the guests spray them with water until they were ice-statues, is only one example of the callousness of these birth-favored tyrants. It is small wonder that attempts at assassination became a sort of desperate, albeit futile, routine.

Also, Lenin lived through the horrors of the famine of 1891. Out of watching the slow starvation of millions of his countrymen, he developed a burning hatred of the inequalities of property. It is small wonder that when he met Karl Marx in the pages of *Das Kapital*, he felt that he had found his people's savior—indeed, the savior of the world's oppressed.

In *Das Kapital* he read, among countless other damning things, the reports which the British officials had written about conditions in the British mines and factories. High among

these were the accounts of the mistreatment of children. He read of droves of children taken from the orphan asylums, housed in barracks where the beds out of which they were awakened were quickly filled with another batch of exhausted sleepers, so that the beds never grew cold. He read of children of seven and eight, nine and ten, sent into the mines and into the mills and made to work ten and twelve and fourteen hours a day.

We now know that story of the Industrial Revolution. It was told to us not only by Karl Marx. It was told by Charles Dickens, by Charles Kingsley, and a host of other sensitive appraisers of the social scene. It was told, and retold, in official reports until action was taken to better conditions. The story is, in large measure, past and gone now in the countries upon which the Industrial Revolution made its first impact. A better order—and one that still becomes progressively better—has succeeded it. But Lenin was reading the story for the first time; and *he lived in that kind of world*: a world of irresponsible and brutal exploitation. Following the lead of Marx, he called it the world of “capitalism”; and “capitalism”—which he defined as the illegitimate power-use of private property—became for him the enemy.

Lenin was not the only young man who read such accounts. Another young man, in our own country, had read them also. Many years later, Felix Adler wrote:

There was especially one picture that stayed with me. It was that of a man waking up a little boy of eight years at four o'clock in the morning to take him to his work. . . . It is now forty-eight years since I read the extracts of those bluebooks, and when, eleven years ago, the Rev. Edgar Gardner Murphy pro-

posed the formation of a National Child Labor Committee and urged me to take part in it, it was this picture which helped to determine my wavering resolution.<sup>2</sup>

Adler, in 1894, helped to organize a National Child Labor Committee, which in the subsequent half-century of its operation slowly and without violence built up a new climate of opinion about children in mines and factories. Lenin took a different course. In his culture, there was no tradition of citizens forming committees for the righting of wrongs—nor would any person who tried to form such a committee have long survived. There were no legally established channels through which people could work for the righting of wrongs. In 1917, burning with his hatred of the power-uses of private property, and raised at last into revolutionary authority, Lenin made a commanding gesture. By summary decree (his very first) *he abolished all private ownership of land and property.*

History always has the last word to say; and history, a century or more from now, will report the long-range consequences of the two methods. But even today we can take a chance and anticipate the verdict of history. It is this method of imperious abruptness, with its complete unwillingness to allow time for the slow maturing of men's minds, that has been the chief cause of the psychological tragedy of the Russian Revolution. No movement has ever shown more clearly how disastrous it can be when an intense *intellectual conviction*, such as Lenin's, is not balanced by *a deep and sympathetic understanding of the slow and fumbling ways of the human mind.*

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Henry Neumann in *Spokesmen for Ethical Religion*, p. 18. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1951.



Lenin was convinced that the roots of evil lay in what he, with Marx, called the capitalistic system; the system, namely, that made private property the lever of power. He had been no student of the evils and cruelties that had marked the history of man through all the centuries before the rise of capitalism. Nor did he realize, as Marx likewise did not, that the capitalistic system is no clearly defined "nodule" within the body politic. He saw it as a sort of specific evil—a kind of tumorous growth—that could be isolated and cleanly cut out. He did not see it as a vast, interwoven, more or less clumsy configuration of behaviors and habits that men had built up: a configuration of diverse motivations—of good intentions on the part of some, and of less good on the part of others; of pride of workmanship among some, and of greed for profits among others; of a spirit of trusteeship, on the one hand, and, on the other, a spirit of the public be damned. When Lenin summarily abolished private property, he thought of the institution of private property as one clear-cut entity, all of one piece. He did not think of it as a vast conglomerate of many-motived people. Neither did he think of it as a system having within itself vast possibilities of self-correction and self-improvement. As he conceived it, it was something that would change *only for the worse* until it was absolutely overcome by a power outside itself. Therefore—"Out, damned spot." By the stroke of a pen, he commanded men to change the whole complex, deep-grounded pattern of their lives.

But deep-grounded patterns of life are not so easily commanded. Lenin had the mind of a technician, not of a physician. In the years since 1917, particularly in the hands of far lesser men than Lenin, the Russian Revolution has been an

increasingly desperate effort, by decree and compulsion, exilings and killings, purgings and terrorizings, to do this impossible thing: to force men to hand over their long-habituated minds to a newly conceived master plan.

By comparison with this sort of revolution, the traditional wars of aggression were simple, forthright affairs. Strength was used to overcome opposing strength. The things that were taken away from the defeated enemy were physical things and the right to rule over them. When a war of the old type was ended, men went back to their occupations very little changed. War left a scar, but not a complete deformation. The same was true of wars of independence—like our own Revolutionary War. With independence won, most of the basic relationships among men and nations continued: they were modified, but not severed; and not turned topsy-turvy.

For the first time in history, the Russian Revolution claimed a revolutionary ownership over *the total souls of men*; for only thus—so it assumed—could it carry out the thoroughgoing social transformation it essayed. It failed; and, in spite of its enormous power, it still fails—because the total souls of men cannot be taken over by decree.

This, then, is one part of the psychological tragedy. In an effort to overcome man's cruelty to man quickly and decisively, the Russian revolutionary leaders themselves *adopted the methods of cruelty*. From the liquidation of the kulaks to the slave labor camps of today, through all the grim efforts to make men walk the Party line, the Russian Revolution remains the most revealing example in history of what happens when, in an effort to convert instantly, men treat other

men as mechanisms to manipulate rather than as minds for whom to provide the conditions for maturing.

This way of revolution, then, is obviously not the sound way. Russian communism, today, instead of being the savior of mankind, has become its destroyer. For it has become the enemy of the free and uncoerced mind. To the extent that it succeeds, it changes millions of men into mechanized conformers and their leaders into dictators who, by fair means or foul, force their followers into conformity.

#### IV

There is also another reason for communism's psychological miscarriage. Communism created a hate-pattern. It divided men into the elect and the damned.

In the long perspective of history, it will seem an incredible thing, in a culture that had witnessed the transition from a God of vengeance to a God of love, and from a God that had selected his chosen people to a God of all mankind, that a complete reversal could take place. Yet Karl Marx reversed the order of spiritual thinking. In his theory of class struggle, he sanctified hate and violence as the true "dialectical" instrumentalities of life; and in his theory of the proletarian revolution, he set apart the "working class" as the chosen people who would in the end inherit the earth.

No more demoralizing reversal could have occurred. In the thirty-odd years since communism took over in Russia, these assumptions that class must struggle against class, and that one class is the elect and the other the damned, have made any generous interplay of ideas and any mutual work-

ing out of problems practically impossible between communism and the non-communist world. Because of its self-centered superiority and its never-concealed hatred of the "bourgeoisie," communism has stood apart—cryptic, elusive, un-co-operative—throwing its wrenches into every conceivable piece of social machinery; waiting for the day when the Lord of the Dialectic would blast the capitalistic enemy and bring His chosen into their own.

With all its justified anger at man's injustice to man—we repeat the word "justified"—communism's coming into the world has been a major disaster. It has built among its own members a psychological atmosphere of hatred and superiority that has turned them, for the most part, into individuals maddeningly untrustworthy. Being the chosen ones, and despising the damned, they have assumed that all weapons are sanctified in their hands. Hence, to lie for the communist cause, to double-cross, to torture, or to murder is to be virtuous in the sight of the Dialectic.

This is not revolution in the grand sense. This is counter-revolution. For when men revert to methods of hate, deception, and violence, even for the sake of what they conceive to be the good, they move not forward but backward within the frame of history.

Fascism and nazism were the brutalities of hoodlum minds. Communism is the brutality of doctrinal minds. While its power has lain in the fact that it was born in a thinking mind, and has been carried on by thinking minds, its tragedy has lain in the fact that from the very beginning the thinking went wrong.

The behaviors of the communists have aroused counter-

emotions and counter-behaviors. Communist hate has aroused counter-hate. Deviousness and deception have brought counter-methods of suspicion and detection. The throwing of wrenches into the social machinery has led to the throwing out of the throwers—and, too often, of those merely labeled as throwers.

If love casts out fear, hate engenders fear. So the hate-psychology of communism has turned the normal friendliness of many men of decent good will into the suspicion and fear of men who begin to look for a communist under every bed.

## V

One unfortunate mistake many of us made in the 1930's was that of thinking that the revolutionary attitudes and purposes of the Soviet Union were "nineteenth century humanitarian, and Protestant—only much more thoroughly and efficiently so."<sup>3</sup> What we now realize "is that nothing has ever been further from the Russian purpose, their history, or their temperament than Protestantism, humanitarianism, liberalism, or the golden rule."<sup>4</sup>

The aim of the Bolshevik leaders, who had spent their youth and manhood in an atmosphere of conspiracy and violence, was *thoroughgoing social revolution*—a clean break with the past. Nothing could have been further from their spirit and intentions than humanitarianism and the golden rule. By the strict logic of the kind of revolution they had in mind, a complete severance was called for from the principles

<sup>3</sup> Alistair Cooke, *A Generation on Trial*, p. 39. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

and moralities that had held the old regimes—our own included—together. With disturbing clarity we now begin to see what this means. When we step into Russian communism (exactly as in the case of fascism and nazism), we move into an area where the truthful word, for example, means nothing, and where the great dependabilities of human relations, as we have known them, have no place.

In the framework of our own culture we have learned that there are a few assumptions in life we all have to make. The first is that promises have to be kept. In a world where the keeping of promises is dismissed as a “bourgeois” virtue, and where a broken promise is, in fact, a badge of honor, the foundations of social organization go out from under. The second is an assumption about truth: that no human relations, whether between friend and friend or between nation and nation, can confidently continue where the lie is the permitted strategy. “Thou shalt not bear false witness” may be an old-fashioned commandment; but it still holds, and must hold, wherever men are to live peacefully together. A third assumption has to do with the inviolability of a man’s life. Perhaps one thing more than any other that has shocked many of us into an awareness of communist immoralism has been the forced confessions that have gone by the name of court trials. Where in a so-called court of law, the long-standing safeguards of tested evidence and legal defense are cast out the window, and where accusation, if it is by the right party, is tantamount to evidence, the reign of terror is on.

This reign of terror—made of the broken word, the lie, and the “legal” inquisition—is found equally in communism and fascism. In fact, we are now beginning to see the truth of

what George Orwell set down in an essay written in 1940: the sin of the Left, he said, was to "have wanted to be anti-fascist without being anti-totalitarian."<sup>5</sup>

We thought, in World War II, that since the Russians were our allies against fascism, they would remain our allies in our postwar efforts to build, by democratic methods, a united freedom. But the Russians, we discovered, were not interested. We can now understand why. As Orwell saw plainly a decade ago, the opposition of communists to fascists was chiefly to rivals for power, *not to enemies in basic tactics*. The things Lenin, and later Stalin, did, the stratagems they used—espionage, terrorizings, purges, torture, wholesale and retail liquidation—were precisely the totalitarian things Mussolini and Hitler did, and for precisely the same totalitarian reason.

Simply stated, that reason was as follows: *If a clean sweep was to be made with the past, it must be made with a ruthless disregard for personal rights*. Both in fascism and in communism this has meant the total, relentless commandeering of mind and body, and the creation, through suppression and against all opposition, of a totally new society. This is *totalitarianism*; and to accomplish its end, not even the immoralisms of the undependable word, false accusations, and murder have been counted too high a price to pay.

## VI

The foregoing, let it be said at once, is mostly hindsight. It is too bad that this logic of the totalitarian mind could not have been more quickly detected by the non-Soviet world. Many of the mistakes that many persons made because of

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

their credulous confidence in the supposed "Western humanitarianism" of Russia might then have been avoided and a wiser, more realistic course followed.

Today, there are those who take a malicious and self-righteous delight in unmasking these credulous ones and mercilessly hounding them. If, however, we look at the record of those who most pertinaciously do the hounding and who are loudest in their self-approval for never having thus been taken in by the Russians, we discover that most of them are persons who, in their own lives, seem never to have shown a flicker of interest in righting human wrongs. Today it turns out, to be sure, that these present accusers of the then innocently guilty were right in opposing communism; but in Phyllis McGinley's damning phrase, they were "right for the wrong perennial reasons." In the days when socially concerned people were being taken in by communism's promise of world redemption, these present accusers were, as often as not, satisfied beneficiaries of the prevailing inhumanities; or were ignorant of them; or were morally indifferent to them. Many of them even today, while they clamor for the ferreting out of communists, show no interest in righting the very wrongs that give communism its strongest talking point among the depressed peoples of the world. Now, as heretofore, they hate Russia as a power-rival without hating those infringements of human rights and dignity that make Russia the top menace to the world's future. They hate communism, in short, much as communism hated fascism and nazism; not as democracy, when it is truly itself, must hate all oppression. Thus we need to remember that the credulous ones who saw hope in the Rus-



sian revolution had at least the honor of caring about injustice and of giving welcome, however mistakenly, to a new nation that looked like a champion of humanity.

Another thing, also, is important to remember: namely, that when the Russian Revolution broke upon the American mind, it found that mind not unaware of the deep flaws in capitalism. The decades that preceded the Russian Revolution had been, for many Americans, decades of painful self-education with regard to the shortcomings and abuses of our own system.

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, Edward Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward*. It leaped into circulation. "A few conservative critics scorned the book as a fantastic concoction; several learned economists proved it fallacious and impertinent; but many thousands of enthusiastic readers, thoroughly dissatisfied with inequality, were ready to use the novel as a blueprint for the new society."<sup>6</sup> The book penetrated to practically every community, becoming the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of economic and social unrest.

In those days, a battle royal was being fought among American economists over the virtues and vices of capitalism. On the conservative side, General Francis Walker, one of the most eminent of our economists, held that capital was always the product of abstinence and savings; hence the owner had a right to employ it as he wished. Nevertheless, it is to be said that he recognized the value of trade unions before most people did. J. Lawrence Laughlin, who was later made head of the Department of Economics in the new University of Chi-

<sup>6</sup> Charles N. Madison, *Critics and Crusaders*, p. 146. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947.

cago, argued that one could gain wealth only by sacrifice, exertion, and skill and that the rich man, therefore, was justified in enjoying the products of his sacrifice, exertion, and skill without interference. William Graham Sumner, of Yale, a disciple of Darwin and Spencer and therefore a proponent of "struggle for survival" as the law of the "fittest" in economics, saw only harm in efforts to regulate business enterprise. Why, he asked, interfere with a process which has rewarded and encouraged men of industry and merit?

A number of economists who differed from these narrowly pro-capitalist views were summarily dismissed from their posts. Among them was John R. Commons, who was asked to leave Syracuse University in 1899. Nevertheless, men like Richard T. Ely, Simon Patten, Lester Ward, Edward A. Ross, Charles H. Cooley, Thorstein Veblen, and Wesley C. Mitchell made their strong fight, as economists and sociologists, for an economic system geared not to the abstract and bloodless "economic man" and to the interests of one class against another, but to a society of concrete, many-sided human beings who needed, as Patten pointed out, to be liberated from a niggardly, class-serving economy of deficit into a humanity-serving economy of abundance.

Nor were the academic economists the only ones who invited Americans to look at their capitalistic system with new—and startled—eyes. Ida Tarbell held the iniquities of Standard Oil on high so that all could plainly see; Upton Sinclair led us into the nauseating jungle of the packing industry; Lincoln Steffens exposed the "shame of the cities."

It is not surprising, then, that when, in 1917, in a Russia that had lost the heart to fight, Lenin, coming out of exile,

angrily declared that the whole stupid business of profit-motivated war must cease, he wakened many a responsive chord. We had ourselves begun to have our doubts about the whole miserable business. The doubts were intensified when, after the war, the dream of a war to end war was dissipated by the refusal of the United States to join the League of Nations. Then came the astounding revelations of war profiteering and, in the incredible Harding days, the scandal of Teapot Dome.

The communist experiment, in brief, broke upon minds that had already variously learned to distrust the system they had been taught to trust. The new words came like the clang of an Independence Bell: "Immediate peace and fraternization of the working classes of the world; a working class republic like the Paris Commune of 1871; Socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat; end of imperialistic war all over the world and overthrow of capitalism at its source, even at the risk of civil war; and finally, a working class Communist International to accomplish and bring to an end the work begun in Russia; the foundation of a Socialist Republic of the world." <sup>7</sup>

Those who knew how desperately economic wrongs needed to be righted—the world around; and even in our own country—did not examine the prospectus too closely, not even the word "dictatorship"; nor did they clearly know what "proletariat" was to mean; nor the "overthrow of capitalism at its source." In the first place, except for a few scraps of knowledge about Siberian exilings and about Russian revolution-

<sup>7</sup> Ypsilon, *Pattern of World Revolution*, p. 5. New York: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1947.

aries of the Prince Kropotkin type, we in this country were as yet in utter ignorance of the nature of these Russians who were now proclaiming the world's salvation. In the second place, there appeared to be considerable evidence that Russia was staging not merely an economic and political revolution but a cultural one as well: a revolution marked by a widespread encouragement of literacy, the emancipation of women and of minority racial groups, and the stimulation of the arts and sciences. In the third place, years would have to go by—of purgings, forced collectivizing, devious duplicity, torture, terrifying infiltration, slave labor camps, and maddening obstructionism—before we could realize that these Russians who declared the liberation of men were, because of a profound psychological naïveté, merely paving the way for man's further enslavement.

This psychological mistake of theirs—the attempt to coerce millions into a radically new pattern of life—is the characteristic evil by which our century will doubtless be known in history. No evil could be more devastating, since it contradicts the very law of the mind's maturing. Such is never the way in which the mind grows into its greater wisdom. Rather, it is the way of a mechanic who, of an afternoon, takes a machine apart, and remakes it into a new one. Fascism, nazism, and communism, out of anger at certain hated mechanisms of their various societies, ordered their disassembling and the instant construction of new, shining mechanisms of power.

But human beings cannot be assembled and disassembled at will. They suffer and die under "mass production" as surely as under the gunfire of mass destruction.

Fascism, nazism, and communism have induced a tragic interlude in our slow advance toward mastery of the deep complexities of human growth. All three have been angry throwbacks to *oversimplification* and to the *dictatorial absoluteness of the primitive tribe*.

## T H I R T E E N

# IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON OUR MINDS

NOTHING that the agents of communism have done or can do in this country," writes Alan Barth, in *The Loyalty of Free Men*, "is so dangerous to the United States as what they have induced us . . . to do to ourselves."<sup>1</sup> One thing they have induced us to do is to permit the creation among us of *an atmosphere favorable to moral timidity*.

The reason is simple. Wherever a wrong seems to need righting, the communists are "Johnny on the spot"—if only to make the most of their chance to show up the weaknesses of "capitalism" and to create dissension. But where a wrong seems to need righting, many non-communists also are "Johnny on the spot"—because they care about democratic justice. This raises a difficulty. How, at these points of moral tension—a race riot, for example, or a dismissal of a man

<sup>1</sup> P. 94. New York: the Viking Press, 1951.

falsely accused—are we to distinguish the communist from the non-communist?

At a glance, it seems impossible to do so. All people who have voluntarily involved themselves in the situation appear to have made a similar move. They seem, therefore, to have been *similarly motivated*. This fact has created a puzzling and dangerous predicament. Men of compassion, defenders of the mind's freedom—and therefore arch-opponents of the coercive methods of communism—are branded as communists because, at points of social tension, *they are where communists are*.

Many an individual, consequently, now hesitates before he “sticks his neck out” in defense, say, of a Negro's legal rights. The communists will likewise be defending these rights. Many a scholar hesitates before he upholds a colleague in his expressed obligation to examine truth from all sides. The communists will be upholding him. Many a decent-minded citizen hesitates, now, to promote the ending of war. Communists have cast themselves as the verbal exponents of peace.

The situation is so fantastic that it leaves the average, well-minded but not too securely placed individual in a state very near to moral paralysis. If he manfully strikes out for justice, some accuser will pop out at him crying the hated word. If he even dares to stand openly for the civil liberties guaranteed in the American Constitution, some accuser will brand him as un-American. If the accuser speaks with a show of authority, the thousands who follow slogans and stereotypes, and who are a prey to fears and frustrations that readily project themselves as hate, will gang up on the accused and begin to hound him. His morally timid employer will fire him. His

friends will turn the other way. (Has the reader had the uncanny experience of being called a communist because he has expressed one liberal view? Or, more fantastically still, has he been called a communist because he has dared to quote the very Americans we have traditionally been taught to honor?)

This is the bewildering situation in which we find ourselves today. It literally means that no man, in this land proudly dedicated to the righting of wrongs, can any longer safely concern himself about human wrongs. The only wrong he can safely oppose is communism itself; and even when he declares his most passionate opposition to communism, he will be disbelieved if, in human pity, and in accord with the principles of Christianity and democracy, he has ever tried to right any wrong against which communists, too, have raised their voices.

It comes to this, then: if, today, an individual wishes not to be branded as a communist (and to have both his reputation and his source of livelihood taken from him), his only safe alternative is *to stop trying to right human wrongs*. He must, in other words, become a moral cipher—and turn over the gratitude and loyalty of the world's oppressed to the communists, thus helping them to win their victory.

This is the moral and practical predicament that is being forced upon us by certain overzealous anticommunists. In the blind excess of their anticommunist fury, they are killing the very spirit they declare themselves out to serve, and are helping the communists to take over. We noted in the preceding chapter that communists hated fascism without hating totalitarianism. Here we note what it specifically means



when, in our own country, many among those who hate communism do so without hating totalitarian tactics.

Not everyone, in brief, who proclaims himself anti-communist thereby proves himself to be pro-democratic or pro-mankind—though the present confused situation may allow him to pin on such proud labels and wear them unchallenged. The chance to besmirch and ruin liberals has made a Roman holiday for those who have always hated liberals. Now their time has come. They have at their command a formula so simple that the veriest fool can use it: "*Cry 'subversive' when anyone proposes any change whatever in the status quo or the righting of any wrong.*" With this formula, they can keep all things safe for whatever privileges they enjoy; or lacking privileges, they can vent their frustrations with destructive impunity.

How can we confront this moral crisis that has come like a thief in the night? Later we shall ask in greater detail how we can confront the peril of communism. Here, we make only an initial observation: we shall hardly, as a people, make a strong and effective stand against communism if we ourselves are *morally washed out*.

Our nation was born in a caring about the rights of men. The words are still grand ones as they come to us out of the eighteenth century: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal. . . ." In spite of all our shortcomings, the deepest impulse of Americans has been to make a fitter world for people to live in. Parents have wanted a fitter world for their children; citizens for their community and nation. This same impulse now calls for a total world in

which a less divided mankind can realize a more united happiness.

It will be a supreme tragedy—not only for ourselves but for the world—if the citizens of this nation are frightened out of their moral caring and mental integrity by the danger of being taken to look like communists. If this happens, communism will have won its victory; for there will no longer be men of moral valor and intellectual integrity for communism to overcome. Men frightened out of their moral and intellectual caring will have ceased to be men. Enrolling them thereafter in the goose-stepping ranks of conformity then becomes a mere routine.

The most urgent of our problems, obviously, is to discover how we can counteract the mind-destroying effects of communism without at the same time killing the moral spirit that gives justification and force to our opposition to communism.

## II

The first requirement, it would seem, is to recognize clearly the nature of the danger we are in. We need now to be alive to the fact that wherever there are wrongs to be righted there will be both communists and non-communists on the scene. We need, therefore, to provide ourselves with an initial warning: *Not everyone who works for the righting of a wrong is a communist.*

The statement is so simple as to seem self-evident. Yet in countless cases this self-evident truth goes unrecognized. Where men and women of otherwise good repute are found to be on the same side as communists, no matter how right the side is by the standards of our political and religious herit-

age, the instant assumption among multitudes of people is that they are tarred with the communist brush. *This is condemnation by surface similarity.* It is as though all men of good will who hurried to put out a fire were to be branded as arsonists because the man who set the fire mingles with them on the spot.

What is needed in every such case is to go beneath such surface similarity to *subsurface dissimilarity*: in brief, to take time out to get at men's deeper aims and motivations and at the wider patterns of their life.

This is hard to do; but in situations where our very democratic life is at stake, such hard work is now required of us. Thus we come to a second warning: *There must be no condemnation without full investigation.* That every man has a right to his "day in court" has been basic to our way of life. This fundamental right is now being shamefully denied even by those in high places. Men are dismissed from their occupations, their characters besmirched, their careers blasted, without the right to face their accusers and to speak in their own defense. In many instances, they do not even know who has accused them. This is not the proud American way. This is the way of the totalitarian regimes that deny to accused individuals the right to a just and open trial.

On this point, then, in these crucial days, we need to be completely clear: *Wherever individuals or agencies, official or unofficial, are permitted, by accusations unsupported by full and tested evidence, to condemn any man or woman, we to that extent go the way of the totalitarian regimes.* Communism, in short, wins without having to fight a battle.

We have so recently become acquainted with communist

strategies that we have scarcely begun as yet to work out our own psychological counter-strategies. On the contrary, we have occupied ourselves chiefly with the more familiar strategies of military defense and offense. But it should be clear that, since we are citizens of a threatened democracy, more is required of us than the launching of armies. We need to learn how to launch our minds.

This means, first and last, that we must learn *how not to be taken in*. We know now, after a number of painful experiences, that communists who come to the support of oppressed individuals or groups are not primarily interested in the oppressed, but in the use they can make of them as a spring-board from which to launch propaganda looking to the overthrow of our system of life. If we know this, and still persist in condemning everyone of good faith who comes to the support of such oppressed individuals and groups, we are being taken in by the communists. They can laugh at us; for they have frightened us into making moral activity too dangerous an activity to indulge in. Or to put the matter another way, they have frightened us out of making our own system of life vigorously convincing.

We need, then, a third cautionary statement: *Beware lest the communists frighten us out of our moral concern.*

Finally, there is a fourth warning we must keep in mind: *Beware of the wolves in anticommunist clothing.* It is bad enough to become the pawns of a communist tyranny abroad; it is equally bad to become the pawns of selfishness, hostility, and a disguised totalitarianism at home. Realistic good sense requires us to realize that just as men have made handsome profits out of military war, so men are today making handsome

profits out of this war of the ideologies. A new word is being passed around: "This is the time to smash the liberals." If the well-minded American does not know this, he is a lamb among the wolves.

### III

Place by the side of the sentence quoted at the beginning of this chapter the following from Dr. J. H. Hildebrand, Dean of the College of Chemistry of the University of California. He is speaking of the effects of the imposition of a special loyalty oath upon the members of the teaching staff of the University: "No conceivable damage to the university at the hands of the hypothetical communists among us could have equalled the damage resulting from the unrest, ill-will, and suspicion engendered by this series of events."<sup>2</sup>

Those familiar with the bitter controversy between the faculty of the University of California and its board of regents know that the words are an understatement, not an exaggeration. No greater blow to the integrity and prestige of a great American university was ever struck than the blow struck by a small majority of men on the governing board of the University of California, who so feared communism that they adopted its chief tactic as their own: a compelled declaration of conformity.

The thing began in 1949 when State Senator Tenney introduced seventeen bills to combat subversive activities in the state. He included lawyers and doctors as well as teachers among those who should be required to take a special loyalty

<sup>2</sup> Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 216. In this chapter I am leaning heavily and gratefully on Alan Barth's book for specific documentary evidence on what we are being induced to do to ourselves.

oath. The lawyers and doctors protested vigorously enough to have the oath requirement for their professions rescinded. The president of the nation's largest institution of higher learning, however, fearing the greater evils that the legislature might visit upon the university, let himself be persuaded to suggest to the regents that a loyalty oath be required of all members of the university faculty. The regents readily complied, ordering that all the university's nine thousand employees, notwithstanding that they had already taken the standard oath of allegiance, should take an additional oath declaring their non-communist stand.

What followed is now well known. The faculty, almost to a man, rose in protest; but a small majority of the regents held firm. Today the doubtful distinction rests with this small majority that distinguished scholars, proved innocent of all connections with communism, many of them with a lifetime of service to the university, were dismissed solely because they refused to sign an oath that went counter to their conscience as citizens and scholars. At the time of writing, a California court of appeals has reversed the action of the board of regents; and the board of regents have at last reversed themselves.

What shall we say of this manner of "protecting" ourselves against communism? The simple answer is that this is exactly the way in which communists "protect" themselves. They require of all their people an unequivocal and public declaration of loyalty to communism; and they interpret as subversive any independent act of the human mind, any reluctance to accept total conformity as the best system of life.

The loyalty oath required of teachers breaks with a hard-

won principle that has come to be regarded as of paramount importance to the integrity of the teaching profession. Very simply, that principle is as follows. When a teacher, after an agreed-upon probationary period, has proved himself to be a fitting member of the faculty of an institution, he achieves tenure. Thereafter, unless he violates the laws of the land or the well-understood requirements of a good teacher, he is secure in his position and cannot be deprived of it because of his religious, political, or other private beliefs or affiliations. He does not, in short, have to go through his entire teaching career subject to the religious, political, or economic fears, whims, and prejudices that may, at one time or another, characterize the governing board. This principle is not one of secondary importance to our American way of life. It is of primary importance; for it signalizes our conviction that even during times of crisis, or of marked shifts in political power, or of religious fanaticisms or mass hysterias, there must be an uninterrupted continuity of mental freedom and integrity within our educational institutions.

The communist principle, we know, is exactly the opposite: No individual, under communism, is secure in his life work *unless his political beliefs and affiliations are "right"*; that is, unless they are identical with those of the authorities in command.

Advocates of the loyalty oath declare that we are now in a state of "national emergency" and that a principle that might otherwise be regarded as excellent must, for the time being, be sacrificed. It becomes a serious question, however, whether we are prepared to sacrifice a principle which not only has been basic in the past to our whole democratic enterprise but

which currently stands as one of the prime marks that distinguish our way of life from the communist way: namely, that a man's political and religious views are his private rights, and that so long as he performs no *acts* that go counter to the laws of the land, he shall be protected in these rights. It becomes, in brief, a serious question whether we are prepared to imitate communist methods because we hate those methods.

#### IV

Certainly the limits of personal freedom become more difficult to set and maintain in a time of acute social crisis than in a time of social stability. Even among people of sincere and informed good will there are profound differences of opinion as to what crisis demands of a society in the way of emergency provisions for self-protection. Yet, from the psychological point of view, there would seem to be a number of basic reasons why we must be exceedingly wary of the temptation to try to preserve freedom by curtailing freedom. Briefly, we might note four of these.

The first reason turns us back to a matter discussed in an earlier chapter: namely, that the emotional temper of a time of crisis is exaggeratedly marked by fear, and therefore by dependence, hostile aggression, and suggestibility. This means that the impulses *to play safe*, on the one hand, and, on the other, *to hit out at someone* are unusually strong among us and are likely, in greater degree than we realize, to dictate the policies we adopt and call proper emergency measures. Or to put the matter another way, the things we feel like doing to people who disagree with us—the restrictions with which we want to surround their words and actions, and the punishments we



want to inflict upon them for non-conformity—may more accurately reflect our own impulses than the objective problems of our society.

The second reason, closely related, is that those who are quick and eager to assume leadership in framing restrictive measures are usually those who *enjoy doing so*: those, in short, who get a sense of importance out of ferreting out weak spots in the reputations of their fellow citizens, inducing fear, compelling conformity: those who have never keenly felt the drama of human freedom. Because these hostile and destructive personalities are so quick to seize the opportunity that crisis affords and are so cynically adept at labeling their efforts as patriotic and American, they create a confusion within which we easily lose our moral perspective—a perspective already weakened by our own disturbed emotions.

The third reason is that the things we impulsively incline to do in a time of crisis often subvert the basic principles on which we want to build our long-range social structure; and once those principles are flouted, even in a sincere effort to protect our society, all rights are in jeopardy. We might illustrate this point by reference to events that have taken place within the past few years at the University of Washington. For a number of years the university had been accused of being a “hotbed of communism” and a “nest of communist professors.” When in 1948 a legislative committee on un-American activities—the so-called Canwell Committee—undertook to study the situation, ten members of the faculty who enjoyed tenure under university rules were named as being or having been members of the Communist Party (ten out of seven hundred full-time faculty members). Two of the ten

flatly denied that they had ever been associated with the party; five said they had belonged but had withdrawn; and three refused to testify as to their membership. Following the legislative hearings, the university's Faculty Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom took up the case of six men—the three who had refused to testify and three of those who admitted past membership. The committee was unanimous in recommending retention of the three who admitted past membership but denied present membership. It divided on the other three; but after careful deliberation, the majority refused to find the accused men guilty of either incompetence or neglect of duty and refused to follow the minority lead in finding *membership* in a political party sufficient cause for dismissal when no actions inimical to good teaching could be shown to have stemmed from that membership.

When, however, this majority report was transmitted to the president of the university, Dr. Raymond B. Allen, he turned it down and recommended that the three men be dismissed. In support of his overriding of the committee's decision, he presented the following argument:

Men in academic life—teachers, scholars, and scientists—are engaged in a vocation which is concerned with the finding of truth and its dissemination, with the pursuit of truth wherever it may lead. Is it possible for an individual, however sincere, to embrace both this unhampered pursuit of truth and, at the same time, the doctrines and dogmas of a political party which admits of no criticism of its fundamental principles and programs? Put in another way, a teacher may be ever so sincere in his belief in communism, but can he at the same time be a sincere seeker

after truth, which is the first obligation and duty of the teacher? My answer to these questions is, "He cannot."<sup>3</sup>

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of President Allen's conclusion; nor is there reason to doubt that he came to that conclusion only after serious and searching thought. On the surface, indeed—and with only the present crisis in mind—his argument seems convincing. It becomes deeply troubling to mind and democratic conscience only when we stand back from the present crisis and ask what such a decision means in terms of our long-range social intentions. How does it fit into the history of man's effort to achieve a workable freedom?

Faced with this question, we may recall the time in America when Catholics were persecuted for the identical reason that President Allen now declared to be a sufficient reason for dismissing the three faculty members: they were accused of being loyal to a foreign power—the Pope—and of being committed to dogmas that they accepted without question. If the principle expressed by President Allen is to be accepted as the one on which we intend to rest our society, then Catholics must again be denied teaching posts in our public schools and colleges on the ground that they believe in "doctrines and dogmas" of a religious body "which admits no criticism of its fundamental principles and programs" and which has the power to punish deviations of belief by excommunication—even if these deviations result from that sincere pursuit of truth which President Allen holds in high regard. We might put the matter thus: There is no way in which our society can

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Alan Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

play wholly safe in a time of world-wide crisis; but the hazard of subverting our own long-range principles, and thereby clearing the way for recurrent rampaging prejudices, would seem greater than the hazard represented by the presence on a large faculty of three men against whom the committee, even after diligent search, was unable to prove any overt actions incompatible with good teaching.

The fourth reason why we must be wary of our own impulse to curtail freedom for the ostensible protection of freedom is that it is a policy that all too easily invites us to believe that the end justifies the means. Here again we might turn for an example to what happened at the University of Washington.<sup>4</sup> A former Communist, George Hewitt, accused Professor Melvin Rader, on what later turned out to be perjured evidence, of having attended a secret communist school in New York during the summer of 1938. The accuser testified to the Canwell Committee under oath that he, personally, had been Rader's instructor. By dint of hard work on the part of Edwin O. Guthman of the *Seattle Times*, who later received a Pulitzer Prize for his work on the case, Rader was found to be completely innocent; and the Attorney General, declaring that Hewitt "did not tell the truth," had him indicted for perjury.

It is interesting to stop at this point and ask ourselves how we would expect a legislative committee on un-American activities to behave when one of its witnesses was revealed as a perjurer: to ask what policy on its part, toward that witness and toward the professor who had been falsely accused, would be most consonant with its role as a defender of the

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

American way of life. And after such a pause for meditation, it is interesting to continue the story of what actually happened. George Hewitt, reports Barth, fled to New York; and when the State of Washington sought to extradite him for prosecution, "the Canwell Committee persuaded a New York judge to set him free by giving testimony which, according to the Attorney General of Washington, 'was an obvious distortion, whether by mistake, inadvertence, or otherwise.'" <sup>5</sup> This committee, in brief, apparently did the un-American thing of shielding a liar and perjurer who had sought to ruin the career of an innocent fellow American. It is doubtful whether any member of the committee would say that he saw nothing wrong in perjury—that it seemed to him consistent with our American tradition. Yet the committee, intent to effect the discovery and dismissal of communists on the University of Washington faculty, *acted out* the belief that the end justifies the means. Or to put the matter another way, while this committee on un-American activities would strongly affirm its hatred of communism, it strongly suggested by its own behavior in this instance that there are certain fundamental communist tactics—such as the well-placed lie—that it does not hate; that it does not find repulsive; that it feels no moral obligation to repudiate. This blunting of the distinction between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, honesty and dishonesty is something against which we have to be acutely on guard wherever we set ourselves to restrict, in the name of a national emergency, the established liberties that have distinguished our nation.

There have been valiant exceptions to the sort of thing we

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

have here been considering. When the Boyles Subversive Activities Commission of the Illinois State Legislature started an investigation of communist activities at the University of Chicago, incited thereto, apparently, according to Alan Barth's report, by the fact that university students had demonstrated against certain bills introduced into the state legislature by Boyles himself, Chancellor Hutchins appeared before the commission and told it in unequivocal words that "the policy of the University is to admit law-abiding students who have the qualifications to do the University's work. It would not be in the public interest," he declared, "to exclude students of communistic leanings. If we did, how would they ever learn better?"

Then he went on to state to the Boyles Commission some of the principles of democratic education:

The policy of repression of ideas cannot work and never has worked. The alternative to it is the long, difficult road of education. To this the American people have been committed. It requires patience and tolerance, even in the face of intense provocation. It requires faith in the principles and practices of democracy, faith that when the citizen understands all forms of government he will prefer democracy and that he will be a better citizen if he is convinced than he would be if he were coerced.<sup>6</sup>

A similar valiant defense of the democratic way of education was made at Harvard. As Alan Barth tells the story,<sup>7</sup> Frank B. Ober, a member of the Maryland State Legislature and an alumnus of the Harvard Law School, wrote President

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

Conant explaining his reasons for not subscribing to the Harvard Law School Fund, basing them upon "the apparent attitude of Harvard toward extra-curricular activities of professors giving aid and comfort to Communism." "The test of a professor's loyalty," he wrote, "ought not to be whether he can be actually proved guilty of a crime. Reasonable grounds to doubt his loyalty to our government should disqualify him. . . ."

Dr. Conant turned the letter over to Mr. Grenville Clark, senior member of the Harvard Corporation. Mr. Clark, in answering Mr. Ober, did the important thing of showing that before we adopt any policy of repression we must think through the full logic of its consequences. He wrote in part:

I cannot help wondering whether you have thought through the implication of what you propose.

Since you wish to discipline professors for taking active part in meetings such as those at which Professors Ciardi and Shapley spoke, would it not be fair to pass in advance on the kind of meetings professors could safely attend? Would this not call for a university licensing board? And would not such a board have an obnoxious and virtually impossible task? . . .

Moreover, I think you will agree that there would be little sense in censoring attendance at meetings and leaving free from censorship speeches on the radio or writings in the press, magazines, pamphlets, and books. Would not your proposals call for a censorship of all these? . . .

Beyond that, however, how could an effective "closer watch" on "extra-curricular activities" be maintained unless the watch extended to conversations and correspondence? And how could that be done without a system of student and other informers—

the classic and necessary method of watching for "subversive" utterances? . . .

What sort of place would Harvard be if it went down this road? It would, I think, not require six months to destroy the morale of both our teachers and students, and thereby our usefulness to the country. . . .

Yet there it is: un-American activities committees throughout the land are throwing the fear of investigation into the universities and colleges; demanding the raised right hand and the declaration of complete political purity—political purity, moreover, not as defined by the American Constitution, with freedom and integrity of mind strictly protected; but political purity as defined by the committee itself.

## V

One of the most astonishing changes that have ever taken place in the direction of our American life came in May, 1938, when, by a vote of 191 to 41, the House of Representatives established a committee the like of which had never before existed in our land. The House Committee on Un-American Activities, under the resolution of Martin Dies, was given, among other things, the vague directive to conduct investigations of the "diffusion within the United States of subversive and un-American propaganda." The committee proceeded to become, almost at once, a means not of defending our American way of life as embodied in the Constitution but a means of pillorying in public those individuals with whose economic, political, and social views its members disagreed.

Even more amazing, perhaps, in the light of our tradition, than the original setting up of such a committee is the fact



that it has, throughout the years since 1938, been given a periodic vote of confidence and instructions to continue its work—and this in spite of procedures that have borne no resemblance whatever to “investigation” in the true and safeguarded sense of that word, and in spite of smearings before hearings and hearings that have been smearings. Even a change from Democratic to Republican leadership, as when J. Parnell Thomas took over the chairmanship (until he was brought to trial for taking kick-backs from his office employees), made no difference in the procedures. Trial by opinion and by newspaper headlines has become such standard practice—in a nation that has traditionally prided itself on the observance of constitutional safeguards against oppression—that people by and large now read the news of such trials with no deep sense of shock, oblivious apparently to how deep a change in our American way of life is signaled by the establishment and continuance of this committee. We might almost say, in fact, that the committee’s method of “punishment by publicity” has become part of the American public’s expectations. Vast numbers of Americans like this sort of “higher scandal”: it is vastly more exciting than the village gossip with which they used to have to “make do.”

This, too, then, must be chalked up against the communists (or against ourselves?); for this is one more dangerous thing they have induced us to do to our minds.

The one incurable defect in this astounding committee, as Alan Barth has searchingly pointed out, is “rooted . . . in the concept that Congress may properly punish, by publicity, *activities which it cannot constitutionally declare criminal*”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

(italics ours). One doubts whether most Americans clearly understand this fact—or have thought through its long-range implications. So many things happen in our political life, so many new agencies take over, that we seldom know clearly what these agencies do or are intended to do. Most Americans, questioned about the function of the Un-American Activities Committee, would doubtless say that its function is *to uncover subversive crimes against the government*. Yet this is not at all the function to which the committee limits itself. In its own eyes, its function has been not to search out instances of subversive action so much as to punish by publicity *views* that are not illegal but that the committee itself has decided to label as dangerous.

In Mr. Dies's own words—and there seems little evidence that subsequent members have disagreed with him—the object of the committee was to deal with “hundreds of Left-wingers and radicals who do not believe in our system of free enterprise.”<sup>9</sup> These are confusing words. In application they have meant that a few members of Congress are in a position to define *as they themselves may please* the terms “left-winger” and “radical” and then to proceed to ruin, through the medium of newspaper publicity, the reputations and livelihoods of those who do not live by their particular definition of “free enterprise.”

All human history testifies to the extreme difficulty of defining the word “radical” or the word “subversive.” Repeatedly it testifies to the fact that progress in social arrangements has in large measure been brought about by men and women originally counted dangerous by those in power.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

All through our own history patriotic Americans have disagreed among themselves in their theories of economics and politics—and the rich growth of our culture has largely depended upon the fact that their right so to disagree has been constitutionally protected. Our nation, we might say, was established *to guarantee the safeguarding of such disagreement*. Andrew Jackson, for example, was a powerful disagreeer. Had an Un-American Activities Committee of anti-Jacksonites been in operation, and had it followed the methods of the present committee, it would have pilloried him in the newspapers as “subversive.” The Abolitionists were disagreeers. So were the trust-busters—Theodore Roosevelt chief among them. So was Senator Norris when he made his tough fight for the TVA. So were the leaders in the movement for women’s suffrage. So was Senator Wagner when he fought for the Wagner Act.

The most deadly danger of the committee lies in the fact that it substitutes for the established American principle of “freedom to disagree” the un-American principle of “compulsion to conform”—the ideas to which men must conform being prescribed by the committee itself. Far from guarding our nation against subversives, the committee, in brief, has employed the trust granted to it by the American people to subvert certain basic American freedoms—and it has been able to do so without being brought up short by public opinion because, having our widespread legitimate fear of communism at its disposal, it has been able to make illegitimate use of the words “Left-winger,” “radical,” “red,” “fellow traveler,” and “subversive.” By turning itself, under the protection of its immunity, into a name-blackening agency, it has

been able, in alarming degree, to terrorize non-conformity into silence. This, we dare not forget, has been a favorite method of totalitarianism. Nor dare we forget that a society terrorized into conformity cannot at the same time be a society strong with creative growth. We dare not forget one of the most profound lessons taught by all human history: namely, that a society that tries to stay strictly *as it is* soon becomes a society that is going backward.

The danger of accusation by labels is quickly seen when it is remembered that Mr. Dies "called the New Dealers Left-wingers and radicals who do not believe in our system of free enterprise."<sup>10</sup> This would seem to mean that New Dealers, even when elections showed them to represent a majority of the American people, were to be considered dangerous subversives because they disagreed with the particular economic theories espoused by Mr. Dies and his committee. It is only one step—and not a long step—from this sort of irresponsible labeling to the political philosophy that all men are "subversive" who disagree with those in power.

Here we come to the root of the matter: "The Committee aimed not so much at Communist ideas as at all ideas; not so much at Communist attempts to change 'our system of free enterprise' as at all attempts to change it. From the beginning, liberals were the committee's real targets—because liberals were responsible for the New Deal. This was their besetting sin in the eyes of the Un-American Activities Committee, which regarded conformity as the test of patriotism and normalcy as the criterion of the good life."<sup>10a</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>10a</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

## VI

Where the rights of individuals are at stake, the utmost cautions of the mind are called for. In our Anglo-Saxon tradition, these cautions have, after centuries of difficult development, come in highest degree to be exemplified in courts of law. Courts of law have their defects—for the application of abiding principles to the enormous variety of special situations in a changing world is the hardest of all things to accomplish. Nevertheless, in spite of defects of procedure and personnel, courts of law are today the institutions which, more than any others, charge themselves with guarding the mind against such of its own willed and unwilled inaccuracies as would infringe the rights of other human beings.

Nothing that the communists have done has evoked more concern in Anglo-Saxon countries than the casting aside of these long-developed cautions of the mind. In the People's Courts in Russia a new jurisprudence is applied—one that places the accused at a maximum disadvantage in his own defense. In the "mass trials" in communist China thousands of accused are disposed of by the roar of the "People's Courts"—"Kill—kill—kill!" These things have brought new horror to the world. Any invasion of the strict and faithful accuracies of court procedure by procedures less strict and accurate must therefore be regarded with grave concern.

The severest criticism that can be made of the Un-American Activities Committee—and of its imitators in state legislatures—is that the members have found a method whereby they can employ *the inaccuracies of non-court procedures* in such ways as to do grave damage to individuals—for which

*damage there is no redress*—and to employ these procedures while they themselves enjoy immunity. This is something new in American life; and it is not a happy thing to contemplate that we appear to be following the communist example and establishing our own type of “People’s Courts.”

Listen to Representative Hébert of the Un-American Activities Committee describing this great new American court of the people:

. . . Dr. Silverman, you are now before the greatest open court in this country. . . . You are now in the presence of probably 1,000 or more people in this committee room. You are in the presence of an invisible audience of millions of American people who listen to the radio. You are in the presence of millions of American people who see moving pictures. You are in the presence of competent and able representatives of the American press, which is free.

I now tell you, Dr. Silverman, you are facing Miss Elizabeth T. Bentley, who may be known to you under the name of Elizabeth T. Bentley, or perhaps under the name of Mary or under the name of Helen. I tell you, Dr. Silverman, that this lady standing here, whom I have described by name, accuses you in open court before the American people of being an espionage agent . . .<sup>11</sup>

You face your accuser, Dr. Silverman. What is your answer? . . .

To which Dr. Silverman quite properly replied—after saying that Miss Bentley’s charges were a “huge web of lies”—“I do not consider this to be a court.”

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82. Quoted from Interim Report of the House Committee on Un-American Activities on Hearings Regarding Communist Espionage in the United States Government, August 28, 1948, pp. 846–47.

Mr. Hébert: "You are hedging. You asked for an open court. I am giving it to you."

Dr. Silverman: "I didn't ask for an open court. I asked for a court."<sup>12</sup>

To understand the usurpation of power resident in Mr. Hébert's statement that Dr. Silverman was standing before "the greatest open court in this country," we have simply to state the fact that the committee that arranged this terrifying *trial by public opinion* and subjected to it a citizen not proved guilty of any crime is not a court at all. It is in no possible sense part of our American judiciary system. It is simply a committee within our legislative system. When it declares its procedures to be that of a court, it indulges in an open usurpation of power: it openly flouts our traditional system of checks and balances. It does this, moreover, under conditions of congressional immunity: members of the committee, calling themselves members of an "open court," can say whatever they feel like saying about the accused, or can subject him to whatever humiliating and destructive publicity they may choose to arrange, and yet they themselves—*because the procedures are not those of a court*—cannot be brought to account for any damage they do to innocent people who are falsely accused.

There the issue lies. Should it, or should it not, remain the American principle to strive for methods that give the greatest possible protection to the individual's rights; that guard him against the intrusion of unverified rumor, innuendo, slander; that call for thorough examination and cross-examination of all evidence; to give the accused the right to have

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

counsel with the full rights of counsel in a court of law? Should America, in brief, seek to perpetuate its own free institutions or should it imitate the "People's Courts" of communist countries—with all that those courts involve in the way of terror and tyranny?

In contrast to Mr. Hébert's grandiose concept of the committee as the "greatest open court in this country," compare the answer that Representative Mundt (then acting as chairman) gave to Mr. Coe, Dr. Silverman's attorney, when the latter said, "If Miss Bentley is here I would like to ask her some questions." To this Mr. Mundt replied, without the slightest thought apparently that he was contradicting a fellow committee member:

The position of this committee has been . . . that we are not functioning as a court, don't have the power, unfortunately, that a court does have, and so we have not made it a policy to cross examine witnesses or to permit counsel to do so.<sup>13</sup>

Here again the whole issue lies open. This is a court that is not a court. It claims the right *to act like a court* to the extent that it punishes the accused—by pitiless publicity when it cannot reach him by any legal means. But it uses the fact *that it is not a court* to deny legal safeguards to the accused. While, in short, it will not permit the accused, even through counsel, to cross-question the accuser, it will permit the accuser to go on accusing. Thus the committee becomes an irresponsible inquisitorial body of the type that we associate with totalitarian, not democratic, systems of government. With the vast power of publicity at its command, it be-

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.



comes judge, prosecuting attorney, jury, and executioner rolled into one. Its members, elected by the people to perform a *legislative* function, turn their membership on this particular committee into a license to usurp *judicial* functions, but to practice them irresponsibly and outside the safeguards of law.

That this is not an exaggeration is proved by typical cases that have come before the committee. In the spring of 1949, the committee turned its attention to private citizens of the District of Columbia.<sup>14</sup> Among others, it summoned Mrs. Rose Anderson, owner of a prosperous drug store, to appear. Asked whether she was a member of the Communist Party, Mrs. Anderson refused to answer on the legal ground—long established in the Anglo-Saxon tradition and in our own Constitution—that an answer would tend to incriminate her.

Mrs. Anderson, it cannot be said too strongly, *acted within her legal rights*—rights that are rigorously and tenaciously affirmed in our duly constituted courts of law. Yet the Committee had its ready weapon for negating those rights. By the simple process of letting the newspapers know her answer it wrecked her business. A public boycott was instituted (“the People’s Court”), and within a month Mrs. Anderson, who had spent twenty years building up her business, sold it at a price far below its value and left the District of Columbia. A committee set up as an *investigating* subdivision of our *legislative* body, in short, assumed the right to inflict drastic punishment upon a private citizen *for standing on her legally constituted rights*.

The same recourse to hearsay evidence and carelessness

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

about the safeguarding of individuals' rights took place in the grand extravaganza of the Hollywood cases.

In a room filled with klieg lights, cameras, microphones, reporters, and an overflow of the curious, the committee permitted a parade of Hollywood stars and statesmen identified as "friendly witnesses" to give voice, with dramatic gestures, to their personal animosities, resentments, and jealousies. Politically naive actors and actresses were encouraged to recite, without a shred of supporting evidence, their suspicions regarding the political sympathies of their professional colleagues and competitors.<sup>15</sup>

When a group of Hollywood writers and directors protested this travesty of investigation, they were subpoenaed and were abruptly asked two questions: "Are you a member of the Screen Writers' Guild?" and "Are you a member of the Communist Party?" When, standing on their constitutional rights, they refused to answer these questions, they were promptly cited for contempt of Congress and were subsequently convicted and sentenced to terms in prison.

This is **no** place in which to discuss the guilt or non-guilt of the Hollywood ten. The point at issue is that because these writers and directors refused to submit to an invasion of what they assumed was their constitutional right of privacy, they were summarily denied the chance to state their case. No shred of evidence against them as to disloyal acts was ever proved; yet through the Committee's enormous power of publicity and its refusal to give the accused a hearing, these writers and directors were deprived of their livelihood and freedom.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

As E. B. White pointed out in the *New York Herald Tribune*, these men were convicted "not of wrong-doing but of wrong believing; that is news in this country and if I have not misread history, it is bad news."<sup>16</sup>

## VII

The matters we have here considered in some detail—the widespread movement toward the exacting of loyalty oaths, and the committee processes whereby lives and livelihoods are ruined without the victims having the normal safeguards of law—are two aspects of the "bad news" that America, out of hatred of communism, is imitating the coercive methods of communism.

They are not the only aspects of that news. There has come into our language recently a word that may well survive as a common noun long after the present crisis is over: *McCarthyism*. We can leave to the lexicographers of the future the task of giving the word its permanent definition; but already the general meaning is becoming clear. *McCarthyism* is a process whereby an individual who himself enjoys senatorial immunity makes widely publicized and sensational charges that certain other individuals are subversive, basing these attacks not on evidence openly presented but on the promise that evidence will be forthcoming at some later time. The record shows that the promised evidence is all too rarely delivered; and that when it is delivered it is all too often far less sensational than the attack and altogether inconclusive. But the peculiar essence of *McCarthyism* lies in its power to

<sup>16</sup> "The Age of Fear," a letter to the editor, *New York Herald Tribune*, Dec. 2, 1947.

do permanent damage to the reputations of people even when these people are completely investigated and cleared. It inflicts this damage by the appallingly simple process of reiterating the charge—and implying the suppression of evidence—until the public comes to believe that there must be some fire where there was smoke enough to evoke the charge. This is the sort of method—peculiarly ruthless because irresponsible—that was first introduced into the modern world by the totalitarian dictators; and we can scarcely look with equanimity upon its use in America.

One other aspect of the “conformity drive” merits attention; and in some respects it is the most elusive of all, because it crops up in a myriad different places under auspices that are often cloaked in anonymity. It takes the form, for example, of pressure put upon the program chairmen of various organizations not to permit certain speakers to appear on the platform; and upon editors not to publish certain writers. The source of the pressure lies, not in some duly constituted authority to whom we have properly delegated the task of protecting America against subversive forces, but in some self-appointed individual or group that has simply assumed the right to dictate who shall and who shall not be heard. And here again we conspicuously find the element of legal and moral irresponsibility: even where the pressure is strong enough to wreck the reputation and the source of livelihood of individuals against whom no actual charge of disloyalty is made or proved, those who exert the pressure are careful to avoid all methods that might involve them in libel suits—or even in the embarrassment of trying to prove the charges they have made. Once again, in short, we find operating

among us a sort of destructive irresponsibility that we have thought of as typical of the totalitarian regimes but as having no place in a society of free people.

### VIII

The temptation, as we explore these various incursions of totalitarian attitudes and methods into our democratic life, is to point the finger at this particular committee, Congressman, or pressure group and say, "*There is the villain.*" Democracy, however, is not going to be maturely defended by any such oversimplification of the problem. For in greater or lesser degree, all of us are guilty of letting the communism we hate determine the direction of our thinking and the color of our thoughts. This is the phenomenon we deeply need to examine: this peculiar yielding of ourselves to the very social processes we hate and despise when they are practiced beyond our borders. This is the problem to which every mature citizen must lend his insight and concern.

To understand why we so easily imitate that which we hate we need to take account of one of the most simple and yet basic of our psychological principles: namely, that *our responses are determined by that to which we attend*. If, out of all the factors in our environment, we give concentrated attention to only one, it will be that one, not the many rejected factors, that determines our response. At the risk of placing our top cultural problem on a level with the absurd, we can take a couple of very ordinary examples of our thus becoming that to which we attend: the person who cannot take his eyes from an individual who is yawning, or trying not to yawn, will soon himself be a yawner; the person who

becomes tense with involvement in the effort that a stutterer is making to frame his words will soon astonish and embarrass himself by stuttering. We respond to that which grips our attention. We cannot do otherwise.

What we appear to be witnessing today is a sort of gigantic cultural reflex: we have, for years now, been lending our concentrated attention to communism, not to democracy; and because the laws of our psychological being are as they are, we stand in grave danger of imitative disaster: the disaster of acting like totalitarians instead of like free men and women. We cannot simply withdraw our attention from communism, for the threat it presents to our way of life is a real threat that stands there before us in the real world. But we cannot simply stare at it, and at nothing else, until we become hypnotically subject to its influence. We have also to give our concentrated attention to democracy: to that which we value, not only to that which we hate; to that which we want to increase in the world, not only to that which we want to overcome. For only thus can we escape the ultimate tragedy implied in the statement that nothing "the agents of communism have done or can do in this country is so dangerous to the United States as what they have induced us . . . to do to ourselves."

## F O U R T E E N

### CONFRONTING THE PROBLEM

WE NEVER rightly meet a problem in a mood of anger. "Anger is a short madness," wrote Horace. As we read the newspapers and listen to people talk, we reach the disquieting conclusion that our prevailing American attitude toward communism is one of rage. Daily and hourly we are reminded of our communist enemies. We are bidden to alert ourselves; to push them back; to be prepared eventually to make the inevitable assault.

Obviously, we can solve no problem—and particularly no such difficult problem of world reconstruction as we face today—while we are in this mood. Problems are solved by the mind that can stand off and look; that can take account of relationships; that can see where things have gone awry and how they can be straightened out.

Reports from Washington tell us of an unprecedented influx of "poison-pen letters." Every prominent government official receives them in multitude. A fury of rage seems to be con-

suming countless persons. Among these letters, we are told, a considerable proportion have been traced to veterans who have been hospitalized for various psychoneurotic conditions. These, no doubt, are individuals whose lives were tragically sickened by the experience of violence and death; and particularly by violence and death that seem to have come to nothing. Such men tend to turn their hatred against civilian authority. While they were fighting, something appeared to be at least on the way to accomplishment. Now that the fighting is over and the futility of it all is glaringly apparent, they can merely brood over what seems to them to have been the stupidity, cowardice, and venality of civilian leaders.

For anger that is a short madness—or a sustained brooding madness—we need to substitute the patient exploration that is a long sanity. This means that in the present crisis of the world, we must begin by casting away the too-easy assumption that we have been affronted and that we must restrain and punish the affronter. Dividing the world thus into ourselves to whom injury has been done and the enemy that has done the injury, we guarantee at the very start that we shall find no solution.

Here the field-of-force theory is peculiarly applicable. What happens in our world is never due to one cause alone. The chaotic violence and the vast confusion of today are due to a widespread and long-continued interrelation of causes. To think in terms of this interrelation is to place ourselves at the beginning of wisdom.



## II

Incredible as it may seem, it is only a short thirty-seven years since the world went "haywire." I remember sitting on a quiet porch in an eastern suburban town when, in 1914, the news came of the outbreak of World War I. Suddenly the world I cared about seemed to collapse. I remember my first spontaneous thought: "Now the good work that is just beginning will be ended." At that time, Jane Addams was a saintly figure among us. Like a modern St. Francis, she had cast away her patrimony of privilege and had gone down into the slums of Chicago to live with the unprivileged. Thousands of us figuratively, and many of us literally, went down with her. We saw with our own eyes conditions we hitherto had not seen; and we were awakened to things we were called upon to do.

In a multitude of ways, a new birth of human understanding was in its beginnings. Disclosures of corruption in our cities had aroused us to a vigor of political decency. Economic monopoly and the oppression of the worker seemed on the way to being overcome. Increasing numbers of us were no longer blind or apathetic with regard to evils in our midst. We saw things to do.

In those days it seemed good to be alive and to feel the pulse of an awakening humanity. Then came World War I; and suddenly we were plunged into an abyss. . . .

Out of a clear sky, the Sarajevo murder; a few days of frenzied diplomatic exchanges; Germany's refusal to negotiate; the "scrap of paper"; the march into Belgium; the

attack on Liége . . . then the long terror of the submarine and our own entrance into the war; years of veritable hell. When it ended, we and our allies seemed to have won. It was then—or a few years later—that we began to learn that in a modern world war no one wins.

Nevertheless, today, many of us are still under the illusion that our winning of the war did advance the world—a little bit. Did it not move us out of an intense nationalism into the beginnings of internationalism? Was not the League of Nations—though weak and faltering—at least a gesture toward a united world?

It is pleasant to think in this way. But it is less than true. Mostly it is the reverse of truth. A deeper analysis would seem to indicate that *we have been moving from a tacit internationalism to an increasingly stubborn, confused, and destructive nationalism.*

This is not the picture that most of us see. Until we see it, however, we shall not find our way to the heart of the present world problems. Since 1914 the world has, in large measure, gone backward, not forward. It has moved from the wide freedoms of a growing but undesignated internationalism into the narrow fixations of a conscious and aggressive nationalism.

### III

One reason why most of us do not see this is that we have learned to think of nationalism and internationalism solely in political terms. If, on the contrary, we think of them in economic and social terms, we easily see why the nineteenth century (with all its glaring shortcomings of monarchy and

imperialism) was international in spirit and practice while the twentieth century has become increasingly and disastrously nationalistic.

The economic and social internationalism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries lay chiefly in the wide freedom of the people of all nations to move about in the world and to trade with one another. Anyone who is old enough to have traveled widely in the years before World War I will know what this means. If he traveled in Europe, he found, to be sure, customs barriers that had to be negotiated; but these were negligible affairs, sometimes annoying but never sinister. If he traveled in Africa or Asia, save for a few hostile places like Thibet, he had the world open to him. Let him today, however, try to travel in these formerly open parts of the world, and he will note, with a sudden clutch of fear, that he is a watched person. He moves in closed spaces. He crosses boundaries only after the most careful inspection of his credentials. Even in his native land, if he wishes to go abroad, the securing of a passport, which used to be a routine affair, involves irritating delays, and inquiries into motives, intentions, and personal trustworthiness that are often embarrassingly insulting.

In short, the easy, wide-open world of former years has suddenly shrunk and split into a multitude of closed worlds, each with its secret police, its ceremonies of identification and registration, and its overt and covert suspicion of the foreigner.

A similar shrinkage of the world has taken place in trade. In those former years, ships sailed the seas in complete disregard of political affiliations or ideological convictions. The trader was a citizen of the world. He brought goods from

places where they were abundantly produced to places where they were produced less abundantly or not at all. As a consequence, he kept the world in balance, and the tempers of men tolerant and unafraid. (The British would say, with a certain justification, that this was because "Britannia ruled the waves." Yet Britannia's rule, being imperial, had eventually to go.)

All of this changed with the ending of World War I. What is seldom realized is that the settlement of World War I brought with it a perplexing and disastrous self-contradiction: on the one hand, a new, but poorly implemented, internationalism; on the other, a new emphasis on nationalistic self-determination. Both were regarded as good; and they were supposed to run along as friendly teammates. Yet it was not long before the two were at daggers' points. Nor is this to be wondered at. Joining together in sudden amity with all the nations of the world—some of whom had been treacherous enemies—was an art not easily learned. Also it was hard to put into flaming slogans. Men mumbled of the League of Nations as of a distant and somewhat dubious thing. But when it came to asserting their own nation's right to *be itself*, the words came clear and confident. Every aspiring statesman-in-the-making could rise to power on a passionate call to the nation to claim its God-given right to independence.

So the inevitable happened: ". . . extreme nationalism dictated policies of states toward one another . . . quotas were laid down, currencies were restricted, high tariff policies were adopted, more men were under arms and trained for war, immigration laws and passport regulations put an end to the

free migration of peoples.”<sup>1</sup> The movement of exaggerated self-determination even reached our own shores; and we, too, as this writer goes on to say, went the way of a closed world. “The erection of barriers to the former more or less free movement of oppressed people in Europe to the Western world ended the role America had played since the days of Columbus as a refuge and asylum. At the same time the United States adopted a high tariff policy that kept out European goods and rendered impossible the paying of the war debts to us.”

Nothing, in those postwar days, was more deeply needed, psychologically as well as economically and politically, than the restoration of the open spaces of the world and the free movement of people, goods, and ideas. Instead, with self-determination as a slogan of almost religious intensity, the nations closed in on themselves; and the wide freedoms of the world vanished.

Then the story of our own tragic times began. Each nation, now closed within itself, had to solve its economic and social problems within its own boundaries. But this was impossible. Germany, for example, had a population that could not possibly be fed by the resources within its own borders. Hence, the push outward and the tensions within. Italy, within itself, had no access to coal, iron, and oil. Hence, the push outward for territory and the inward struggles for power. Japan had a population far in excess of what its small island territory could support. Hence, the building up of its military forces to take over stray territories that were unprotected.

Suddenly the world was thrown out of balance. No nation

<sup>1</sup> Harry R. Rudin, “The Problem of Security,” in *God and the Nations*, p. 29. Ed. Paul Newton Poling. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1950.

by itself could solve its economic problems; and yet each nation, in order to survive, had to try. And paradoxically enough, even as each nation's problems mounted to catastrophic dimensions, the slogan of self-determination became more and more each nation's passionate rallying cry. How to be independent of other nations and yet live: this was the unanswerable question that statesmen tried to answer, with the result that where reason was powerless unreason took over.

“So great were the problems that mild measures proved inadequate; only extreme measures appeared likely to succeed. . . . Hence arose the extreme political parties of frightened men—parties of the right and of the left, Fascist, Nazi, or Communist, Labor or Conservative. Parties of the middle ground, like the liberal party in England, tended to vanish into the right and left wings. . . . The armed and uniformed political party became the order of the day in more than one continental country. . . . In Fascist Italy, in Nazi Germany, and in Communist Russia one sees the regular practice of calculated brutality whereby desperate and unscrupulous totalitarianism strove for power and sought to keep itself in power.”<sup>2</sup>

Today we think of communism as the cause of our troubles. But yesterday, it was fascism, nazism, and Japanese imperialism. When we recall the sudden dislocation of the world's life, we see that all of these have been merely symptoms of a disease the complicated cause of which goes deeper than themselves. This deeper cause, writes Rudin, “was the necessity of trying to find a solution for economic problems within

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

narrow national areas where resources were quite inadequate for the needs of the population.”<sup>3</sup> The writer concludes his analysis with three sentences that would seem to go to the heart of the whole contemporary problem: “The *ism* meriting most condemnation is nationalism, for it explains why people turned to Fascism, Nazism, or Communism. Just as tolerance, freedom, and democracy came with the internationalism of the nineteenth century, so did their opposites come with the nationalism of the twentieth. . . . Extreme ideologies and their accompanying aggression will remain with us until something positive is done toward easing the access of all peoples to the resources and markets of the world.” This was what Norman Angell tried to tell us in the years after the First World War; but a world that *talked* about internationalism while it busily and intently practiced nationalism, could not listen.

#### IV

The clue concept we need to keep in mind, then, is that of *a world thrown out of balance*. How can we now not only restore such balance as we once had but move forward to a more dynamic world-in-balance? Putting aside for the moment the immediate threat of communism, this is the central problem we need to be concerned about.

We might approach the concept of a “world-in-balance” by noting what balance means in the life of the individual. It is obvious that an individual’s freedom can never be something by itself. It must exist in a wide setting of freedoms. Thus an individual who is free to do what he pleases in his

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

own house but is surrounded by a community of thieves and thugs is clearly not free. Only if he can go beyond his house; can walk the streets unafraid; can work where he pleases and worship as he pleases; only, in short, as he lives in a wide framework of freedoms is he free.

A balanced life, in short, is one which is *in healthy relation to all the factors essential to its continuance and growth*. What is basically at fault with our world today is that it has managed, in one way and another, to get its parts *out of healthy relation to one another*.

Communism, for example, has set apart the "working class"; has magnified it into sole importance and power; and within the framework of this single class has tried to build a living freedom. Fascism and Nazism set apart the privileged, possessing classes—the white as against the colored, the Christian as against the Jew, the rich as against the poor—magnified these into sole importance and power, and within the framework of these selected portions of mankind tried to build a triumphant freedom. Imperialism set apart the single land-hungry nation, magnifying it into power-over-other-nations-and-peoples, and tried within the framework of this acquisitive power-unit to build its security and wealth. Creators of high tariffs set apart those groups at home that were to be favored for "protection," magnified them into special privilege, and tried to build wealth and sanity for a nation that also included the underprivileged and unprotected.

In each case, the selecting out of the part and the treating of it as if it were the whole has thrown life out of balance. In contrast to this, life-in-dynamic-balance would be the con-



dition where all parts *function together with mutual benefit*.

If we recall the nineteenth century, with its free-ranging movement of persons and goods (imperfect as that still was), we begin to see some of the conditions necessary for a world-in-balance. To a person who had lived long within his own nation, free and unrestricted travel within other nations was, in those days, a "balancing" experience. It gave him a chance for healthy comparison, new valuations, better understanding. By contrast, in these present days, the denial to millions of people of travel beyond national boundaries—the peremptory closing of the spaces of the world—makes for mental and emotional unbalance. People who are now compelled to remain within their nations, or who, if they venture forth, find themselves under suspicion, are denied the former chance to have their national experience widened and enriched. They may, if they are permitted, get certain mind-enlarging experiences from books or reports of travelers. But if they are denied even these—as they are in certain "curtained" countries—they inevitably develop the unbalance of ignorance and mind closure. This breeds its various symptoms: prejudice, intolerance, fear of the foreigner, hatred of the foreigner, exaggerated and misplaced patriotism. For health and sanity, therefore, it is no small thing to have a world in which men can move freely beyond national boundaries. Instead of the unbalance of mind closure, they tend, in such a world, to achieve the sanity of a balanced outlook upon men and life.

The same, even in greater measure, applies to the free and unhindered movement of goods throughout the world. When a people lack something that is needed for the full carrying on of their life, they are to that extent thrown out of balance.

If, for example, they lack food, and if other lands with surpluses are prevented from selling them food at fair exchange, they will suffer from a kind of perpetual semistarvation, which, in turn, will bring about physical and psychological deterioration. Or a people may need machinery with which to extract metals or to manufacture needed goods. If they are prevented from receiving these from the nations that have them in excess, they are thrown out of balance. Potentialities of development that might otherwise come to fruition remain unfulfilled.

Free exchange of goods is perhaps the greatest of all the balancers of world life. Where barriers are so erected that exchange is made difficult or impossible—through quota systems, cartels, high tariffs, embargoes, imperialistic restrictions, totalitarian autarchy—the life of the world is thrown dangerously out of gear. Security goes; fear enters; hostilities multiply. Pruning hooks are sharpened into spears; and the war of men against men is on.

Here, then, it would seem, we find the central challenge to whatever maturity of mind we can muster: *how can we work our way out of a variously unbalanced world into a world-in-dynamic-balance?*

For our time and generation, this means *how can we work our way out of the closed worlds we have unwisely created*: out of the closed world of sovereign states into the open world of the commonwealth of men; out of the closed worlds of economic monopoly, restriction, and exploitation into the open world of economic freedom; out of the closed worlds of nationalized science and literature into the open world of men's common explorings; out of the closed worlds of racial

and class snobbery and oppression into the open world of men's dignity and friendliness. Wherever we have built up barriers of artificial separation, we have thrown life out of balance.

## V

In the Icelandic *Elder Edda*, we find a description of what the world will be like as it approaches its ending:

An axe-age, a sword-age, shields shall be cloven;  
A wind-age, a wolf-age, ere the world totters.<sup>4</sup>

A world is in unbalance and goes toward its ending where part is arrayed against part. No deeper or more urgent need exists, then, than to create a world in which part supports part.

Bringing the world into dynamic balance, however, is not some far-off undertaking to be worked at only by politicians, global economists, and international bankers. It is something to be worked at wherever, in any situation, life is out of balance or can be helped into balance.

In recent years, we have learned much about how we can, and must, help life into balance at its beginnings, in childhood. We must, as we now say, give the child a sense of "belonging." This means that we must give him the feeling that all the relationships he enters are *supportive*. He will not then be unbalanced by fear and a sense of rejection. He will not need to turn hostile. He can enter freely and happily into a balanced give-and-take of life from which no one is excluded.

<sup>4</sup> *The Prose Edda*, p. 78. By Snorri Sturluson, translated from the Icelandic with an introduction by Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur. Oxford University Press, 1929.

To bring this much of balance into life is within the province of every parent or other adult within a family.

We have learned, likewise, how the child must be helped into balance during his school years. The school must not be a place of terror and compulsion but one where the child is inducted happily and understandingly into relationship with the skills, cultural memories, and values he needs to know. Education, as we have come to comprehend it now, is properly a process of helping the child to grow into balanced relations with the world in which he functions. Ignorance, lack of skill, misinformation, hostile relations with teachers and others, the inculcation of local prejudices and dishonesties puts him out of balance with his world. Here, again, everyone who is in any way involved with the education of the child has his part to play in bringing balance into life.

We find this same need for creating balanced relationships in the areas of work and earning. In these areas, life is now far too often destructively out of balance. For millions of men and women it is a treadmill, yielding few basic satisfactions, encouraging little growth in the total person, and, by its insecurity, engendering fears and hostilities. For many others, it is a way of frenetic ambition; a means to power and possessions that as often as not set the possessors apart from and against their fellows. Far too rarely is the work life a life-in-balance, where the individual is in happy relation to his work; and where, in and through his work, he is in helpful relation to his fellow men. This is the better condition of the work life for which men have long striven and still continue to strive. Where this condition exists, there is, as in the good home, a sense of "belonging"—of fellowship in work and earning; a

pride in being "part of"; a willingness to give as well as take. It is out of the vast amount of sheer unbalance in the economic life that the major hostilities of men have arisen. The communisms and fascisms are the exacerbated symptoms of dissatisfactions created by such unbalance. Wherever, therefore, the economic life can be helped into balance, we do a major job in diminishing the fascisms and communisms.

Life must be kept in balance, above all, in the areas of our basic assumptions about life. The most dangerously divisive of all the claims men make is the claim to some infallible and completely authoritative truth. All the fanaticisms are of this sort, whether economic, political, racial, religious, or otherwise. Nazism's racial fanaticism, by its sheer dogmatic assertiveness, placed itself outside reason. In fact, in its pseudo-biologies and pseudo-anthropologies, it manufactured its own special "reasons" to support its fanaticism, displacing the disciplined conclusions of science by the undisciplined say-so of its fanatic hatred. Communism's fanaticism is of similar nature. Its unshaken belief in its own irrefragable truth makes the balanced give-and-take of reasonable negotiation almost, if not completely, impossible.

Religion has, from time to time, suffered from this same unbalance of a fanatically assumed absolutism. Wherever a religion claims that it is the "one and only true religion"—which has been standard practice among religions throughout the ages—it throws the spiritual life of man seriously out of balance. The "one and only" assumes heaven-sponsored superiority over the others. The others, similarly confident of their spiritual insights, resent the superiority. In older times, the result was the ferocity of religious wars. In these days, the

result is a deplorable dividing and weakening of men's spiritual efforts. Men hate and fight one another's creeds instead of hating and fighting the enemies of men's better future.

Absolutism, wherever we find it, is a "sin against the Holy Spirit" of man's rational nature; for it is the essence of man that he is a growing, learning, still imperfect mind. For him, in any major area of life, to assume that he has infallible, final, and authoritative truth is to put him out of rational balance with life.

Thus, wherever there is controversy, the balanced mind begins always with the acknowledgment of its own possibility of error. Whether the controversy be religious, economic, political, or what not, the balanced mind is prepared to say at the outset: "You may be right or I may be right; in all probability each of us is both right and wrong; let's explore."

The mind is in dangerous unbalance that can say only, "I alone am right." This goes for many minds in today's world of fanatic oppositions.

## VI

In the foregoing, then, we note what needs to be our over-all human undertaking. In all the areas of life—home, school, church, business, industry, government—the aim must be to create the mutually supportive relationships that put life in balance.

Today, this over-all need comes to focus with a more than usual urgency in two special areas: (1) in the relationships of sovereign states to one another; and (2) in the relationships of advanced to backward peoples. In both these areas

the unbalancing principle of "going it alone" and the still more unbalancing principle of "going it against" have brought near ruin to the world. Out of the near ruin have come the fascisms, nazisms, and communisms.

As to the first of these special areas, the Federal Council of Churches, in 1942, in its Guiding Principles, made a clear statement that seems to sum up what most intelligent people have come at last to believe: "A world of irresponsible, competing and unrestrained national sovereignties, whether acting alone or in alliance or coalition, is a world of international anarchy."

Here, then, would seem to be one especially urgent major task of today: *to overcome the anarchy of nations by creating a world of co-operating nations*. How to do this is the century's challenge to our political intelligence. It is a problem still unsolved, but happily, it would seem, in process of being solved. The solution lies largely in the creation of a new climate of opinion—a new attitude of world-mindedness. Toward the creation of such a new climate of opinion it is obvious that every individual can play his part. Before statesmen can build a one-world-in-balance, the minds of men must be open to welcome and support such a world. Above all, the mature individual will find ways at hand to discourage the continuation of the older separative, isolationist ways of thinking. His voice and vote can be enlisted in opposition to the pseudo-patriotism of chauvinistic nationalism and in support of the more genuine patriotism of a united mankind.

As to the second of these areas, we borrow a sentence from James Warburg's chapter on "World Recovery and Point Four": "The privileged peoples of the world are only just be-

ginning to realize that their favored position is endangered by the condition of the underprivileged.”<sup>5</sup>

This would seem to point to a second urgent major task that has newly come upon us: namely, *to overcome the discrepancy between the “haves” and the “have-nots”*—the one-third of the human race that are well-fed and the two-thirds that are in semistarvation; the one-third that have science, medicine, education, self-government as their favored portion, and the two-thirds that have as their portion plague, disease, famine, ignorance, unending toil, and oppression.

This task can be undertaken from either of two motives: (1) from anxiety about our own safety; or (2) from a sense of human obligation. Undertaken in the first way, it becomes a task of forestalling the murderous hatreds of overwhelming millions now stirring into revolution by quickly bettering the conditions of their life. Undertaken in the second way, it becomes a task of responding to the call of human decency: of doing things we ought long since to have done to remove oppression and alleviate deprivations.

If we act from the first motive, the task becomes a challenge to our technical and political ingenuity; if from the second, it becomes a challenge to our often-expressed concern about human brotherhood. In any event, whatever our motive, this is a task we cannot now escape. The world of the underprivileged—of whatever race or religion or color or locality—has become our world.

These two tasks, the one challenging our political intelligence and the other, at its best, challenging our moral in-

<sup>5</sup> In *God and the Nations*, ed. Paul Newton Poling, p. 89. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1950.



tegrity, fall into the basic pattern of creating a world-in-balance.

It can now be seen that the enemy in our midst—the arch unbalancer of life—is *separatism*, whether it be called fascism, nazism, imperialism, nationalism, racism, or chauvinism, and whether it be Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, Argentinian, American, or any other. Wherever, in short, the aim is to divide—nation from nation, class from class, elite from vulgar, the racially superior from the racially inferior, the privileged from the underprivileged—life is thrown out of balance. If, in addition, the methods are those that through ignorance, or hatred, or what not set men apart from one another—Iron Curtains, fanatical absolutes, irresponsible smearings, false accusations, poisoned propaganda—life is thrown out of balance.

The business of the mature individual, then, is clear. It is to join up with the forces that create dynamic life-in-balance. To oppose communism, yet to allow the world to continue in its present unbalance, is merely to encourage the triumph either of communism itself or of some other later form of aberrant protest. Communism and the rest are merely symptoms of the disease of unbalance. The mature mind tries to get to the wide-spreading roots of the disease.

## F I F T E E N

### ALTERNATIVE TO DISASTER

TODAY two contrasted visions of man compete for supremacy: (1) the vision of *man made safe within a Plan*; and (2) the vision of *man made able to evolve plans*. The competition between these two has, in our time, become sharp and bitter. As our temperaments, interests, and knowledge dictate we align ourselves with the one or the other.

On the political plane, these two visions are embodied in the competing systems of totalitarianism and democracy. Yesterday they were embodied in a number of similar competing systems. In religion, for example, they were expressed in the contrasted systems of priestly and prophetic religion—the one with its finality and completeness of creed, ritual, and plan of salvation, into which the individual worshiper (priest or lay person) fitted snugly and securely; the other with its adventurous unpredictability of discovery and renovating insight. Again, they were expressed in competing world views

—the Ptolemaic, with its small, describable universe, of earth at the center and heavens well-arranged around it; the other with its wide-flung heavens in which stars could be lost and never found again, in which the soul of man had no central standing-place, but in which an unimagined destiny was at work. Later they were expressed in the competing systems of creationism and evolutionism—the one with its world made in six days by a Deity that, pronouncing the work finished, rested from His labors; the other with its world moving from small, ragged beginnings into later stages that were forever, in their turn, moving beyond their unfinished state into something they seemed still to have it in them to become.

All through man's history, there has been a competition between the safe and the adventurous; the fully formed and the to-be-formed; between the "pattern set for all men" and the glimmer of a gleam for men to follow.

From another point of view, the competition has been between the deductive propensity in man and the inductive. The deductive propensity must have the truth wholly and comfortably within its grasp. Then it can reel out particular conclusions according to need. The inductive follows intimations and clues, gets lost, finds its way again, and eventually, if it is lucky, *comes upon* one partial truth and then another.

From an emotional standpoint, the competition has been between arrogance and humility. The mind that pronounces authoritative truth, if it runs true to form, has no doubts of its ability to grasp truth in its finality. On the other hand, the mind that keeps the pathways of truth open is humble before possibilities not yet disclosed. "Truth," wrote Radhakrishnan,

in this spirit of humility, "is always greater than man's reach; there is more in God than we know."<sup>1</sup>

## II

These strands of difference are highlighted in the present competition between political totalitarianism and democracy. Political totalitarianism comes with Plan in hand. To its own passionate belief, it has "the way, the truth, and the life." In fact, it announces to the world that it has the sole way of human salvation. All other ways are "of the Devil"—capitalism, liberalism, democracy. With a complete assurance of rightness, it calls for an utter surrender and obedience.

In political totalitarianism, therefore, as in religious, the primary virtue is orthodoxy: repeating the authorized words; genuflecting before the authorized heroes; reviling the authorized enemies; doing the authorized will of Party or Leader; avoiding unauthorized thoughts and actions. Political totalitarianism, in short, comes with its list of prohibited "sins" and prescribed "virtues"; and in the name of its total truth demands a total surrender and obedience.

Otherwise excommunication. In political totalitarianism, this means liquidation. The deviating heretic is wiped out—expunged—annihilated. Only the true believer has the right to exist. In political totalitarianism, in short, there is no recognition of an "unalienable" right to life, much less to liberty and happiness. The right to life exists only where there is obedience to the prescribed doctrine and authority. Liberty, within strict limits, and happiness, are likewise per-

<sup>1</sup> *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, p. 318. Oxford, London. 1942.

mitted only where there is obedience to doctrine and authority.

Such a concept of the total Plan moves, by strict logic, to a distrust of the many.

“ . . . the few shall save  
The many, or the many are to fall—  
Still to be wrangling in a noisy grave.”<sup>2</sup>

This, in all times, has been the view of the priestly-minded. Only a few can enter the holy of holies. The masses must stand on the outside. Only the few can say the word; the masses must listen.

Totalitarianism, in short, whether religious or political (or educational, artistic, or economic, for that matter) has no faith in the power of ordinary men and women to evolve truths by which they can live. Totalitarianism has no patience with mere partial truths. It has *the Truth*. Truth is holy; and only the superior mind can grasp it whole.

There is still relevance in the story Anne O'Hare McCormick told many years ago of her visits to Mussolini, Hitler, and Roosevelt. She asked each of them, in effect, how it was that he seemed able to rise to the special needs of his time and people. Mussolini characteristically puffed out his chest: “*I came!*” When she asked the question of Adolf Hitler, he turned on his “mystical” look: “*I was sent!*” When she asked Roosevelt, he laughed: “Well, *somebody* had to do it.”

The totalitarian mind has no faith in the garden variety of men and women. It is convinced that they have in themselves

<sup>2</sup> Edwin Arlington Robinson, from “Demos,” in *Collected Poems*, p. 472. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930.

no power of leadership. Nietzsche called them the *viel zu viele*: the many too many. Their proper destiny is to be told what to do. What their leaders tell them is, of course, "for their own good"—naturally. If, then, certain freedoms are denied them, it is because these freedoms may tempt them to do things that may harm them: like reading forbidden books; talking with forbidden people; listening to forbidden music; going to forbidden plays; hearing forbidden speeches; turning on forbidden programs; taking up with forbidden science; listening to forbidden propaganda; marrying into a forbidden race or ideology.

The masses, according to this view (or, in religion, the communicants), must be constantly and meticulously guarded against such deviations. For their own protection, therefore, they must be kept in leading strings. In short, their condition must be one of perpetual dependence—never out of sight of their leaders; carefully directed as to what they should and should not do, what they should and should not think.

Seen in this light, totalitarianism of whatever sort—religious, political, economic, educational—is a plan for *fixating the many in immaturity*. It is a plan for preventing the majority of men and women from growing up. In short, it is the philosophy and practice of the authoritarian parent-child relationship transferred to the adult world.

### III

This can be made to seem wholly beneficent. Most men and women are fairly limited in their outlook, since they have neither the time nor the inclination to become informed about matters of wide human concern. Hence it might not

seem unreasonable that the few should be guides and leaders of those who have no chance to know.

But there is a subtle and not always recognized danger in this. Exercising authority over others for their own good has a way of being transformed, by subtle stages, into *getting satisfaction* out of exercising authority. At the same time, it tends to generate contempt for those who are kept in leading strings: a contempt for the weak and incompetent that by well-known psychological stages becomes in turn a hatred of the "stupid masses." Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is a textbook illustration of this "rake's progress" from a conviction of God-given leadership to a disgusted sense of the incapacity and untrustworthiness of the masses.

That this "rake's progress" is fairly typical would seem to be abundantly proved by the fact that the most marked characteristic of all totalitarian regimes, however well intentioned at the outset, is a self-justified *use of terror*. Religious totalitarians have used the terrors of hell and of excommunication—"You have to keep them frightened"; economic totalitarians have used the terrors of firing and the blacklist—"Men won't work unless they are afraid"; political totalitarians have used the terrors of the secret police, expulsion from the party, the labor camp, and liquidation. This almost inevitable use of terror would seem to imply two things: first, that the parent-child relationship called for in totalitarian systems is, by and large, not one of love, but of *love of authority*; second, that the "parental" aim in totalitarianism is not to help child-adults to grow into mature wisdom, but rather to keep them intimidated and in their place, so that those in power will have free rein.

It is doubtful, for example, that when Calvin, the religious totalitarian, burned the "heretic" Servetus at the stake, he burned him for his own good and because he loved him. Calvin had taken on the authority of God; he obviously loved that authority; and in the grim exercise of it he put to death an intelligent and sensitive man who disagreed with him. Cotton Mather, officer of the Massachusetts theocracy, drowned the witches of Salem not because he loved them, as a parent might love and yet chastise his misguided children, but because with an authority vested in him by his totalitarian God, he hated them into destruction. Torquemada, given absolute power over heretics by the Catholic queen, Isabella, put to death the thousand and more he adjudged guilty because he hated their dissident views.

In every totalitarian system, the right to lead the masses turns easily and almost inevitably into the right to hate and destroy them if this becomes necessary to the maintenance of power. We have seen this happen in fascism, nazism, and communism. Mussolini's very manner of driving through the streets and along the roadways of Italy, running down anyone, man or beast, that happened to be in his way, is symbolic of the arrogance and contempt of the self-appointed "leader." Hitler's order to shoot to death a whole city of people for the offense of one, and his screaming demand that the entire Jewish race be annihilated, were the antics of a "leader" grown mad with hate and power. Stalin's willingness to send millions of his people to torture and death without trial and his use of the infamous labor camps have been horrible revelations of a totalitarian "leader" corrupted by power.

Totalitarianism, as of today, is the way of the world's dis-



aster. Because it has no faith in the masses of men, its guidance of them is inevitably misguidance. Placing the majority in complete dependence, it fixates them in immaturity. It makes them into permanent child-adults—powerless to have minds of their own; trained only to follow; made to repeat slogans and stereotypes. Most disastrously of all, it keeps their loyalty alive not by visions of a better world for all men but by a whipped-up hatred of those they are ordered to hate.

## I V

It is difficult to say something new and exciting about the contrasted vision of man, for it comes with no mind-arresting Total Plan. It comes with nothing more arresting than the humdrum permission to all men to fumble along.

This permission, however, is grounded on something that the totalitarian vision does not have: a stubborn belief in man. The vision it has is that of unawakened potentialities resident in all men and women. Ignorant, uninformed, apathetic, self-centered, at times cruel, greedy, short-sighted, intolerant, irritating beyond words—people individually and in the mass are all or some of these. When we say this, however, we are only speaking of people *as we see them*. This is what they are now; or at least this is what they look as if they were. If we stop there, we can, with some apparent justification, call them swine—stupid, hopeless, inert, needing to be led. But stopping there—as do all the arrogant despisers of men—is to fail to achieve the saving intimation that there is a potential in human beings which, if given a proper chance, may come into powerful reality.

Sandburg's phrase, "The People, Yes," is the stubborn affirmation of a belief (for which there may as yet be slight evidence) that the people have it in them to rise above their present selves; in brief, that they have it in them to evolve, out of the slow-forming wisdoms of their experience, not indeed a Master Plan, but workable plans.

Such a belief requires in those who hold it a long patience and a willingness to be many times disappointed; for the freedom given a people to fumble along carries with it the possibility that the fumbling may often be backward as well as forward.

## V

Such a scheme of life, where there is no finished Plan and no Total Authority, but only the freedom of all men to try and fail, to fail and sometimes to succeed, has at least this marked advantage: there is in it a minimum chance for the growth of hatred. Hatred thrives where people are urged to distinguish between those who are inside and those who are outside the pale. An ideological Plan, like Hitler's nazism or the Politburo's communism (or like theology's "thirty-nine articles") is an enclosure, a psychological walled-in space. For those who are inside, it is easy to consider themselves the redeemed and the outsiders the unredeemed. It is easy, then, for them to think of the outsiders as enemies, and to hate them as possible destroyers of the enclosure and of themselves who are within it. On the other hand, where no ideological enclosure divides the right people from the wrong, but where freedom is ungrudgingly given to all *to find out what seems*

*best*, there is the maximum chance for tolerance, friendliness, helpfulness.

These are the frontier virtues we like to recall. On the frontier, there were no absolute, preordained structurings of life. Men had to explore, to go scouting ahead, to test out locations, climates, and soils. Their approach was experimental. They had to evolve their plans as they went along, meeting each situation with such expertness and wisdom as they could command. In the pioneer society, therefore, a neighbor was an asset, not a labeled adherent or partisan. He was a fellow man trying, as you were yourself trying, to tame some small piece of the wilderness and make a go of life. You could call on him for help and he could call on you. Putting heads and hands together, you could get things done; and while you were doing them, you could talk together and, in all probability, like each other.

This, it would seem, is the better picture of life: a going out into the unknown; a keeping of one's eyes open and one's mind alert; a courage to try things out; the lending of a hand to a neighbor and the not being too suspicious or too high-and-mighty to ask him to lend a hand. This is a better picture of life than the regimented "security" of a Master Plan, with submission to a creed and a code and the continuous hating of those one is commanded to hate. Such freedom, however, is now being appallingly threatened. Today's war of the world is a civil war between those who would keep the mind free and those who would compel it into a pattern.

At the turn of the century we all thought that the battle for liberty of conscience was won—for keeps—except possibly in a

few 'backward' countries. . . . And in a sense that is still true. The catch is, however, that the frontiers of Russia have now engulfed vast areas and millions of human beings who were once free, like ourselves.

Nor is this the only encroachment. . . . Dominant religious groups in certain European and Latin-American countries, in the Middle East, in India, and in Africa, have ignored or actively challenged the 'inalienable' right of mankind to religious freedom.<sup>3</sup>

The threat, however, is not only to liberty of conscience but even to the basic liberty to be alive:

Upwards of 3,000,000 peasant proprietors in the Ukraine, their women and children, were murdered by the Soviet regime in the man-made famine and mass deportations resulting from the farm collectivization program in the early 1930's. This crime was beyond belief. It was not believed. Not a single authoritative voice in the civilized world was raised in protest; and indeed, those few persons who called attention to this immense crime were vilified.

It is now apparent that another great crime against humanity is taking place. The middle-class and intellectual elements of the states behind the Iron Curtain are being systematically exterminated. . . .<sup>4</sup>

More specifically:

(1) A ruthless purge is under way in Hungary, where merchants, small landowners, and members of the professional classes are being arrested, imprisoned, and deported by the

<sup>3</sup> From an open letter of the World Council of Churches, Sept. 10, 1951.

<sup>4</sup> "An Appeal to the American People." Statement Issued by the Iron Curtain Refugee Campaign of the International Rescue Committee, Inc. New York.

thousands. It is reported on the best authority that over 100,000 citizens of the capital city of Budapest alone have been seized and sent to the provinces or to slave labor camps.

(2) The Roumanian Government is uprooting all inhabitants from the 30-mile wide strip along the Yugoslav border. Trains are packed with uprooted families, the aged, the infirm, and the young are being routed to slave labor camps.

(3) Tens of thousands of "unessential" people have been liquidated in Poland and Czechoslovakia where cities like Warsaw, Cracow, Prague and Brno are partially emptied. Middle classes and anybody over thirty-five, too old to "make the great change" to Communist thinking, are potential victims.

(4) The Bulgarian Government is rounding up tens of thousands of persons on the charge of collaboration with the outlawed Social Democratic parties. Some of these human beings are simply dumped in the neighboring countryside. Many are being sent to forced labor in the mines, from which few ever return.

These crimes beggar description. Yet, modern man has become so inured to brutality and terror on a grand scale that they pass almost unnoticed. Were it not for the thousands of men and women, some with their families, who press across the Iron Curtain to escape Communist proscription, little or nothing would be known of the crimes. At least 1,000 men, women and children each week cross the barbed wire borders to the West. These men and women have fled at the risk of their lives. Each has chosen to hazard escape rather than to live in slavery. They have come to the West with nothing save the clothes on their backs. Most have found a dead-end. The Western world appears indifferent to their misery.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

The reason, it would seem, is that this fantastic *tyranny of the Pattern* is so new to our experience that it passes comprehension. We are actually unable as yet to conceive of a human policy that can deny even the right to exist to those who happen by chance to be outside the Pattern and the Plan.

## VI

This is the deepest cleft that has ever been driven between conflicting segments of the human race. Wars upon wars have set men against one another. But these wars of the past have been merely trials of strength, with the tacit assumption on the part of the contestants that when the trial of strength was over, matters would be adjusted among all concerned. They would all continue to inhabit the same earth and to go on about their business.

Not so in this present civil war of the world. The clamping down on all dissenters; the ruthless removal, enslavement, and destruction of all those who chance to belong to a proscribed class or race or occupation or belief, is indication that this is a war of a different order. *This is a war to force all men into a prescribed pattern of life.*

On the part of the democracies, then, it becomes a war to defend the right of all men to create their own patterns of life. This is the bitterest and most thoroughgoing opposition that can exist in the human scene: on the one hand, *complete power over the minds of men*; on the other, *the right of men to their own minds*. If the one side wins, the other side does not merely lose; it is expunged, annihilated. There can be no compromise between a doctrine of a *total compulsory patterning of men's lives* and a belief in *freedom for growth*.

There can be no compromise between the two. It must be noted, however, that we are here speaking of the irreconcilability of two *doctrines*, or *beliefs*, not of the irreconcilability of certain political entities, like Russia and the United States, Czechoslovakia and the Western nations. This is a profoundly important distinction to keep in mind, for it may hold the clue to the resolution of this deepest conflict of all times.

Russia is today the chief proponent and the chief practitioner of the doctrine of *collectivized man*. Could strong enough pressures, however, be brought to bear, or significant enough changes made in the world outside Russia, it is conceivable that Russia might be persuaded to modify the stubborn ruthlessness with which it now practices this doctrine. Put in another way, Russia may quite conceivably continue to hold its doctrine of the collectivized man as an over-all theory that it preaches in season and out; but through various developments in the world, Russia may well come to the point where it no longer, with a strict and undeviating completeness, "practices what it preaches."

The hope, perhaps a faint one at present, would be that as life gets variously readjusted throughout the world—as our emerging wisdoms, for example, turn national enmities into friendships, and thus make a mutually productive interchange more widely possible—Russia and her satellites may reluctantly fall into line. While still officially maintaining their doctrine of collectivized man they may unofficially be willing to tolerate men as they are and do such business with them as seems possible. Once this even begins to happen, it means that certain types of freedom-hungry minds behind the Iron Curtain—minds that are now ruthlessly suppressed—will have

to be allowed again at least a marginal existence, and can begin to exert once more their redeeming influence from the inside. If, in brief, to put the matter sharply, it can be made more profitable for Russia to renew even tenuous relations with the Western world than to hew to the strict, unrelenting line of its political orthodoxy, then the processes by which freedom has been worked into existence in the human past can again begin to operate. Those processes are of two kinds: contacts between cultures, with all that these contacts imply in the way of leavening influence; and the toleration of certain minimal differences within even the most tyrannical culture, with all that such toleration implies in the way of the re-animation of men's minds.

The important thing we need to remember is that *people* are never as bad—or as good—as the *doctrines* they profess. Individuals are mixtures of good and bad. So likewise are groups and nations. To conceive of all Russians—or even of the Russian government—as irrevocably committed in practice to the doctrinal belief in wholly collectivized man would be as great a mistake as to conceive of Christians as wholly committed in practice to their belief in the brotherhood of man. Doctrines tend to take on both a simplicity and a fixity not found in human beings. Monstrous, therefore, as a doctrine may be, where there are humans there is hope.

## VII

The strategy of democracy, then, is to work for humans—in the hope that practices will get adjusted as humans become more generously and widely human. The most effective force that the democracies can bring to bear to change totalitarian



governments and totalitarian peoples is the power they possess (but do not always exercise) *to help people to be free*. Increasing the number of free people in the world is an undertaking that must at least run parallel to our effort to increase armies designed to keep people free.

In the savage state of conflict at which we now are, armies to "contain" totalitarian tyranny are obviously necessary. But even as we build and use such armies, the psychological fact must not be forgotten that the military way of defeating or "containing" an enemy is always the hard way—and usually, in long-range terms, an unsuccessful way. This hard way may, indeed, have regrettably to be undertaken; but the difficulties it raises need to be kept in mind. A nation challenged by military force does not characteristically fold up and yield. On the contrary, it resists; and to make its resistance effective, it determinedly builds up all the power it can possibly command. Trying to win by force, then, presupposes always that the counter force is at its highest pitch—and can still be outdone even at its highest pitch. This is why the military way is always the hardest. The winning has to be done against a heightened counter-will to win.

This, in short, is the strategy of head-on collision: the irresistible force trying to overcome the immovable object. There is, however, even in warfare, another possible strategy—that of weakening the enemy from within: sowing seeds of doubt; making his resistance less because he finds less he is called upon to resist. If in this present civil war, cold or hot, we could come to see that we are fighting, not an *immutable doctrine called communism* but *mutable people who call themselves communists*, we could set about doing things that

might eventually make their armed enmity seem even to themselves foolish, needless, and impractical. In short, the most disarming strategy of the democratic peoples is *to do to the utmost of their power what their democratic beliefs require them to do.*

It is now a commonplace observation that whenever and wherever the democratic peoples do what goes counter to their democratic professions, communist peoples take on added self-assurance and strength. Western imperialism, for example, with its long tradition of treating the world's dark-skinned millions as inferior and without rights to their own institutions and natural resources, has, to the communists, been worth a hundred thousand battalions. It has been their chief weapon of persuasion among the world's dispossessed. White supremacy, wherever practiced—at home or abroad—is, to the communists, worth additional battalions. Wherever, in short, democratic peoples still put the racist assumption into practice, they literally give tanks and bombs to the enemy. It is an ironic commentary that many Americans who hunt down stray communists in their local communities feel no compunction about clinging to racial views that are making communists by the million on the world front.

By various omissions and commissions, also, democratic peoples have permitted exploitation and created poverty—those twin destroyers of the freedom and opportunity that the democratic nations themselves proclaim. Wherever exploitation and poverty exist, communists become more self-assured, more violent in their denunciation, and more powerful to tell the world that the true way of life is not to be found in the way of “democratic freedom.” The most effective way

to drain the strength of the communist enemy is to do the things that freedom calls for.

This, then, is the alternative to disaster: *to make more freedom*. The emphasis needs to be, not merely upon *defending* something supremely precious—a policy that has only negative strength—but rather upon *extending* it.

Fifty or a hundred years from now, some historian may make the discovery that in the mid-twentieth century the democratic peoples of the world became suddenly aware that if they did not act pretty quickly to make more freedom in the world, they would lose even what they had. Examining the things that those mid-twentieth-century peoples began to do to remove old enslavements and bring new opportunities into life, he may come to the surprised conclusion that in those years, when tyrannies were at their height of terror, the democratic peoples learned a new way of warfare—that of defeating the enemy by doing the things that took away his psychological weapons.

## S I X T E E N

### NEW FORCES AT WORK

WHAT WE do within our world depends always upon what we think about our world. If we think of the world we live in as pretty hopeless, we respond with gestures of hopelessness; if, on the contrary, we see hope, we tend to respond in ways that carry forward the hope.

Obviously, to think of the world as hopeless—as many people do today—hardly helps in the maturing of the self. “What’s the use?” “What can *I* do?” “The world is going to smash anyway.” To think in this manner is to be thrown back upon ourselves. In one type of person this may take the form of a withdrawal into a world beyond this world; in another, the form of deep pessimism; in another, the cynical form of “getting while the getting is good,” since “tomorrow we die.”

If, on the other hand, we think of the world we live in as one in which something hopefully new is coming into being, we develop a different attitude. There are then things for

us to do. We can move out beyond ourselves into a contributing relationship to the world-in-the-making.

Are we at a breakdown point in our human history? There are indeed many signs seeming to indicate that we are living in a period of cultural disintegration and collapse. Forces that have held men together—like community feeling, world neighborliness, a warm sense of confidence in people, a habit of moving freely about the world and of being hospitably treated—would seem, like worn-out elastic, to have snapped. Far more apparent, now, are the forces that antagonize and divide.

If this were all that could be said, we might well close on a note of despair and set about the uninspiring task of coming to terms with the approaching doom. There seems good reason, however, to believe that this is not all that can be said; that on the contrary, the age we live in, deeply as disintegrative forces have pulverized its life, is one not so much of progressive and hopeless disintegration as of a newly forming integration.

## II

Something is happening in our culture that appears to have been little noticed, yet that is of profound psychological and social significance. It is the phenomenon among us of *emerging agreements*. These are tentative and uncertain as yet; but the fact that they are occurring is the most hopeful sign that our culture's vitality is not yet at an end.

One mark of health in a culture, as we have come to know, is a certain power of men to talk comprehendingly together; to come to some measure of mutual understanding; and to

work together for common ends. The more widely such mental and emotional "togetherness" extends—providing it is not a static, rigid, imposed togetherness—the healthier the culture. A culture is at a high level of health when the forces that thus bind men freely and intelligently together outweigh those that pull them apart.

We might, therefore, offer a psychosocial observation: When, in a seemingly disintegrating culture (as ours appears to be), a great many people in different walks of life, of different ages, and of different backgrounds begin to come to some new, constructive agreements and to do some new, constructive things about the situations they are in, we may suspect that a new cultural integration is on the way.

The fact that new agreements are taking shape among us is, of course, no guarantee that these point to an emerging social pattern healthier than the one that is disintegrating. The agreements among the Nazis are a case in point. They were viciously regressive, not forward-looking. Significantly, however, they were *imposed* agreements formulated and fostered by an authoritarian regime. They did not, so to speak, grow up gradually out of the natural soil of men's daily experience.

The emerging agreements to which we can now look with hope, in a time of disintegration like our own, are of a different order. Out of the living logic of human need and desire they seem to take form in a host of different minds at more or less the same time. They come into the open hesitantly; reluctantly even. But they come; and their coming marks a changed focus of human attention: from how good the world used to be, or how bad the world now is, to how it may be made better. Such agreements, in short, add up to a

kind of evidence that man's constructive genius is ready to go to work.

That many people among us are now beginning to agree upon a number of matters they have never agreed upon before is becoming so clearly evident one wonders why the significance of it has been so little noticed: for these new agreements, soberly entered into, about matters that deeply trouble us, *would seem to be the stuff out of which a new culture is beginning to emerge.*

For example, everywhere in our own land, and in many other lands as well, men are saying that the whole human race now has to learn how to live together or it will destroy itself. This is a point of view never before held with the clarity and intensity of conviction with which it now begins to be held. It is a view so basically different from the ethnocentric and nation-centered views hitherto held that it might be regarded as the beginning of a new cultural outlook.

The fact is that we have never before in our human history been confronted by the magnitude of peril we face today. This emerging agreement, therefore, is being shaped out of something we have never experienced before. Hence it expresses, as it were, a "wisdom concerning danger" that belongs peculiarly to our present age. Nor is this growing agreement among us a mere statement of a fact. Rather, it strongly asserts our culture's sense of urgency: "We *must* learn, or else. . . ." Finally—and most deeply—it expresses our culture's strongly emergent new faith: a faith in a united mankind.

Again, we find men saying with a new strength of conviction that violence never solves any problem, and that wars must be made to cease. There were times, not far in the past,

when most men thought it hard-headed and realistic, even scientific, to accept war as the expression of something inherent and even admirable in our human nature. Not so at present. The man who today proclaims the inborn warlikeness of men and the consequent inevitability, if not desirability, of armed conflict walks alone. Today, a new powerful agreement is forming among us that places war in the category of the stupid and avoidable. This is of deep moment to the race. So long as war was regarded as noble, or as mysteriously compulsive, as though placed in us by Nature and Nature's God, there was little chance to remove it from the human scene. Once, however, war, by common agreement, begins to be thought of as a stupid, tragic, infantile, and inexcusable irrelevancy in life, the trappings and the glories go. In other words, a new bent of mind is apparently in the making. It is, paradoxically, in the making even while we strain our national resources to build up our military power. And because of this new bent of mind, there is actually a chance, for the first time in history, that war is on the way out.

People begin to agree upon a third matter: namely, that we in our democracy need to achieve positive and constructive goals. While there is a recognized need to be vigorously *against* a common enemy—today, Russian communism; yesterday, fascism and nazism—there is a growing recognition that to be merely *against* is fatal to a society like our own. We are beginning to say that democracy will be strong *against* the enemy only when it can demonstrate that it is strongly *for* the human race. Hence the growing will among us to take on world-wide obligations unheard of in previous times. The will to do this is, to be sure, only in its beginnings: the pitifully



small support for the Point Four Program on the part of both Congress and the people indicates this clearly enough. Yet even these small beginnings are indicative of a cultural point of view that is forming. It could scarcely be expected to form all at once, like Minerva from the head of Jove. Its very health and durability depend, in fact, upon its growing naturally out of many different human efforts to grapple with problems. The important thing is that for any one of us to have said, even fifty years ago, that we of the Western culture were obligated to help lift the levels of health and technical skill of *all the depressed peoples of the world* would have induced an incredulous shaking of heads. Nowadays the statement is made by all sorts of people every day; and while, in some quarters, it still induces anger, this very anger shows that it is no longer regarded as fantasy. By growing numbers of people it is regarded as inspiring good sense. In other words, it has come to this: that we of the Western culture are increasingly unable to contemplate with equanimity and self-approval our own relative prosperity in the midst of the world's deep poverty and distress.

Closely related to this new sensitivity to the world's need is the growing agreement among those of us who have been brought up in the Hebrew-Christian tradition that we must at last practice the brotherhood we have long been preaching. Christians are beginning to agree that the Christ they revere never said, "Love God and your racially acceptable neighbor as yourself." To be sure, the overcoming of racial prejudice is one of the hardest of all human tasks; but the effort to overcome it is strong and growing stronger.

Again in growing numbers, people are agreeing that we

must move toward some measure of effective world law. To have law within the parts of the world and yet anarchy in the whole no longer seems safe or rational in this period of the physical binding together of all regions of the planet. Here again the agreements are only in their beginnings; but small and confused as they are, they seem to have the future in them. The old stubbornnesses and arrogances of exclusive nationalism appear to be on the way out—and this in spite of a new birth of intense nationalism among the revolutionary, hitherto oppressed peoples of the world.

Another emerging agreement is that we need to learn a new skill: namely, skill in the arts of agreeing. Hitherto we have been chiefly adept in the arts of not agreeing. But the long-practiced habit—as in industry and politics, and even religion—of throwing dust in one another's faces, deliberately sabotaging reasonableness in conference, and of delighting to put one's opponents out of countenance is proving too costly and too infantile to be justified by its short-range advantages. We are learning, at last, that where angers and hurt prides are left over after the "solution" of a problem has been reached, they will be there to reckon with later on. In the wider concerns of life, particularly where large segments of the human race are involved (but even in intimate personal relations), we begin to realize that men need to learn the creative art of uniting their minds rather than to continue the sterile art of keeping those minds at daggers' points.

Another emerging agreement goes to the very roots of our life. It comes out of the many things we have been learning about how human beings grow up from infancy to adulthood, and how in that process they are all too often arrested in their

proper growth, becoming mentally and emotionally malformed and maladjusted. Increasingly now, in homes, schools, churches, industries, penal institutions, guidance centers, psychiatric clinics, and in communities as a whole, men are reaching the new agreement that we must learn how to give every individual his rightful chance to grow into the fullness of his powers.

Similar to this in its respect for the growing forces of life is the emerging agreement that our relationship to the planet on which we depend for sustenance must be one of rational use and development rather than of ruthless exploitation. In countless ways a new attitude toward our planetary home begins to manifest itself: an attitude of *giving to* as well as *taking from*; of sensitive expert understanding instead of insensitive clumsy destructiveness.

Finally, there is an emerging agreement among us that we must achieve, somehow, the power to shape up some shared affirmation of faith that transcends our many different creeds and religions. This is not to say that we are moving toward an imposed uniformity of belief. Sincere differences must be not only tolerated but welcomed; for they are vital reminders of a fact we might otherwise forget: namely, that the universe has not yet invited man into full knowledge of all its mysteries. What the emerging agreement seems to signify, however, is that we are hungry for a spiritual affirmation that will strongly put first things first, and that we are ready to believe that where first things *are* put first many of the dogmas and doctrinal differences that have held us apart will show up as of secondary importance.

## III

Such newly emerging agreements, even when they are still in their early and tentative stages, seem to have the genuine future in them. In the midst of the forces that appear to be destroying us, they hint at the new culture that is already in process of growth.

If this is true, then the individual who cares about a more decent world has his work cut out for him. *He can watch for the emerging agreements that seem to have a living future and put his strength behind them.*

He will need, however, to estimate whether the agreements he detects are of the sort that bring life or of the sort that bring death. Some, as we have said, bring death—as in the massed agreements of fascists, nazis, communists, Ku Kluxers, and others. Creative agreements must be such that, as they work themselves out, they “bring life and bring it more abundantly”—and more inclusively.

The agreements we have described would seem to be of this sort: they are *for* men rather than *against* them. Also, in every case, they aim at the extension of human rights and happiness rather than at their curtailment. Finally, they are agreements through which we can incorporate into our culture the major changes that have come into the world. These are, first of all, the space-annihilating means of communication and transportation that now make us all next-door neighbors. Secondly, they are the newly released atomic powers that can be used either for our destruction or for our greater hope. Third, they are the new insights into human nature and behavior for which we are indebted to the biological, psycho-

logical, and social sciences. Finally, they are the new claims of backward and oppressed peoples to be given their long-delayed chance to rise out of the degradation of poverty into some measure of equality with ourselves. These are all new things that have come into our world. If we can incorporate them wisely into our cultural practices and intentions, we shall not only survive but shall become a human society immeasurably in advance of any that has existed before.

Granted that there are such constructive agreements now taking shape among us, we would seem to have the beginnings of an answer to our perplexities about our present age. We live, not in a time of progressive disintegration, but in a time of emerging integration. In point of fact, there appears every reason to believe that we are heading—if we do not lose our way in a morass of old fears and exclusivenesses, antagonisms and self-seekings—toward the creation of a culture more deeply aware of human needs and more bravely and capably bent upon fulfilling them than any culture that has hitherto existed on earth.

#### IV

Because these emerging agreements have here been listed one after another, it may seem that each of them stands independently alone—a thing in itself. It is when we think of them in sum, however, that we begin to see, through the fog of our present confusions, the shape of the culture that is coming into being. For while one of them may seem to lie in the specialized province of the soil conservationist, another in that of the teacher, or minister, or psychologist, or statesman, they are all one in their spiritual intent. They are all one,

therefore, in the claim they make upon us for our understanding and support.

In their sum, these agreements constitute a new plateau of human endeavor; a new practical and spiritual level on which we have to do our joint living. Hitherto, separateness and disunity—of class, race, nation, religion and the rest—have been taken for granted as the expected way of life. On the new plateau, the logic of life calls for a heightened sense of unity and a willing involvement in mankind.

The great enterprise we are now called upon to undertake is that of struggling up to this new plateau. For every person who cares about the maturing of man's mind and spirit, this is the most energizing imperative of our time.

# INDEX

- absolutism, 296  
Adler, Felix, 233  
Adorno, T. W., 50  
affection, 75, 88, 180, 197, 203  
affirmation of faith, 325  
agreements, emerging, 319, 326  
Alexander, Franz, 22, 102, 124, 127,  
128  
Allen, Dr. Raymond B., 260  
Anderson, Dewey, 64  
Anderson, Mrs. Rose, 275  
Angell, Norman, 289  
Angell, R. C., 174  
animism, 161, 162, 164  
area rigidity, 112  
Aurelius, Marcus, 131  
Austin, Aleine, 212  
authority, 89, 90, 103, 162, 305  
  
Bacon, Francis, 146  
Bacon, Roger, 159  
Barth, Alan, 248, 255, 261, 263, 264,  
267  
Bauer, Anne, 98  
Bellamy, Edward, 243  
Blake, William, 204  
Boyles Commission, 264  
  
California, University of, 255  
camps, slave, 211  
Canwell Committee, 262  
  
capitalism, 233  
caprice, 161, 163, 177  
Carver, Thomas Nixon, 62  
Chase, Stuart, 220  
child, 167, 184, 294, 307  
Chisholm, G. Brock, 139  
Christ, 179, 180, 191  
church, 187, 189, 190, 196  
citizen-scientist, 172  
Clark, Grenville, 265  
class struggle, 237  
climate of immaturity, 145, 149  
co-creators, 169, 170  
Committee on Un-American Activi-  
ties, 266, 268, 271  
Commons, John R., 244  
communism, 240, 246, 252, 256, 265,  
277  
competition, 58 ff.  
conformity, 230, 255, 269, 278  
constructive goals, 322  
context of the self, 17 ff.  
Cooley, Charles H., 244  
court, open, 273  
Courts, People's, 271  
creeds, 188, 296  
crisis, moral, 251  
cultural neurosis, 123  
  
Dashiell, John Frederick, 68  
democracy, 280, 300, 302, 314

- Democritus, 163  
 Dies, Martin, 266, 268, 270  
 disconnection, 76, 84  
 disorientation, reality, 35  
 Donne, John, 9  
 Drees, Frank, 96  
 Duffy, Warden Clinton T., 73, 74  
 dynamics, group, 20, 28 ff.  
  
 education, 153, 201  
 egocentric trap, 68 ff.  
 ego-validation, 124 ff.  
 Einstein, Albert, 171  
 Ely, Richard T., 244  
 emerging agreements, 319, 326  
 empathy, 86  
 equality, 105, 106, 131  
 escapism, 147  
 exchange, free, 292  
  
 faith, 199, 325  
 fascism, 240, 246  
 fellowship, 189, 190, 193  
 field theory of personality, 20, 31 ff.  
 flexibility, 108, 122, 164  
 Foster, Gordon Lynn, 139  
 Fox, George, 105  
 Frank, Lawrence K., 160, 176, 177  
 free exchange, 292  
 Frenkel-Brunswick, Else, 50  
 Freud, Sigmund, 20, 75  
 Fromm, Erich, 102  
 Fromm-Reichmann, Frieda, 20  
 frontier, scientific, 158 ff.  
 frontier, spiritual, 178 ff.  
  
 Galileo, 59  
 Gilbert, G. M., 230  
 Glass, Bentley, 108  
 goals, constructive, 322  
 God, 104, 105, 166, 197, 202, 204  
 group dynamics, 20, 28 ff.  
 group psychiatry, 95  
 group therapy, 20, 24 ff.  
 growth-into-love, 189  
 Guthman, Edwin O., 262  
  
 Hart, Bernard, 36  
 hate, 180, 181, 187, 204, 205 ff.  
  
 Hébert, Representative F. Edward,  
     272  
 Hildebrand, Dr. J. H., 255  
 Hitler, Adolf, 85, 306  
 Hollywood ten, 276  
 hoodlumism, political, 228  
 Horney, Karen, 45, 110, 123  
 hostility, 27, 75, 85, 88, 110, 128,  
     137, 208, 215, 219  
 Hutchins, Robert M., 264  
 Huxley, Aldous, 185  
  
 images of others, 52 ff.  
 imagination, 67, 101  
 immaturity, climate of, 145, 149  
 Industrial Revolution, 233  
 integration, emerging, 327  
 intergroup relations, 55  
 interhuman relations, 20, 22 ff.  
 interpersonal relations, 20, 21, 55  
 isolation, 72, 83  
  
 Jackson, Andrew, 269  
 James, William, 118 ff.  
 Jefferson, Thomas, 151  
  
 Laughlin, J. Lawrence, 243  
 law, world, 324  
 League of Nations, 284  
 Lenin, V. I., 231 ff.  
 Levinson, Daniel J., 50  
 Lewin, Kurt, 29  
 life-in-balance, 299  
 love, 180, 181, 187, 190, 204  
 loyalty oath, 256 ff., 277  
 Lynd, Helen M., 153  
 Lysenkoism, 171  
  
 Madden, Ward, 193, 199  
 Madison, Charles N., 243  
 Marcus Aurelius, 131  
 Marshall, Bruce, 192  
 Marx, Karl, 232  
 materialisms, 163, 165  
 Mather, Cotton, 306  
 maturity, social, 105, 157  
 May, Rollo, 123  
 McCann, Rebecca, 43  
 McCarthyism, 277



- McCormick, Anne O'Hare, 303  
 McGinley, Phyllis, 242  
 Menninger, Karl, 179, 205  
 Menninger, William, 96  
 method, scientific, 201  
 Mitchell, Wesley C., 244  
 Montagu, Ashley, 174, 175  
 moral crisis, 251  
 moral timidity, 248  
 Moreno, Dr. L., 139  
 Murphy, Gardner, 31  
 Murrow, Edward R., 153
- nationalism, 284, 285, 324  
 Nations, League of, 284  
 Neumann, Henry, 234  
 neurosis, 35, 36  
 neurosis, cultural, 123  
 Nietzsche, Friedrich W., 304  
 Norris, Frank, 125  
 Norris, Senator George W., 269
- oath, loyalty, 256 ff., 277  
 Ober, Frank B., 264  
 offenses against peace, 223  
 open court, 273  
 orientation, reality, 93  
 Original Virtue, 185  
 Orwell, George, 241  
 others, images of, 52 ff.  
 over-under relations, 88 ff.
- panic-prone, 147  
 Parkhurst, Helen, 167, 185  
 Paton, Alan, 65, 95  
 Patten, Simon, 244  
 pattern, tyranny of the, 312  
 peace, offenses against, 223  
 People's Courts, 271  
 personality, field theory of, 20, 31 ff.  
 Peterson, Virgilia, 183  
 Plant, James, 35, 36, 77, 80  
 Poling, Paul Newton, 287, 298  
 political hoodlumism, 228  
 potentiality, 107 ff., 160, 307  
 power, 92, 103, 105, 133  
 prejudice, 113, 116  
 psychiatry, group, 95
- race, 174  
 race relations, 60  
 Rader, Melvin, 262  
 Radhakrishnan, 301  
 Ramos, Dr. Arthur, 174  
 Rasey, Marie, 167, 217, 218  
 Raushenbush, Stephen, 64  
 readiness, 130 ff.  
 reality, 34, 44, 67, 131, 135, 200  
 reality disorientation, 35  
 reality orientation, 93  
 regularities, 162, 163, 169  
 relations, intergroup, 55  
 relations, interhuman, 20, 22 ff.  
 relations, interpersonal, 20, 21, 55  
 relations, over-under, 88 ff.  
 relationships, 10, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 33, 76, 79, 137  
 religion, 62, 100, 101, 198, 202  
 Revolution, Industrial, 233  
 Revolution, Russian, 231  
 revolution, social, 239  
 Richards, I. A., 161  
 rigidity, 110, 111, 122, 164  
 rigidity, area, 112 ff.  
 Robinson, Edwin Arlington, 45, 53, 66, 303  
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 269  
 Ross, Edward A., 244  
 Rudin, Harry R., 287
- Salinger, J. D., 183  
 Sandburg, Carl, 308  
 Sanford, R. Nevitt, 50  
 Saul, Leon, 34, 124, 126  
 scapegoats, 148  
 science, 159, 166, 170, 172  
 scientific frontier, 158 ff.  
 scientific method, 201  
 segregation, 222  
 self, context of, 17 ff.  
 self-depreciation, 46  
 self-determination, 287, 288  
 self-image, 34 ff., 41, 42, 136, 176  
 self-overestimation, 44  
 separatism, 299  
 Servetus, 306  
 shyness, 79  
 Sinclair, Upton, 244

- Slavson, S. R., 24 ff.  
 slave camps, 211, 215  
 social maturity, 105, 157  
 social revolution, 239  
 spiritual frontier, 178 ff.  
 Stalin, 241, 306  
 Steffens, Lincoln, 244  
 Steig, William, 51  
 stereotypes, 116, 148  
 suggestibility, 147  
 Sullivan, Harry Stack, 21  
 Sumner, William Graham, 244
- Tarbell, Ida, 244  
 Taylor, Gordon Rattray, 122, 124  
 ten, Hollywood, 276  
 Tenney, Senator, 255  
 tension, 143 ff.  
 tenure, 257  
 therapy, group, 20, 24 ff.  
 Thomas, J. Parnell, 267  
 Thurber, James, 37, 38  
 timidity, moral, 248  
 Torquemada, 306  
 totalitarianism, 155, 167, 241, 300,  
 302, 303, 304, 306  
 trap, egocentric, 68 ff.  
 Trueblood, Elton, 189, 194, 195  
 truth-mindedness, 202  
 Turner, Frederick, 23
- tyranny of the pattern, 312
- Un-American Activities, Committee  
 on, 266, 268, 271  
 UNESCO, 174, 175  
 University of California, 255  
 University of Washington, 262  
 unreality, 39, 41
- values, 172, 175, 202, 210  
 Veblen, Thorstein, 244  
 violence, 145, 321  
 Voltaire, 210
- Walker, General Francis A., 243  
 Warburg, James, 297  
 Ward, Lester, 244  
 Washington, University of, 262  
 whim, 161, 163, 177  
 White, E. B., 277  
 White, Walter, 206  
 white supremacy, 316  
 Wilkins, John, 73  
 Wilson, Donald Powell, 101  
 Wordsworth, 67  
 world-in-balance, 289  
 world law, 324  
 world-mindedness, 297
- Ypsilon, 245

## Books that Live

---

The Norton imprint on a book means that in the publisher's estimation it is a book not for a single season but for the years.



W · W · NORTON & CO · INC ·















UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



136 366

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY