

Public Opinion

Walter Lippmann

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PUBLIC OPINION

BY

WALTER LIPPMANN

TO

FAYE LIPPMANN

Wading River,
Long Island.
1921.

_"Behold! human beings living in a sort of underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all across the den; they have been here from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them; for the chains are arranged in such a manner as to prevent them from turning round their heads. At a distance above and behind them the light of a fire is blazing, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have before them, over which they show the puppets.

I see, he said.

And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying vessels, which appear over the wall; also figures of men and animals, made of wood and stone and various materials; and some of the prisoners, as you would expect, are talking, and some of them are silent?

This is a strange image, he said, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said: how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would see only the shadows?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to talk with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?" _
--The Republic of Plato, Book Seven. (Jowett Translation.)

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD OUTSIDE AND THE PICTURES IN OUR HEADS

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

THE WORLD OUTSIDE AND THE PICTURES IN OUR HEADS

There is an island in the ocean where in 1914 a few Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans lived. No cable reaches that island, and the British mail steamer comes but once in sixty days. In September it had not yet come, and the islanders were still talking about the latest newspaper which told about the approaching trial of Madame Caillaux for the shooting of Gaston Calmette. It was, therefore, with more than usual eagerness that the whole colony assembled at the quay on a day in mid-September to hear from the captain what the verdict had been. They learned that for over six weeks now those of them who were English and those of them who were French had been fighting in behalf of the sanctity of treaties against those of them who were Germans. For six strange weeks they had acted as if they were friends, when in fact they were enemies.

But their plight was not so different from that of most of the population of Europe. They had been mistaken for six weeks, on the continent the interval may have been only six days or six hours. There was an interval. There was a moment when the picture of Europe on which men were conducting their business as usual, did not in any way correspond to the Europe which was about to make a jumble of their lives. There was a time for each man when he was still adjusted to an environment that no longer existed. All over the world as late as July 25th men were making goods that they would not be able to ship, buying goods they would not be able to import, careers were being planned, enterprises contemplated, hopes and expectations entertained, all in the belief that the world as known was the world as it was. Men were writing books describing that world. They trusted the picture in their

heads. And then over four years later, on a Thursday morning, came the news of an armistice, and people gave vent to their unutterable relief that the slaughter was over. Yet in the five days before the real armistice came, though the end of the war had been celebrated, several thousand young men died on the battlefields.

Looking back we can see how indirectly we know the environment in which nevertheless we live. We can see that the news of it comes to us now fast, now slowly; but that whatever we believe to be a true picture, we treat as if it were the environment itself. It is harder to remember that about the beliefs upon which we are now acting, but in respect to other peoples and other ages we flatter ourselves that it is easy to see when they were in deadly earnest about ludicrous pictures of the world. We insist, because of our superior hindsight, that the world as they needed to know it, and the world as they did know it, were often two quite contradictory things. We can see, too, that while they governed and fought, traded and reformed in the world as they imagined it to be, they produced results, or failed to produce any, in the world as it was. They started for the Indies and found America. They diagnosed evil and hanged old women. They thought they could grow rich by always selling and never buying. A caliph, obeying what he conceived to be the Will of Allah, burned the library at Alexandria.

Writing about the year 389, St. Ambrose stated the case for the prisoner in Plato's cave who resolutely declines to turn his head. "To discuss the nature and position of the earth does not help us in our hope of the life to come. It is enough to know what Scripture states. 'That He hung up the earth upon nothing' (Job xxvi. 7). Why then argue whether He hung it up in air or upon the water, and raise a controversy as to how the thin air could sustain the earth; or why, if upon the waters, the earth does not go crashing down to the bottom?... Not because the earth is in the middle, as if suspended on even balance, but because the majesty of God constrains it by the law of His will, does it endure stable upon the unstable and the void." [Footnote: Hexaemeron, i. cap 6, quoted in *The Mediæval Mind*, by Henry Osborn Taylor, Vol. i, p. 73.]

It does not help us in our hope of the life to come. It is enough to know what Scripture states. Why then argue? But a century and a half after St. Ambrose, opinion was still troubled, on this occasion by the problem of the antipodes. A monk named Cosmas, famous for his scientific attainments, was therefore deputed to write a Christian Topography, or "Christian Opinion concerning the World." [Footnote: Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. I, pp. 276-8.] It is clear that he knew exactly what was expected of him, for he based all his conclusions on the Scriptures as he read them. It appears, then, that the world is a flat parallelogram, twice as broad from east to west as it is long from north to south., In the center is the earth surrounded by ocean, which is in turn surrounded by another earth, where men lived before the deluge. This other earth was Noah's port of embarkation. In the north is a high conical mountain around which revolve the sun and moon. When the sun is behind the mountain it is night. The sky is glued to the edges of the outer earth. It consists of four high walls which meet in a concave roof, so that the earth is the floor of the universe. There is an ocean on the other side of the sky, constituting the "waters that are above the firmament." The space between the celestial ocean and the ultimate roof of the universe belongs to the blest. The space between the earth and sky is inhabited

by the angels. Finally, since St. Paul said that all men are made to live upon the "face of the earth" how could they live on the back where the Antipodes are supposed to be? With such a passage before his eyes, a Christian, we are told, should not 'even speak of the Antipodes.'" [Footnote: _Id._]

Far less should he go to the Antipodes; nor should any Christian prince give him a ship to try; nor would any pious mariner wish to try. For Cosmas there was nothing in the least absurd about his map. Only by remembering his absolute conviction that this was the map of the universe can we begin to understand how he would have dreaded Magellan or Peary or the aviator who risked a collision with the angels and the vault of heaven by flying seven miles up in the air. In the same way we can best understand the furies of war and politics by remembering that almost the whole of each party believes absolutely in its picture of the opposition, that it takes as fact, not what is, but what it supposes to be the fact. And that therefore, like Hamlet, it will stab Polonius behind the rustling curtain, thinking him the king, and perhaps like Hamlet add:

"Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune."

2

Great men, even during their lifetime, are usually known to the public only through a fictitious personality. Hence the modicum of truth in the old saying that no man is a hero to his valet. There is only a modicum of truth, for the valet, and the private secretary, are often immersed in the fiction themselves. Royal personages are, of course, constructed personalities. Whether they themselves believe in their public character, or whether they merely permit the chamberlain to stage-manage it, there are at least two distinct selves, the public and regal self, the private and human. The biographies of great people fall more or less readily into the histories of these two selves. The official biographer reproduces the public life, the revealing memoir the other. The Charnwood Lincoln, for example, is a noble portrait, not of an actual human being, but of an epic figure, replete with significance, who moves on much the same level of reality as Aeneas or St. George. Oliver's Hamilton is a majestic abstraction, the sculpture of an idea, "an essay" as Mr. Oliver himself calls it, "on American union." It is a formal monument to the state-craft of federalism, hardly the biography of a person. Sometimes people create their own facade when they think they are revealing the interior scene. The Repington diaries and Margot Asquith's are a species of self-portraiture in which the intimate detail is most revealing as an index of how the authors like to think about themselves.

But the most interesting kind of portraiture is that which arises spontaneously in people's minds. When Victoria came to the throne, says Mr. Strachey, [Footnote: Lytton Strachey, _Queen Victoria_, p. 72.] "among the outside public there was a great wave of enthusiasm. Sentiment and romance were coming into fashion; and the spectacle of the little girl-queen, innocent, modest, with fair hair and pink cheeks, driving through her capital, filled the hearts of the beholders with raptures of affectionate loyalty. What, above all, struck everybody with overwhelming force was the contrast between Queen Victoria and her uncles. The nasty old men, debauched and selfish, pigheaded and ridiculous, with their perpetual burden of

debts, confusions, and disreputabilities--they had vanished like the snows of winter and here at last, crowned and radiant, was the spring."

M. Jean de Pierrefeu [Footnote: Jean de Pierrefeu, _G. Q. G. Trois ans au Grand Quartier General_, pp 94-95.] saw hero-worship at first hand, for he was an officer on Joffre's staff at the moment of that soldier's greatest fame:

"For two years, the entire world paid an almost divine homage to the victor of the Marne. The baggage-master literally bent under the weight of the boxes, of the packages and letters which unknown people sent him with a frantic testimonial of their admiration. I think that outside of General Joffre, no commander in the war has been able to realize a comparable idea of what glory is. They sent him boxes of candy from all the great confectioners of the world, boxes of champagne, fine wines of every vintage, fruits, game, ornaments and utensils, clothes, smoking materials, inkstands, paperweights. Every territory sent its specialty. The painter sent his picture, the sculptor his statuette, the dear old lady a comforter or socks, the shepherd in his hut carved a pipe for his sake. All the manufacturers of the world who were hostile to Germany shipped their products, Havana its cigars, Portugal its port wine. I have known a hairdresser who had nothing better to do than to make a portrait of the General out of hair belonging to persons who were dear to him; a professional penman had the same idea, but the features were composed of thousands of little phrases in tiny characters which sang the praise of the General. As to letters, he had them in all scripts, from all countries, written in every dialect, affectionate letters, grateful, overflowing with love, filled with adoration. They called him Savior of the World, Father of his Country, Agent of God, Benefactor of Humanity, etc.... And not only Frenchmen, but Americans, Argentinians, Australians, etc. etc.... Thousands of little children, without their parents' knowledge, took pen in hand and wrote to tell him their love: most of them called him Our Father. And there was poignancy about their effusions, their adoration, these sighs of deliverance that escaped from thousands of hearts at the defeat of barbarism. To all these naïf little souls, Joffre seemed like St. George crushing the dragon. Certainly he incarnated for the conscience of mankind the victory of good over evil, of light over darkness.

Lunatics, simpletons, the half-crazy and the crazy turned their darkened brains toward him as toward reason itself. I have read the letter of a person living in Sydney, who begged the General to save him from his enemies; another, a New Zealander, requested him to send some soldiers to the house of a gentleman who owed him ten pounds and would not pay.

Finally, some hundreds of young girls, overcoming the timidity of their sex, asked for engagements, their families not to know about it; others wished only to serve him."

This ideal Joffre was compounded out of the victory won by him, his staff and his troops, the despair of the war, the personal sorrows, and the hope of future victory. But beside hero-worship there is the exorcism of devils. By the same mechanism through which heroes are incarnated, devils are made. If everything good was to come from Joffre, Foch, Wilson, or Roosevelt, everything evil originated in the Kaiser Wilhelm, Lenin and Trotsky. They were as omnipotent for evil as

the heroes were omnipotent for good. To many simple and frightened minds there was no political reverse, no strike, no obstruction, no mysterious death or mysterious conflagration anywhere in the world of which the causes did not wind back to these personal sources of evil.

3

Worldwide concentration of this kind on a symbolic personality is rare enough to be clearly remarkable, and every author has a weakness for the striking and irrefutable example. The vivisection of war reveals such examples, but it does not make them out of nothing. In a more normal public life, symbolic pictures are no less governant of behavior, but each symbol is far less inclusive because there are so many competing ones. Not only is each symbol charged with less feeling because at most it represents only a part of the population, but even within that part there is infinitely less suppression of individual difference. The symbols of public opinion, in times of moderate security, are subject to check and comparison and argument. They come and go, coalesce and are forgotten, never organizing perfectly the emotion of the whole group. There is, after all, just one human activity left in which whole populations accomplish the union sacrée. It occurs in those middle phases of a war when fear, pugnacity, and hatred have secured complete dominion of the spirit, either to crush every other instinct or to enlist it, and before weariness is felt.

At almost all other times, and even in war when it is deadlocked, a sufficiently greater range of feelings is aroused to establish conflict, choice, hesitation, and compromise. The symbolism of public opinion usually bears, as we shall see, [Footnote: Part V.] the marks of this balancing of interest. Think, for example, of how rapidly, after the armistice, the precarious and by no means successfully established symbol of Allied Unity disappeared, how it was followed almost immediately by the breakdown of each nation's symbolic picture of the other: Britain the Defender of Public Law, France watching at the Frontier of Freedom, America the Crusader. And think then of how within each nation the symbolic picture of itself frayed out, as party and class conflict and personal ambition began to stir postponed issues. And then of how the symbolic pictures of the leaders gave way, as one by one, Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, ceased to be the incarnation of human hope, and became merely the negotiators and administrators for a disillusioned world.

Whether we regret this as one of the soft evils of peace or applaud it as a return to sanity is obviously no matter here. Our first concern with fictions and symbols is to forget their value to the existing social order, and to think of them simply as an important part of the machinery of human communication. Now in any society that is not completely self-contained in its interests and so small that everyone can know all about everything that happens, ideas deal with events that are out of sight and hard to grasp. Miss Sherwin of Gopher Prairie, [Footnote: See Sinclair Lewis, *__Main Street__*.] is aware that a war is raging in France and tries to conceive it. She has never been to France, and certainly she has never been along what is now the battlefield.

Pictures of French and German soldiers she has seen, but it is impossible for her to imagine three million men. No one, in fact, can imagine them, and the professionals do not try. They think of them as, say, two hundred divisions. But Miss Sherwin has no access to the

order of battle maps, and so if she is to think about the war, she fastens upon Joffre and the Kaiser as if they were engaged in a personal duel. Perhaps if you could see what she sees with her mind's eye, the image in its composition might be not unlike an Eighteenth Century engraving of a great soldier. He stands there boldly unruffled and more than life size, with a shadowy army of tiny little figures winding off into the landscape behind. Nor it seems are great men oblivious to these expectations. M. de Pierrefeu tells of a photographer's visit to Joffre. The General was in his "middle class office, before the worktable without papers, where he sat down to write his signature. Suddenly it was noticed that there were no maps on the walls. But since according to popular ideas it is not possible to think of a general without maps, a few were placed in position for the picture, and removed soon afterwards." [Footnote: _Op. cit._, p. 99.]

The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event. That is why until we know what others think they know, we cannot truly understand their acts. I have seen a young girl, brought up in a Pennsylvania mining town, plunged suddenly from entire cheerfulness into a paroxysm of grief when a gust of wind cracked the kitchen window-pane. For hours she was inconsolable, and to me incomprehensible. But when she was able to talk, it transpired that if a window-pane broke it meant that a close relative had died. She was, therefore, mourning for her father, who had frightened her into running away from home. The father was, of course, quite thoroughly alive as a telegraphic inquiry soon proved. But until the telegram came, the cracked glass was an authentic message to that girl. Why it was authentic only a prolonged investigation by a skilled psychiatrist could show. But even the most casual observer could see that the girl, enormously upset by her family troubles, had hallucinated a complete fiction out of one external fact, a remembered superstition, and a turmoil of remorse, and fear and love for her father.

Abnormality in these instances is only a matter of degree. When an Attorney-General, who has been frightened by a bomb exploded on his doorstep, convinces himself by the reading of revolutionary literature that a revolution is to happen on the first of May 1920, we recognize that much the same mechanism is at work. The war, of course, furnished many examples of this pattern: the casual fact, the creative imagination, the will to believe, and out of these three elements, a counterfeit of reality to which there was a violent instinctive response. For it is clear enough that under certain conditions men respond as powerfully to fictions as they do to realities, and that in many cases they help to create the very fictions to which they respond. Let him cast the first stone who did not believe in the Russian army that passed through England in August, 1914, did not accept any tale of atrocities without direct proof, and never saw a plot, a traitor, or a spy where there was none. Let him cast a stone who never passed on as the real inside truth what he had heard someone say who knew no more than he did.

In all these instances we must note particularly one common factor. It is the insertion between man and his environment of a pseudo-environment. To that pseudo-environment his behavior is a response. But because it is behavior, the consequences, if they are acts, operate not in the pseudo-environment where the behavior is stimulated, but in the real environment where action eventuates. If the behavior is not a

practical act, but what we call roughly thought and emotion, it may be a long time before there is any noticeable break in the texture of the fictitious world. But when the stimulus of the pseudo-fact results in action on things or other people, contradiction soon develops. Then comes the sensation of butting one's head against a stone wall, of learning by experience, and witnessing Herbert Spencer's tragedy of the murder of a Beautiful Theory by a Gang of Brutal Facts, the discomfort in short of a maladjustment. For certainly, at the level of social life, what is called the adjustment of man to his environment takes place through the medium of fictions.

By fictions I do not mean lies. I mean a representation of the environment which is in lesser or greater degree made by man himself. The range of fiction extends all the way from complete hallucination to the scientists' perfectly self-conscious use of a schematic model, or his decision that for his particular problem accuracy beyond a certain number of decimal places is not important. A work of fiction may have almost any degree of fidelity, and so long as the degree of fidelity can be taken into account, fiction is not misleading. In fact, human culture is very largely the selection, the rearrangement, the tracing of patterns upon, and the stylizing of, what William James called "the random irradiations and resettlements of our ideas." [Footnote: James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 638] The alternative to the use of fictions is direct exposure to the ebb and flow of sensation. That is not a real alternative, for however refreshing it is to see at times with a perfectly innocent eye, innocence itself is not wisdom, though a source and corrective of wisdom. For the real environment is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for direct acquaintance. We are not equipped to deal with so much subtlety, so much variety, so many permutations and combinations. And although we have to act in that environment, we have to reconstruct it on a simpler model before we can manage with it. To traverse the world men must have maps of the world. Their persistent difficulty is to secure maps on which their own need, or someone else's need, has not sketched in the coast of Bohemia.

4

The analyst of public opinion must begin then, by recognizing the triangular relationship between the scene of action, the human picture of that scene, and the human response to that picture working itself out upon the scene of action. It is like a play suggested to the actors by their own experience, in which the plot is transacted in the real lives of the actors, and not merely in their stage parts. The moving picture often emphasizes with great skill this double drama of interior motive and external behavior. Two men are quarreling, ostensibly about some money, but their passion is inexplicable. Then the picture fades out and what one or the other of the two men sees with his mind's eye is reënacted. Across the table they were quarreling about money. In memory they are back in their youth when the girl jilted him for the other man. The exterior drama is explained: the hero is not greedy; the hero is in love.

A scene not so different was played in the United States Senate. At breakfast on the morning of September 29, 1919, some of the Senators read a news dispatch in the *Washington Post* about the landing of American marines on the Dalmatian coast. The newspaper said:

FACTS NOW ESTABLISHED

"The following important facts appear already _established_. The orders to Rear Admiral Andrews commanding the American naval forces in the Adriatic, came from the British Admiralty via the War Council and Rear Admiral Knapps in London. The approval or disapproval of the American Navy Department was not asked....

WITHOUT DANIELS' KNOWLEDGE

"Mr. Daniels was admittedly placed in a peculiar position when cables reached here stating that the forces over which he is presumed to have exclusive control were carrying on what amounted to naval warfare without his knowledge. It was fully realized that the _British Admiralty might desire to issue orders to Rear Admiral Andrews_ to act on behalf of Great Britain and her Allies, because the situation required sacrifice on the part of some nation if D'Annunzio's followers were to be held in check.

"It was further realized that _under the new league of nations plan foreigners would be in a position to direct American Naval forces in emergencies_ with or without the consent of the American Navy Department...." etc. (Italics mine).

The first Senator to comment is Mr. Knox of Pennsylvania. Indignantly he demands investigation. In Mr. Brandegee of Connecticut, who spoke next, indignation has already stimulated credulity. Where Mr. Knox indignantly wishes to know if the report is true, Mr. Brandegee, a half a minute later, would like to know what would have happened if marines had been killed. Mr. Knox, interested in the question, forgets that he asked for an inquiry, and replies. If American marines had been killed, it would be war. The mood of the debate is still conditional. Debate proceeds. Mr. McCormick of Illinois reminds the Senate that the Wilson administration is prone to the waging of small unauthorized wars. He repeats Theodore Roosevelt's quip about "waging peace." More debate. Mr. Brandegee notes that the marines acted "under orders of a Supreme Council sitting somewhere," but he cannot recall who represents the United States on that body. The Supreme Council is unknown to the Constitution of the United States. Therefore Mr. New of Indiana submits a resolution calling for the facts.

So far the Senators still recognize vaguely that they are discussing a rumor. Being lawyers they still remember some of the forms of evidence. But as red-blooded men they already experience all the indignation which is appropriate to the fact that American marines have been ordered into war by a foreign government and without the consent of Congress. Emotionally they want to believe it, because they are Republicans fighting the League of Nations. This arouses the Democratic leader, Mr. Hitchcock of Nebraska. He defends the Supreme Council: it was acting under the war powers. Peace has not yet been concluded because the Republicans are delaying it. Therefore the action was necessary and legal. Both sides now assume that the report is true, and the conclusions they draw are the conclusions of their partisanship. Yet this extraordinary assumption is in a debate over a resolution to investigate the truth of the assumption. It reveals how difficult it is, even for trained lawyers, to suspend response until the returns are in. The response is instantaneous. The fiction is taken for truth because the fiction is badly needed.

A few days later an official report showed that the marines were not landed by order of the British Government or of the Supreme Council. They had not been fighting the Italians. They had been landed at the request of the Italian Government to protect Italians, and the American commander had been officially thanked by the Italian authorities. The marines were not at war with Italy. They had acted according to an established international practice which had nothing to do with the League of Nations.

The scene of action was the Adriatic. The picture of that scene in the Senators' heads at Washington was furnished, in this case probably with intent to deceive, by a man who cared nothing about the Adriatic, but much about defeating the League. To this picture the Senate responded by a strengthening of its partisan differences over the League.

5

Whether in this particular case the Senate was above or below its normal standard, it is not necessary to decide. Nor whether the Senate compares favorably with the House, or with other parliaments. At the moment, I should like to think only about the world-wide spectacle of men acting upon their environment, moved by stimuli from their pseudo-environments. For when full allowance has been made for deliberate fraud, political science has still to account for such facts as two nations attacking one another, each convinced that it is acting in self-defense, or two classes at war each certain that it speaks for the common interest. They live, we are likely to say, in different worlds. More accurately, they live in the same world, but they think and feel in different ones.

It is to these special worlds, it is to these private or group, or class, or provincial, or occupational, or national, or sectarian artifacts, that the political adjustment of mankind in the Great Society takes place. Their variety and complication are impossible to describe. Yet these fictions determine a very great part of men's political behavior. We must think of perhaps fifty sovereign parliaments consisting of at least a hundred legislative bodies. With them belong at least fifty hierarchies of provincial and municipal assemblies, which with their executive, administrative and legislative organs, constitute formal authority on earth. But that does not begin to reveal the complexity of political life. For in each of these innumerable centers of authority there are parties, and these parties are themselves hierarchies with their roots in classes, sections, cliques and clans; and within these are the individual politicians, each the personal center of a web of connection and memory and fear and hope.

Somehow or other, for reasons often necessarily obscure, as the result of domination or compromise or a logroll, there emerge from these political bodies commands, which set armies in motion or make peace, conscript life, tax, exile, imprison, protect property or confiscate it, encourage one kind of enterprise and discourage another, facilitate immigration or obstruct it, improve communication or censor it, establish schools, build navies, proclaim "policies," and "destiny," raise economic barriers, make property or unmake it, bring one people under the rule of another, or favor one class as against another. For each of these decisions some view of the facts is taken to be conclusive, some view of the circumstances is accepted as the

basis of inference and as the stimulus of feeling. What view of the facts, and why that one?

And yet even this does not begin to exhaust the real complexity. The formal political structure exists in a social environment, where there are innumerable large and small corporations and institutions, voluntary and semi-voluntary associations, national, provincial, urban and neighborhood groupings, which often as not make the decision that the political body registers. On what are these decisions based?

"Modern society," says Mr. Chesterton, "is intrinsically insecure because it is based on the notion that all men will do the same thing for different reasons.... And as within the head of any convict may be the hell of a quite solitary crime, so in the house or under the hat of any suburban clerk may be the limbo of a quite separate philosophy. The first man may be a complete Materialist and feel his own body as a horrible machine manufacturing his own mind. He may listen to his thoughts as to the dull ticking of a clock. The man next door may be a Christian Scientist and regard his own body as somehow rather less substantial than his own shadow. He may come almost to regard his own arms and legs as delusions like moving serpents in the dream of delirium tremens. The third man in the street may not be a Christian Scientist but, on the contrary, a Christian. He may live in a fairy tale as his neighbors would say; a secret but solid fairy tale full of the faces and presences of unearthly friends. The fourth man may be a theosophist, and only too probably a vegetarian; and I do not see why I should not gratify myself with the fancy that the fifth man is a devil worshiper.... Now whether or not this sort of variety is valuable, this sort of unity is shaky. To expect that all men for all time will go on thinking different things, and yet doing the same things, is a doubtful speculation. It is not founding society on a communion, or even on a convention, but rather on a coincidence. Four men may meet under the same lamp post; one to paint it pea green as part of a great municipal reform; one to read his breviary in the light of it; one to embrace it with accidental ardour in a fit of alcoholic enthusiasm; and the last merely because the pea green post is a conspicuous point of rendezvous with his young lady. But to expect this to happen night after night is unwise...." [Footnote: G. K. Chesterton, "The Mad Hatter and the Sane Householder," *Vanity Fair*, January, 1921, p. 54]

For the four men at the lamp post substitute the governments, the parties, the corporations, the societies, the social sets, the trades and professions, universities, sects, and nationalities of the world. Think of the legislator voting a statute that will affect distant peoples, a statesman coming to a decision. Think of the Peace Conference reconstituting the frontiers of Europe, an ambassador in a foreign country trying to discern the intentions of his own government and of the foreign government, a promoter working a concession in a backward country, an editor demanding a war, a clergyman calling on the police to regulate amusement, a club lounging-room making up its mind about a strike, a sewing circle preparing to regulate the schools, nine judges deciding whether a legislature in Oregon may fix the working hours of women, a cabinet meeting to decide on the recognition of a government, a party convention choosing a candidate and writing a platform, twenty-seven million voters casting their ballots, an Irishman in Cork thinking about an Irishman in Belfast, a Third International planning to reconstruct the whole of human society, a board of directors confronted with a set of their

employees' demands, a boy choosing a career, a merchant estimating supply and demand for the coming season, a speculator predicting the course of the market, a banker deciding whether to put credit behind a new enterprise, the advertiser, the reader of advertisements.... Think of the different sorts of Americans thinking about their notions of "The British Empire" or "France" or "Russia" or "Mexico." It is not so different from Mr. Chesterton's four men at the pea green lamp post.

6

And so before we involve ourselves in the jungle of obscurities about the innate differences of men, we shall do well to fix our attention upon the extraordinary differences in what men know of the world. [Footnote: _Cf_. Wallas, _Our Social Heritage_, pp. 77 _et seq_.] I do not doubt that there are important biological differences. Since man is an animal it would be strange if there were not. But as rational beings it is worse than shallow to generalize at all about comparative behavior until there is a measurable similarity between the environments to which behavior is a response.

The pragmatic value of this idea is that it introduces a much needed refinement into the ancient controversy about nature and nurture, innate quality and environment. For the pseudo-environment is a hybrid compounded of "human nature" and "conditions." To my mind it shows the uselessness of pontificating about what man is and always will be from what we observe man to be doing, or about what are the necessary conditions of society. For we do not know how men would behave in response to the facts of the Great Society. All that we really know is how they behave in response to what can fairly be called a most inadequate picture of the Great Society. No conclusion about man or the Great Society can honestly be made on evidence like that.

This, then, will be the clue to our inquiry. We shall assume that what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him. If his atlas tells him that the world is flat he will not sail near what he believes to be the edge of our planet for fear of falling off. If his maps include a fountain of eternal youth, a Ponce de Leon will go in quest of it. If someone digs up yellow dirt that looks like gold, he will for a time act exactly as if he had found gold. The way in which the world is imagined determines at any particular moment what men will do. It does not determine what they will achieve. It determines their effort, their feelings, their hopes, not their accomplishments and results. The very men who most loudly proclaim their "materialism" and their contempt for "ideologues," the Marxian communists, place their entire hope on what? On the formation by propaganda of a class-conscious group. But what is propaganda, if not the effort to alter the picture to which men respond, to substitute one social pattern for another? What is class consciousness but a way of realizing the world? National consciousness but another way? And Professor Giddings' consciousness of kind, but a process of believing that we recognize among the multitude certain ones marked as our kind?

Try to explain social life as the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. You will soon be saying that the hedonist begs the question, for even supposing that man does pursue these ends, the crucial problem of why he thinks one course rather than another likely to produce pleasure, is untouched. Does the guidance of man's conscience explain? How then does he happen to have the particular

conscience which he has? The theory of economic self-interest? But how do men come to conceive their interest in one way rather than another? The desire for security, or prestige, or domination, or what is vaguely called self-realization? How do men conceive their security, what do they consider prestige, how do they figure out the means of domination, or what is the notion of self which they wish to realize? Pleasure, pain, conscience, acquisition, protection, enhancement, mastery, are undoubtedly names for some of the ways people act. There may be instinctive dispositions which work toward such ends. But no statement of the end, or any description of the tendencies to seek it, can explain the behavior which results. The very fact that men theorize at all is proof that their pseudo-environments, their interior representations of the world, are a determining element in thought, feeling, and action. For if the connection between reality and human response were direct and immediate, rather than indirect and inferred, indecision and failure would be unknown, and (if each of us fitted as snugly into the world as the child in the womb), Mr. Bernard Shaw would not have been able to say that except for the first nine months of its existence no human being manages its affairs as well as a plant.

The chief difficulty in adapting the psychoanalytic scheme to political thought arises in this connection. The Freudians are concerned with the maladjustment of distinct individuals to other individuals and to concrete circumstances. They have assumed that if internal derangements could be straightened out, there would be little or no confusion about what is the obviously normal relationship. But public opinion deals with indirect, unseen, and puzzling facts, and there is nothing obvious about them. The situations to which public opinions refer are known only as opinions. The psychoanalyst, on the other hand, almost always assumes that the environment is knowable, and if not knowable then at least bearable, to any unclouded intelligence. This assumption of his is the problem of public opinion. Instead of taking for granted an environment that is readily known, the social analyst is most concerned in studying how the larger political environment is conceived, and how it can be conceived more successfully. The psychoanalyst examines the adjustment to an X, called by him the environment; the social analyst examines the X, called by him the pseudo-environment.

He is, of course, permanently and constantly in debt to the new psychology, not only because when rightly applied it so greatly helps people to stand on their own feet, come what may, but because the study of dreams, fantasy and rationalization has thrown light on how the pseudo-environment is put together. But he cannot assume as his criterion either what is called a "normal biological career" [Footnote: Edward J. Kempf, *Psychopathology*, p. 116.] within the existing social order, or a career "freed from religious suppression and dogmatic conventions" outside. [Footnote: *Id.*, p. 151.] What for a sociologist is a normal social career? Or one freed from suppressions and conventions? Conservative critics do, to be sure, assume the first, and romantic ones the second. But in assuming them they are taking the whole world for granted. They are saying in effect either that society is the sort of thing which corresponds to their idea of what is normal, or the sort of thing which corresponds to their idea of what is free. Both ideas are merely public opinions, and while the psychoanalyst as physician may perhaps assume them, the sociologist may not take the products of existing public opinion as criteria by which to study public opinion.

The world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported, and imagined. Man is no Aristotelian god contemplating all existence at one glance. He is the creature of an evolution who can just about span a sufficient portion of reality to manage his survival, and snatch what on the scale of time are but a few moments of insight and happiness. Yet this same creature has invented ways of seeing what no naked eye could see, of hearing what no ear could hear, of weighing immense masses and infinitesimal ones, of counting and separating more items than he can individually remember. He is learning to see with his mind vast portions of the world that he could never see, touch, smell, hear, or remember. Gradually he makes for himself a trustworthy picture inside his head of the world beyond his reach.

Those features of the world outside which have to do with the behavior of other human beings, in so far as that behavior crosses ours, is dependent upon us, or is interesting to us, we call roughly public affairs. The pictures inside the heads of these human beings, the pictures of themselves, of others, of their needs, purposes, and relationship, are their public opinions. Those pictures which are acted upon by groups of people, or by individuals acting in the name of groups, are Public Opinion with capital letters. And so in the chapters which follow we shall inquire first into some of the reasons why the picture inside so often misleads men in their dealings with the world outside. Under this heading we shall consider first the chief factors which limit their access to the facts. They are the artificial censorships, the limitations of social contact, the comparatively meager time available in each day for paying attention to public affairs, the distortion arising because events have to be compressed into very short messages, the difficulty of making a small vocabulary express a complicated world, and finally the fear of facing those facts which would seem to threaten the established routine of men's lives.

The analysis then turns from these more or less external limitations to the question of how this trickle of messages from the outside is affected by the stored up images, the preconceptions, and prejudices which interpret, fill them out, and in their turn powerfully direct the play of our attention, and our vision itself. From this it proceeds to examine how in the individual person the limited messages from outside, formed into a pattern of stereotypes, are identified with his own interests as he feels and conceives them. In the succeeding sections it examines how opinions are crystallized into what is called Public Opinion, how a National Will, a Group Mind, a Social Purpose, or whatever you choose to call it, is formed.

The first five parts constitute the descriptive section of the book. There follows an analysis of the traditional democratic theory of public opinion. The substance of the argument is that democracy in its original form never seriously faced the problem which arises because the pictures inside people's heads do not automatically correspond with the world outside. And then, because the democratic theory is under criticism by socialist thinkers, there follows an examination of the most advanced and coherent of these criticisms, as made by the English Guild Socialists. My purpose here is to find out whether these reformers take into account the main difficulties of public opinion.

My conclusion is that they ignore the difficulties, as completely as did the original democrats, because they, too, assume, and in a much more complicated civilization, that somehow mysteriously there exists in the hearts of men a knowledge of the world beyond their reach.

I argue that representative government, either in what is ordinarily called politics, or in industry, cannot be worked successfully, no matter what the basis of election, unless there is an independent, expert organization for making the unseen facts intelligible to those who have to make the decisions. I attempt, therefore, to argue that the serious acceptance of the principle that personal representation must be supplemented by representation of the unseen facts would alone permit a satisfactory decentralization, and allow us to escape from the intolerable and unworkable fiction that each of us must acquire a competent opinion about all public affairs. It is argued that the problem of the press is confused because the critics and the apologists expect the press to realize this fiction, expect it to make up for all that was not foreseen in the theory of democracy, and that the readers expect this miracle to be performed at no cost or trouble to themselves. The newspapers are regarded by democrats as a panacea for their own defects, whereas analysis of the nature of news and of the economic basis of journalism seems to show that the newspapers necessarily and inevitably reflect, and therefore, in greater or lesser measure, intensify, the defective organization of public opinion. My conclusion is that public opinions must be organized for the press if they are to be sound, not by the press as is the case today. This organization I conceive to be in the first instance the task of a political science that has won its proper place as formulator, in advance of real decision, instead of apologist, critic, or reporter after the decision has been made. I try to indicate that the perplexities of government and industry are conspiring to give political science this enormous opportunity to enrich itself and to serve the public. And, of course, I hope that these pages will help a few people to realize that opportunity more vividly, and therefore to pursue it more consciously.

PART II

APPROACHES TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE

CHAPTER 2. CENSORSHIP AND PRIVACY

- " 3. CONTACT AND OPPORTUNITY
- " 4. TIME AND ATTENTION
- " 5. SPEED, WORDS, AND CLEARNESS

CHAPTER II

CENSORSHIP AND PRIVACY

1

The picture of a general presiding over an editorial conference at the

most terrible hour of one of the great battles of history seems more like a scene from *The Chocolate Soldier* than a page from life. Yet we know at first hand from the officer who edited the French communiqués that these conferences were a regular part of the business of war; that in the worst moment of Verdun, General Joffre and his cabinet met and argued over the nouns, adjectives, and verbs that were to be printed in the newspapers the next morning.

"The evening communiqué of the twenty-third (February 1916)" says M. de Pierrefeu, [Footnote: *G. Q. G.*, pp. 126-129.] "was edited in a dramatic atmosphere. M. Berthelot, of the Prime Minister's office, had just telephoned by order of the minister asking General Pelle to strengthen the report and to emphasize the proportions of the enemy's attack. It was necessary to prepare the public for the worst outcome in case the affair turned into a catastrophe. This anxiety showed clearly that neither at G. H. Q. nor at the Ministry of War had the Government found reason for confidence. As M. Berthelot spoke, General Pelle made notes. He handed me the paper on which he had written the Government's wishes, together with the order of the day issued by General von Deimling and found on some prisoners, in which it was stated that this attack was the supreme offensive to secure peace. Skilfully used, all this was to demonstrate that Germany was letting loose a gigantic effort, an effort without precedent, and that from its success she hoped for the end of the war. The logic of this was that nobody need be surprised at our withdrawal. When, a half hour later, I went down with my manuscript, I found gathered together in Colonel Claudel's office, he being away, the major-general, General Janin, Colonel Dupont, and Lieutenant-Colonel Renouard. Fearing that I would not succeed in giving the desired impression, General Pellé had himself prepared a proposed communiqué. I read what I had just done. It was found to be too moderate. General Pellé's, on the other hand, seemed too alarming. I had purposely omitted von Deimling's order of the day. To put it into the communiqué would be to break with the formula to which the public was accustomed, would be to transform it into a kind of pleading. It would seem to say: 'How do you suppose we can resist?' There was reason to fear that the public would be distracted by this change of tone and would believe that everything was lost. I explained my reasons and suggested giving Deimling's text to the newspapers in the form of a separate note.

"Opinion being divided, General Pellé went to ask General de Castelnau to come and decide finally. The General arrived smiling, quiet and good humored, said a few pleasant words about this new kind of literary council of war, and looked at the texts. He chose the simpler one, gave more weight to the first phrase, inserted the words 'as had been anticipated,' which supply a reassuring quality, and was flatly against inserting von Deimling's order, but was for transmitting it to the press in a special note ... " General Joffre that evening read the communiqué carefully and approved it.

Within a few hours those two or three hundred words would be read all over the world. They would paint a picture in men's minds of what was happening on the slopes of Verdun, and in front of that picture people would take heart or despair. The shopkeeper in Brest, the peasant in Lorraine, the deputy in the Palais Bourbon, the editor in Amsterdam or Minneapolis had to be kept in hope, and yet prepared to accept possible defeat without yielding to panic. They are told, therefore, that the loss of ground is no surprise to the French Command. They are taught to regard the affair as serious, but not strange. Now, as a

matter of fact, the French General Staff was not fully prepared for the German offensive. Supporting trenches had not been dug, alternative roads had not been built, barbed wire was lacking. But to confess that would have aroused images in the heads of civilians that might well have turned a reverse into a disaster. The High Command could be disappointed, and yet pull itself together; the people at home and abroad, full of uncertainties, and with none of the professional man's singleness of purpose, might on the basis of a complete story have lost sight of the war in a melee of faction and counter-faction about the competence of the officers. Instead, therefore, of letting the public act on all the facts which the generals knew, the authorities presented only certain facts, and these only in such a way as would be most likely to steady the people.

In this case the men who arranged the pseudo-environment knew what the real one was. But a few days later an incident occurred about which the French Staff did not know the truth. The Germans announced [Footnote: On February 26, 1916. Pierrefeu, _G. Q. G._, pp. 133 _et seq_.] that on the previous afternoon they had taken Fort Douaumont by assault. At French headquarters in Chantilly no one could understand this news. For on the morning of the twenty-fifth, after the engagement of the XXth corps, the battle had taken a turn for the better. Reports from the front said nothing about Douaumont. But inquiry showed that the German report was true, though no one as yet knew how the fort had been taken. In the meantime, the German communiqué was being flashed around the world, and the French had to say something. So headquarters explained. "In the midst of total ignorance at Chantilly about the way the attack had taken place, we imagined, in the evening communiqué of the 26th, a plan of the attack which certainly had a thousand to one chance of being true." The communiqué of this imaginary battle read:

"A bitter struggle is taking place around Fort de Douaumont which is an advanced post of the old defensive organization of Verdun. The position taken this morning by the enemy, _after several unsuccessful assaults that cost him very heavy losses_, has been reached again and passed by our troops whom the enemy has not been able to drive back." [Footnote: This is my own translation: the English translation from London published in the New York Times of Sunday, Feb. 27, is as follows:

London, Feb. 26 (1916). A furious struggle has been in progress around Fort de Douaumont which is an advance element of the old defensive organization of Verdun fortresses. The position captured this morning by the enemy after several fruitless assaults which cost him extremely heavy losses, [Footnote: The French text says "pertes tres elevees." Thus the English translation exaggerates the original text.] was reached again and gone beyond by our troops, which all the attempts of the enemy have not been able to push back."]

What had actually happened differed from both the French and German accounts. While changing troops in the line, the position had somehow been forgotten in a confusion of orders. Only a battery commander and a few men remained in the fort. Some German soldiers, seeing the door open, had crawled into the fort, and taken everyone inside prisoner. A little later the French who were on the slopes of the hill were horrified at being shot at from the fort. There had been no battle at Douaumont and no losses. Nor had the French troops advanced beyond it as the communiqués seemed to say. They were beyond it on either side,

to be sure, but the fort was in enemy hands.

Yet from the communiqué everyone believed that the fort was half surrounded. The words did not explicitly say so, but "the press, as usual, forced the pace." Military writers concluded that the Germans would soon have to surrender. In a few days they began to ask themselves why the garrison, since it lacked food, had not yet surrendered. "It was necessary through the press bureau to request them to drop the encirclement theme." [Footnote: Pierrefeu, _op. cit._, pp. 134-5.]

2

The editor of the French communiqué tells us that as the battle dragged out, his colleagues and he set out to neutralize the pertinacity of the Germans by continual insistence on their terrible losses. It is necessary to remember that at this time, and in fact until late in 1917, the orthodox view of the war for all the Allied peoples was that it would be decided by "attrition." Nobody believed in a war of movement. It was insisted that strategy did not count, or diplomacy. It was simply a matter of killing Germans. The general public more or less believed the dogma, but it had constantly to be reminded of it in face of spectacular German successes.

"Almost no day passed but the communiqué... ascribed to the Germans with some appearance of justice heavy losses, extremely heavy, spoke of bloody sacrifices, heaps of corpses, hecatombs. Likewise the wireless constantly used the statistics of the intelligence bureau at Verdun, whose chief, Major Cointet, had invented a method of calculating German losses which obviously produced marvelous results. Every fortnight the figures increased a hundred thousand or so. These 300,000, 400,000, 500,000 casualties put out, divided into daily, weekly, monthly losses, repeated in all sorts of ways, produced a striking effect. Our formulae varied little: 'according to prisoners the German losses in the course of the attack have been considerable' ... 'it is proved that the losses' ... 'the enemy exhausted by his losses has not renewed the attack' ... Certain formulae, later abandoned because they had been overworked, were used each day: 'under our artillery and machine gun fire' ... 'mowed down by our artillery and machine gun fire' ... Constant repetition impressed the neutrals and Germany itself, and helped to create a bloody background in spite of the denials from Nauen (the German wireless) which tried vainly to destroy the bad effect of this perpetual repetition." [Footnote: _Op. cit._, pp. 138-139.]

The thesis of the French Command, which it wished to establish publicly by these reports, was formulated as follows for the guidance of the censors:

"This offensive engages the active forces of our opponent whose manpower is declining. We have learned that the class of 1916 is already at the front. There will remain the 1917 class already being called up, and the resources of the third category (men above forty-five, or convalescents). In a few weeks, the German forces exhausted by this effort, will find themselves confronted with all the forces of the coalition (ten millions against seven millions)." [Footnote: _Op. cit._, p. 147.]

According to M. de Pierrefeu, the French command had converted itself

to this belief. "By an extraordinary aberration of mind, only the attrition of the enemy was seen; it appeared that our forces were not subject to attrition. General Nivelle shared these ideas. We saw the result in 1917."

We have learned to call this propaganda. A group of men, who can prevent independent access to the event, arrange the news of it to suit their purpose. That the purpose was in this case patriotic does not affect the argument at all. They used their power to make the Allied publics see affairs as they desired them to be seen. The casualty figures of Major Cointet which were spread about the world are of the same order. They were intended to provoke a particular kind of inference, namely that the war of attrition was going in favor of the French. But the inference is not drawn in the form of argument. It results almost automatically from the creation of a mental picture of endless Germans slaughtered on the hills about Verdun. By putting the dead Germans in the focus of the picture, and by omitting to mention the French dead, a very special view of the battle was built up. It was a view designed to neutralize the effects of German territorial advances and the impression of power which the persistence of the offensive was making. It was also a view that tended to make the public acquiesce in the demoralizing defensive strategy imposed upon the Allied armies. For the public, accustomed to the idea that war consists of great strategic movements, flank attacks, encirclements, and dramatic surrenders, had gradually to forget that picture in favor of the terrible idea that by matching lives the war would be won. Through its control over all news from the front, the General Staff substituted a view of the facts that comported with this strategy.

The General Staff of an army in the field is so placed that within wide limits it can control what the public will perceive. It controls the selection of correspondents who go to the front, controls their movements at the front, reads and censors their messages from the front, and operates the wires. The Government behind the army by its command of cables and passports, mails and custom houses and blockades increases the control. It emphasizes it by legal power over publishers, over public meetings, and by its secret service. But in the case of an army the control is far from perfect. There is always the enemy's communiqué, which in these days of wireless cannot be kept away from neutrals. Above all there is the talk of the soldiers, which blows back from the front, and is spread about when they are on leave. [Footnote: For weeks prior to the American attack at St. Mihiel and in the Argonne-Meuse, everybody in France told everybody else the deep secret.] An army is an unwieldy thing. And that is why the naval and diplomatic censorship is almost always much more complete. Fewer people know what is going on, and their acts are more easily supervised.

3

Without some form of censorship, propaganda in the strict sense of the word is impossible. In order to conduct a propaganda there must be some barrier between the public and the event. Access to the real environment must be limited, before anyone can create a pseudo-environment that he thinks wise or desirable. For while people who have direct access can misconceive what they see, no one else can decide how they shall misconceive it, unless he can decide where they shall look, and at what. The military censorship is the simplest form of barrier, but by no means the most important, because it is known to

exist, and is therefore in certain measure agreed to and discounted.

At different times and for different subjects some men impose and other men accept a particular standard of secrecy. The frontier between what is concealed because publication is not, as we say, "compatible with the public interest" fades gradually into what is concealed because it is believed to be none of the public's business. The notion of what constitutes a person's private affairs is elastic. Thus the amount of a man's fortune is considered a private affair, and careful provision is made in the income tax law to keep it as private as possible. The sale of a piece of land is not private, but the price may be. Salaries are generally treated as more private than wages, incomes as more private than inheritances. A person's credit rating is given only a limited circulation. The profits of big corporations are more public than those of small firms. Certain kinds of conversation, between man and wife, lawyer and client, doctor and patient, priest and communicant, are privileged. Directors' meetings are generally private. So are many political conferences. Most of what is said at a cabinet meeting, or by an ambassador to the Secretary of State, or at private interviews, or dinner tables, is private. Many people regard the contract between employer and employee as private. There was a time when the affairs of all corporations were held to be as private as a man's theology is to-day. There was a time before that when his theology was held to be as public a matter as the color of his eyes. But infectious diseases, on the other hand, were once as private as the processes of a man's digestion. The history of the notion of privacy would be an entertaining tale. Sometimes the notions violently conflict, as they did when the bolsheviks published the secret treaties, or when Mr. Hughes investigated the life insurance companies, or when somebody's scandal exudes from the pages of Town Topics to the front pages of Mr. Hearst's newspapers.

Whether the reasons for privacy are good or bad, the barriers exist. Privacy is insisted upon at all kinds of places in the area of what is called public affairs. It is often very illuminating, therefore, to ask yourself how you got at the facts on which you base your opinion. Who actually saw, heard, felt, counted, named the thing, about which you have an opinion? Was it the man who told you, or the man who told him, or someone still further removed? And how much was he permitted to see? When he informs you that France thinks this and that, what part of France did he watch? How was he able to watch it? Where was he when he watched it? What Frenchmen was he permitted to talk to, what newspapers did he read, and where did they learn what they say? You can ask yourself these questions, but you can rarely answer them. They will remind you, however, of the distance which often separates your public opinion from the event with which it deals. And the reminder is itself a protection.

CHAPTER III

CONTACT AND OPPORTUNITY

1

While censorship and privacy intercept much information at its source, a very much larger body of fact never reaches the whole public at all,

or only very slowly. For there are very distinct limits upon the circulation of ideas.

A rough estimate of the effort it takes to reach "everybody" can be had by considering the Government's propaganda during the war. Remembering that the war had run over two years and a half before America entered it, that millions upon millions of printed pages had been circulated and untold speeches had been delivered, let us turn to Mr. Creel's account of his fight "for the minds of men, for the conquest of their convictions" in order that "the gospel of Americanism might be carried to every corner of the globe."
[Footnote: George Creel, How We Advertised America.]

Mr. Creel had to assemble machinery which included a Division of News that issued, he tells us, more than six thousand releases, had to enlist seventy-five thousand Four Minute Men who delivered at least seven hundred and fifty-five thousand, one hundred and ninety speeches to an aggregate of over three hundred million people. Boy scouts delivered annotated copies of President Wilson's addresses to the householders of America. Fortnightly periodicals were sent to six hundred thousand teachers. Two hundred thousand lantern slides were furnished for illustrated lectures. Fourteen hundred and thirty-eight different designs were turned out for posters, window cards, newspaper advertisements, cartoons, seals and buttons. The chambers of commerce, the churches, fraternal societies, schools, were used as channels of distribution. Yet Mr. Creel's effort, to which I have not begun to do justice, did not include Mr. McAdoo's stupendous organization for the Liberty Loans, nor Mr. Hoover's far reaching propaganda about food, nor the campaigns of the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, Jewish Welfare Board, not to mention the independent work of patriotic societies, like the League to Enforce Peace, the League of Free Nations Association, the National Security League, nor the activity of the publicity bureaus of the Allies and of the submerged nationalities.

Probably this is the largest and the most intensive effort to carry quickly a fairly uniform set of ideas to all the people of a nation. The older proselyting worked more slowly, perhaps more surely, but never so inclusively. Now if it required such extreme measures to reach everybody in time of crisis, how open are the more normal channels to men's minds? The Administration was trying, and while the war continued it very largely succeeded, I believe, in creating something that might almost be called one public opinion all over America. But think of the dogged work, the complicated ingenuity, the money and the personnel that were required. Nothing like that exists in time of peace, and as a corollary there are whole sections, there are vast groups, ghettos, enclaves and classes that hear only vaguely about much that is going on.

They live in grooves, are shut in among their own affairs, barred out of larger affairs, meet few people not of their own sort, read little. Travel and trade, the mails, the wires, and radio, railroads, highways, ships, motor cars, and in the coming generation aeroplanes, are, of course, of the utmost influence on the circulation of ideas. Each of these affects the supply and the quality of information and opinion in a most intricate way. Each is itself affected by technical, by economic, by political conditions. Every time a government relaxes the passport ceremonies or the customs inspection, every time a new railway or a new port is opened, a new shipping line established,

every time rates go up or down, the mails move faster or more slowly, the cables are uncensored and made less expensive, highways built, or widened, or improved, the circulation of ideas is influenced. Tariff schedules and subsidies affect the direction of commercial enterprise, and therefore the nature of human contracts. And so it may well happen, as it did for example in the case of Salem, Massachusetts, that a change in the art of shipbuilding will reduce a whole city from a center where international influences converge to a genteel provincial town. All the immediate effects of more rapid transit are not necessarily good. It would be difficult to say, for example, that the railroad system of France, so highly centralized upon Paris, has been an unmixed blessing to the French people.

It is certainly true that problems arising out of the means of communication are of the utmost importance, and one of the most constructive features of the program of the League of Nations has been the study given to railroad transit and access to the sea. The monopolizing of cables, [Footnote: Hence the wisdom of taking Yap seriously.] of ports, fuel stations, mountain passes, canals, straits, river courses, terminals, market places means a good deal more than the enrichment of a group of business men, or the prestige of a government. It means a barrier upon the exchange of news and opinion. But monopoly is not the only barrier. Cost and available supply are even greater ones, for if the cost of travelling or trading is prohibitive, if the demand for facilities exceeds the supply, the barriers exist even without monopoly.

2

The size of a man's income has considerable effect on his access to the world beyond his neighborhood. With money he can overcome almost every tangible obstacle of communication, he can travel, buy books and periodicals, and bring within the range of his attention almost any known fact of the world. The income of the individual, and the income of the community determine the amount of communication that is possible. But men's ideas determine how that income shall be spent, and that in turn affects in the long run the amount of income they will have. Thus also there are limitations, none the less real, because they are often self-imposed and self-indulgent.

There are portions of the sovereign people who spend most of their spare time and spare money on motoring and comparing motor cars, on bridge-whist and post-mortems, on moving-pictures and potboilers, talking always to the same people with minute variations on the same old themes. They cannot really be said to suffer from censorship, or secrecy, the high cost or the difficulty of communication. They suffer from anemia, from lack of appetite and curiosity for the human scene. Theirs is no problem of access to the world outside. Worlds of interest are waiting for them to explore, and they do not enter.

They move, as if on a leash, within a fixed radius of acquaintances according to the law and the gospel of their social set. Among men the circle of talk in business and at the club and in the smoking car is wider than the set to which they belong. Among women the social set and the circle of talk are frequently almost identical. It is in the social set that ideas derived from reading and lectures and from the circle of talk converge, are sorted out, accepted, rejected, judged and sanctioned. There it is finally decided in each phase of a discussion which authorities and which sources of information are

admissible, and which not.

Our social set consists of those who figure as people in the phrase "people are saying"; they are the people whose approval matters most intimately to us. In big cities among men and women of wide interests and with the means for moving about, the social set is not so rigidly defined. But even in big cities, there are quarters and nests of villages containing self-sufficing social sets. In smaller communities there may exist a freer circulation, a more genuine fellowship from after breakfast to before dinner. But few people do not know, nevertheless, which set they really belong to, and which not.

Usually the distinguishing mark of a social set is the presumption that the children may intermarry. To marry outside the set involves, at the very least, a moment of doubt before the engagement can be approved. Each social set has a fairly clear picture of its relative position in the hierarchy of social sets. Between sets at the same level, association is easy, individuals are quickly accepted, hospitality is normal and unembarrassed. But in contact between sets that are "higher" or "lower," there is always reciprocal hesitation, a faint malaise, and a consciousness of difference. To be sure in a society like that of the United States, individuals move somewhat freely out of one set into another, especially where there is no racial barrier and where economic position changes so rapidly.

Economic position, however, is not measured by the amount of income. For in the first generation, at least, it is not income that determines social standing, but the character of a man's work, and it may take a generation or two before this fades out of the family tradition. Thus banking, law, medicine, public utilities, newspapers, the church, large retailing, brokerage, manufacture, are rated at a different social value from salesmanship, superintendence, expert technical work, nursing, school teaching, shop keeping; and those, in turn, are rated as differently from plumbing, being a chauffeur, dressmaking, subcontracting, or stenography, as these are from being a butler, lady's maid, a moving picture operator, or a locomotive engineer. And yet the financial return does not necessarily coincide with these gradations.

3

Whatever the tests of admission, the social set when formed is not a mere economic class, but something which more nearly resembles a biological clan. Membership is intimately connected with love, marriage and children, or, to speak more exactly, with the attitudes and desires that are involved. In the social set, therefore, opinions encounter the canons of Family Tradition, Respectability, Propriety, Dignity, Taste and Form, which make up the social set's picture of itself, a picture assiduously implanted in the children. In this picture a large space is tacitly given to an authorized version of what each set is called upon inwardly to accept as the social standing of the others. The more vulgar press for an outward expression of the deference due, the others are decently and sensitively silent about their own knowledge that such deference invisibly exists. But that knowledge, becoming overt when there is a marriage, a war, or a social upheaval, is the nexus of a large bundle of dispositions classified by Trotter [Footnote: W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in War and Peace.*] under the general term instinct of the herd.

Within each social set there are augurs like the van der Luydens and Mrs. Manson Mingott in "The Age of Innocence," [Footnote: Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence.*] who are recognized as the custodians and the interpreters of its social pattern. You are made, they say, if the van der Luydens take you up. The invitations to their functions are the high sign of arrival and status. The elections to college societies, carefully graded and the gradations universally accepted, determine who is who in college. The social leaders, weighted with the ultimate eugenic responsibility, are peculiarly sensitive. Not only must they be watchfully aware of what makes for the integrity of their set, but they have to cultivate a special gift for knowing what other social sets are doing. They act as a kind of ministry of foreign affairs. Where most of the members of a set live complacently within the set, regarding it for all practical purposes as the world, the social leaders must combine an intimate knowledge of the anatomy of their own set with a persistent sense of its place in the hierarchy of sets.

The hierarchy, in fact, is bound together by the social leaders. At any one level there is something which might almost be called a social set of the social leaders. But vertically the actual binding together of society, in so far as it is bound together at all by social contact, is accomplished by those exceptional people, frequently suspect, who like Julius Beaufort and Ellen Olenska in "The Age of Innocence" move in and out. Thus there come to be established personal channels from one set to another, through which Tarde's laws of imitation operate. But for large sections of the population there are no such channels. For them the patented accounts of society and the moving pictures of high life have to serve. They may develop a social hierarchy of their own, almost unnoticed, as have the Negroes and the "foreign element," but among that assimilated mass which always considers itself the "nation," there is in spite of the great separateness of sets, a variety of personal contacts through which a circulation of standards takes place.

Some of the sets are so placed that they become what Professor Ross has called "radiant points of conventionality." [Footnote: Ross, *Social Psychology*, Ch. IX, X, XI.] Thus the social superior is likely to be imitated by the social inferior, the holder of power is imitated by subordinates, the more successful by the less successful, the rich by the poor, the city by the country. But imitation does not stop at frontiers. The powerful, socially superior, successful, rich, urban social set is fundamentally international throughout the western hemisphere, and in many ways London is its center. It counts among its membership the most influential people in the world, containing as it does the diplomatic set, high finance, the upper circles of the army and the navy, some princes of the church, a few great newspaper proprietors, their wives and mothers and daughters who wield the scepter of invitation. It is at once a great circle of talk and a real social set. But its importance comes from the fact that here at last the distinction between public and private affairs practically disappears. The private affairs of this set are public matters, and public matters are its private, often its family affairs. The confinements of Margot Asquith like the confinements of royalty are, as the philosophers say, in much the same universe of discourse as a tariff bill or a parliamentary debate.

There are large areas of governments in which this social set is not interested, and in America, at least, it has exercised only a

fluctuating control over the national government. But its power in foreign affairs is always very great, and in war time its prestige is enormously enhanced. That is natural enough because these cosmopolitans have a contact with the outer world that most people do not possess. They have dined with each other in the capitals, and their sense of national honor is no mere abstraction; it is a concrete experience of being snubbed or approved by their friends. To Dr. Kennicott of Gopher Prairie it matters mighty little what Winston thinks and a great deal what Ezra Stowbody thinks, but to Mrs. Mingott with a daughter married to the Earl of Swithin it matters a lot when she visits her daughter, or entertains Winston himself. Dr. Kennicott and Mrs. Mingott are both socially sensitive, but Mrs. Mingott is sensitive to a social set that governs the world, while Dr. Kennicott's social set governs only in Gopher Prairie. But in matters that effect the larger relationships of the Great Society, Dr. Kennicott will often be found holding what he thinks is purely his own opinion, though, as a matter of fact, it has trickled down to Gopher Prairie from High Society, transmuted on its passage through the provincial social sets.

4

It is no part of our inquiry to attempt an account of the social tissue. We need only fix in mind how big is the part played by the social set in our spiritual contact with the world, how it tends to fix what is admissible, and to determine how it shall be judged. Affairs within its immediate competence each set more or less determines for itself. Above all it determines the detailed administration of the judgment. But the judgment itself is formed on patterns [Footnote: *_Cf_*. Part III] that may be inherited from the past, transmitted or imitated from other social sets. The highest social set consists of those who embody the leadership of the Great Society. As against almost every other social set where the bulk of the opinions are first hand only about local affairs, in this Highest Society the big decisions of war and peace, of social strategy and the ultimate distribution of political power, are intimate experiences within a circle of what, potentially at least, are personal acquaintances.

Since position and contact play so big a part in determining what can be seen, heard, read, and experienced, as well as what it is permissible to see, hear, read, and know, it is no wonder that moral judgment is so much more common than constructive thought. Yet in truly effective thinking the prime necessity is to liquidate judgments, regain an innocent eye, disentangle feelings, be curious and open-hearted. Man's history being what it is, political opinion on the scale of the Great Society requires an amount of selfless equanimity rarely attainable by any one for any length of time. We are concerned in public affairs, but immersed in our private ones. The time and attention are limited that we can spare for the labor of not taking opinions for granted, and we are subject to constant interruption.

CHAPTER IV

TIME AND ATTENTION

NATURALLY it is possible to make a rough estimate only of the amount of attention people give each day to informing themselves about public affairs. Yet it is interesting that three estimates that I have examined agree tolerably well, though they were made at different times, in different places, and by different methods. [Footnote: July, 1900. D. F. Wilcox, *The American Newspaper: A Study in Social Psychology*, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. xvi, p. 56. (The statistical tables are reproduced in James Edward Rogers, *The American Newspaper*.)

1916 (?) W. D. Scott, *The Psychology of Advertising*, pp. 226-248. See also Henry Foster Adams, *Advertising and its Mental Laws*, Ch. IV.

1920 *Newspaper Reading Habits of College Students*, by Prof. George Burton Hotchkiss and Richard B. Franken, published by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc., 15 East 26th Street, New York City.]

A questionnaire was sent by Hotchkiss and Franken to 1761 men and women college students in New York City, and answers came from all but a few. Scott used a questionnaire on four thousand prominent business and professional men in Chicago and received replies from twenty-three hundred. Between seventy and seventy-five percent of all those who replied to either inquiry thought they spent a quarter of an hour a day reading newspapers. Only four percent of the Chicago group guessed at less than this and twenty-five percent guessed at more. Among the New Yorkers a little over eight percent figured their newspaper reading at less than fifteen minutes, and seventeen and a half at more.

Very few people have an accurate idea of fifteen minutes, so the figures are not to be taken literally. Moreover, business men, professional people, and college students are most of them liable to a curious little bias against appearing to spend too much time over the newspapers, and perhaps also to a faint suspicion of a desire to be known as rapid readers. All that the figures can justly be taken to mean is that over three quarters of those in the selected groups rate rather low the attention they give to printed news of the outer world.

These time estimates are fairly well confirmed by a test which is less subjective. Scott asked his Chicagoans how many papers they read each day, and was told that

14 percent read but one paper
46 " " two papers
21 " " three papers
10 " " four papers
3 " " five papers
2 " " six papers
3 " " all the papers (eight
at the time of this inquiry).

The two- and three-paper readers are sixty-seven percent, which comes fairly close to the seventy-one percent in Scott's group who rate themselves at fifteen minutes a day. The omnivorous readers of from four to eight papers coincide roughly with the twenty-five percent who rated themselves at more than fifteen minutes.

It is still more difficult to guess how the time is distributed. The college students were asked to name "the five features which interest you most." Just under twenty percent voted for "general news," just under fifteen for editorials, just under twelve for "politics," a little over eight for finance, not two years after the armistice a little over six for foreign news, three and a half for local, nearly three for business, and a quarter of one percent for news about "labor." A scattering said they were most interested in sports, special articles, the theatre, advertisements, cartoons, book reviews, "accuracy," music, "ethical tone," society, brevity, art, stories, shipping, school news, "current news," print. Disregarding these, about sixty-seven and a half percent picked as the most interesting features news and opinion that dealt with public affairs.

This was a mixed college group. The girls professed greater interest than the boys in general news, foreign news, local news, politics, editorials, the theatre, music, art, stories, cartoons, advertisements, and "ethical tone." The boys on the other hand were more absorbed in finance, sports, business page, "accuracy" and "brevity." These discriminations correspond a little too closely with the ideals of what is cultured and moral, manly and decisive, not to make one suspect the utter objectivity of the replies.

Yet they agree fairly well with the replies of Scott's Chicago business and professional men. They were asked, not what features interested them most, but why they preferred one newspaper to another. Nearly seventy-one percent based their conscious preference on local news (17.8%), or political (15.8%) or financial (11.3%), or foreign (9.5%), or general (7.2%), or editorials (9%). The other thirty percent decided on grounds not connected with public affairs. They ranged from not quite seven who decided for ethical tone, down to one twentieth of one percent who cared most about humor.

How do these preferences correspond with the space given by newspapers to various subjects? Unfortunately there are no data collected on this point for the newspapers read by the Chicago and New York groups at the time the questionnaires were made. But there is an interesting analysis made over twenty years ago by Wilcox. He studied one hundred and ten newspapers in fourteen large cities, and classified the subject matter of over nine thousand columns.

Averaged for the whole country the various newspaper matter was found to fill:

	{ (a) War News	17.9	
	{	{ Foreign	1.2
	{ (b) General "	21.8	{ Politics 6.4
I. News	55.3 {	{ Crime	3.1
	{	{ Misc.	11.1
	{	{ Business	8.2
	{ (c) Special "	15.6	{ Sport 5.1
		{ Society	2.3
II. Illustrations			3.1

III. Literature	2.4
	{ (a) Editorials 3.9
IV. Opinion	7.1 { (b) Letters & Exchange 3.2
V. Advertisements	32.1

In order to bring this table into a fair comparison, it is necessary to exclude the space given to advertisements, and recompute the percentages. For the advertisements occupied only an infinitesimal part of the conscious preference of the Chicago group or the college group. I think this is justifiable for our purposes because the press prints what advertisements it can get, [Footnote: Except those which it regards as objectionable, and those which, in rare instances, are crowded out.] whereas the rest of the paper is designed to the taste of its readers. The table would then read:

	{War News 26.4-
	{ {Foreign 1.8-
I. News	81.4+{General News 32.0+ {Political 9.4+
	{ {Crime 4.6-
	{ {Misc. 16.3+
	{
	{ {Business 12.1-
	{Special " 23.0- {Sporting 7.5+
	{ {Society 3.3-
II. Illustrations	4.6-
III. Literature	3.5+
IV. Opinion	10.5- {Editorials 5.8-
	{Letters 4.7+

In this revised table if you add up the items which may be supposed to deal with public affairs, that is to say war, foreign, political, miscellaneous, business news, and opinion, you find a total of 76.5% of the edited space devoted in 1900 to the 70.6% of reasons given by Chicago business men in 1916 for preferring a particular newspaper, and to the five features which most interested 67.5% of the New York College students in 1920.

This would seem to show that the tastes of business men and college students in big cities to-day still correspond more or less to the averaged judgments of newspaper editors in big cities twenty years ago. Since that time the proportion of features to news has undoubtedly increased, and so has the circulation and the size of newspapers. Therefore, if to-day you could secure accurate replies from more typical groups than college students or business and professional men, you would expect to find a smaller percentage of time devoted to public affairs, as well as a smaller percentage of space. On the other hand you would expect to find that the average man spends more than the quarter of an hour on his newspaper, and that while the percentage of space given to public affairs is less than twenty years ago the net amount is greater.

No elaborate deductions are to be drawn from these figures. They help merely to make somewhat more concrete our notions of the effort that goes day by day into acquiring the data of our opinions. The newspapers are, of course, not the only means, but they are certainly the principal ones. Magazines, the public forum, the chautauqua, the

church, political gatherings, trade union meetings, women's clubs, and news serials in the moving picture houses supplement the press. But taking it all at the most favorable estimate, the time each day is small when any of us is directly exposed to information from our unseen environment.

CHAPTER V

SPEED, WORDS, AND CLEARNESS

1

The unseen environment is reported to us chiefly by words. These words are transmitted by wire or radio from the reporters to the editors who fit them into print. Telegraphy is expensive, and the facilities are often limited. Press service news is, therefore, usually coded. Thus a dispatch which reads,--

"Washington, D. C. June 1.--The United States regards the question of German shipping seized in this country at the outbreak of hostilities as a closed incident,"

may pass over the wires in the following form:

"Washn i. The Uni Stas rgds tq of Ger spg seized in ts cou at t outbk o hox as a clod incident." [Footnote: Phillip's Code.]

A news item saying:

"Berlin, June 1, Chancellor Wirth told the Reichstag to-day in outlining the Government's program that 'restoration and reconciliation would be the keynote of the new Government's policy.' He added that the Cabinet was determined disarmament should be carried out loyally and that disarmament would not be the occasion of the imposition of further penalties by the Allies."

may be cabled in this form:

"Berlin 1. Chancellor Wirth told t Reichstag tdy in outlining the gvts pgn tt qn restoration & reconciliation wd b the keynote f new gvts policy. qj He added ttt cabinet ws dtmd disarmament sd b carried out loyally & tt disarmament wd n b. the ocan f imposition of further penalties bi t alis."

In this second item the substance has been culled from a long speech in a foreign tongue, translated, coded, and then decoded. The operators who receive the messages transcribe them as they go along, and I am told that a good operator can write fifteen thousand or even more words per eight hour day, with a half an hour out for lunch and two ten minute periods for rest.

2

A few words must often stand for a whole succession of acts, thoughts, feelings and consequences. We read:

"Washington, Dec. 23--A statement charging Japanese military authorities with deeds more 'frightful and barbarous' than anything ever alleged to have occurred in Belgium during the war was issued here to-day by the Korean Commission, based, the Commission said, on authentic reports received by it from Manchuria."

Here eyewitnesses, their accuracy unknown, report to the makers of 'authentic reports'; they in turn transmit these to a commission five thousand miles away. It prepares a statement, probably much too long for publication, from which a correspondent culls an item of print three and a half inches long. The meaning has to be telescoped in such a way as to permit the reader to judge how much weight to give to the news.

It is doubtful whether a supreme master of style could pack all the elements of truth that complete justice would demand into a hundred word account of what had happened in Korea during the course of several months. For language is by no means a perfect vehicle of meanings. Words, like currency, are turned over and over again, to evoke one set of images to-day, another to-morrow. There is no certainty whatever that the same word will call out exactly the same idea in the reader's mind as it did in the reporter's. Theoretically, if each fact and each relation had a name that was unique, and if everyone had agreed on the names, it would be possible to communicate without misunderstanding. In the exact sciences there is an approach to this ideal, and that is part of the reason why of all forms of world-wide cooperation, scientific inquiry is the most effective.

Men command fewer words than they have ideas to express, and language, as Jean Paul said, is a dictionary of faded metaphors. [Footnote: Cited by White, *Mechanisms of Character Formation.*] The journalist addressing half a million readers of whom he has only a dim picture, the speaker whose words are flashed to remote villages and overseas, cannot hope that a few phrases will carry the whole burden of their meaning. "The words of Lloyd George, badly understood and badly transmitted," said M. Briand to the Chamber of Deputies, [Footnote: Special Cable to *The New York Times*, May 25, 1921, by Edwin L. James.] "seemed to give the Pan-Germanists the idea that the time had come to start something." A British Prime Minister, speaking in English to the whole attentive world, speaks his own meaning in his own words to all kinds of people who will see their meaning in those words. No matter how rich or subtle--or rather the more rich and the more subtle that which he has to say, the more his meaning will suffer as it is sluiced into standard speech and then distributed again among alien minds. [Footnote: In May of 1921, relations between England and France were strained by the insurrection of M. Korfanty in Upper Silesia. The London Correspondence of the *Manchester Guardian* (May 20, 1921), contained the following item:

"The Franco-English Exchange in Words.

"In quarters well acquainted with French ways and character I find a tendency to think that undue sensibility has been shown by our press and public opinion in the lively and at times intemperate language of the French press through the present crisis. The point was put to me by a well-informed neutral observer in the following manner.

"Words, like money, are tokens of value. They represent meaning,

therefore, and just as money, their representative value goes up and down. The French word 'étonnant' was used by Bossuet with a terrible weight of meaning which it has lost to-day. A similar thing can be observed with the English word 'awful.' Some nations constitutionally tend to understate, others to overstate. What the British Tommy called an unhealthy place could only be described by an Italian soldier by means of a rich vocabulary aided with an exuberant mimicry. Nations that understate keep their word-currency sound. Nations that overstate suffer from inflation in their language.

"Expressions such as 'a distinguished scholar,' 'a clever writer,' must be translated into French as 'a great savant,' 'an exquisite master.' It is a mere matter of exchange, just as in France one pound pays 46 francs, and yet one knows that that does not increase its value at home. Englishmen reading the French press should endeavour to work out a mental operation similar to that of the banker who puts back francs into pounds, and not forget in so doing that while in normal times the change was 25 it is now 46 on account of the war. For there is a war fluctuation on word exchanges as well as on money exchanges.

"The argument, one hopes, works both ways, and Frenchmen do not fail to realize that there is as much value behind English reticence as behind their own exuberance of expression."]

Millions of those who are watching him can read hardly at all. Millions more can read the words but cannot understand them. Of those who can both read and understand, a good three-quarters we may assume have some part of half an hour a day to spare for the subject. To them the words so acquired are the cue for a whole train of ideas on which ultimately a vote of untold consequences may be based. Necessarily the ideas which we allow the words we read to evoke form the biggest part of the original data of our opinions. The world is vast, the situations that concern us are intricate, the messages are few, the biggest part of opinion must be constructed in the imagination.

When we use the word "Mexico" what picture does it evoke in a resident of New York? Likely as not, it is some composite of sand, cactus, oil wells, greasers, rum-drinking Indians, testy old cavaliers flourishing whiskers and sovereignty, or perhaps an idyllic peasantry à la Jean Jacques, assailed by the prospect of smoky industrialism, and fighting for the Rights of Man. What does the word "Japan" evoke? Is it a vague horde of slant-eyed yellow men, surrounded by Yellow Perils, picture brides, fans, Samurai, banzais, art, and cherry blossoms? Or the word "alien"? According to a group of New England college students, writing in the year 1920, an alien was the following: [Footnote: _The New Republic_: December 29, 1920, p. 142.]

"A person hostile to this country."
"A person against the government."
"A person who is on the opposite side."
"A native of an unfriendly country."
"A foreigner at war."
"A foreigner who tries to do harm to the country he is in."
"An enemy from a foreign land."
"A person against a country." etc....

Yet the word alien is an unusually exact legal term, far more exact than words like sovereignty, independence, national honor, rights,

defense, aggression, imperialism, capitalism, socialism, about which we so readily take sides "for" or "against."

3

The power to dissociate superficial analogies, attend to differences and appreciate variety is lucidity of mind. It is a relative faculty. Yet the differences in lucidity are extensive, say as between a newly born infant and a botanist examining a flower. To the infant there is

precious little difference between his own toes, his father's watch, the lamp on the table, the moon in the sky, and a nice bright yellow edition of Guy de Maupassant. To many a member of the Union League Club there is no remarkable difference between a Democrat, a Socialist, an anarchist, and a burglar, while to a highly sophisticated anarchist there is a whole universe of difference between Bakunin, Tolstoi, and Kropotkin. These examples show how difficult it might be to secure a sound public opinion about de Maupassant among babies, or about Democrats in the Union League Club.

A man who merely rides in other people's automobiles may not rise to finer discrimination than between a Ford, a taxicab, and an automobile. But let that same man own a car and drive it, let him, as the psychoanalysts would say, project his libido upon automobiles, and he will describe a difference in carburetors by looking at the rear end of a car a city block away. That is why it is often such a relief when the talk turns from "general topics" to a man's own hobby. It is like turning from the landscape in the parlor to the ploughed field outdoors. It is a return to the three dimensional world, after a sojourn in the painter's portrayal of his own emotional response to his own inattentive memory of what he imagines he ought to have seen.

We easily identify, says Ferenczi, two only partially similar things: [Footnote: Internat. Zeitschr. f. Arztl. Psychoanalyse, 1913. Translated and republished by Dr. Ernest Jones in S. Ferenczi, Contributions to Psychoanalysis, Ch. VIII, Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality.] the child more easily than the adult, the primitive or arrested mind more readily than the mature. As it first appears in the child, consciousness seems to be an unmanageable mixture of sensations. The child has no sense of time, and almost none of space, it reaches for the chandelier with the same confidence that it reaches for its mother's breast, and at first with almost the same expectation. Only very gradually does function define itself. To complete inexperience this is a coherent and undifferentiated world, in which, as someone has said of a school of philosophers, all facts are born free and equal. Those facts which belong together in the world have not yet been separated from those which happen to lie side by side in the stream of consciousness.

At first, says Ferenczi, the baby gets some of the things it wants by crying for them. This is "the period of magical hallucinatory omnipotence." In its second phase the child points to the things it wants, and they are given to it. "Omnipotence by the help of magic gestures." Later, the child learns to talk, asks for what it wishes, and is partially successful. "The period of magic thoughts and magic words." Each phase may persist for certain situations, though overlaid and only visible at times, as for example, in the little harmless superstitions from which few of us are wholly free. In each phase, partial success tends to confirm that way of acting, while failure

tends to stimulate the development of another. Many individuals, parties, and even nations, rarely appear to transcend the magical organization of experience. But in the more advanced sections of the most advanced peoples, trial and error after repeated failure has led to the invention of a new principle. The moon, they learn, is not moved by baying at it. Crops are not raised from the soil by spring festivals or Republican majorities, but by sunlight, moisture, seeds, fertilizer, and cultivation. [Footnote: Ferenczi, being a pathologist, does not describe this maturer period where experience is organized as equations, the phase of realism on the basis of science.]

Allowing for the purely schematic value of Ferenczi's categories of response, the quality which we note as critical is the power to discriminate among crude perceptions and vague analogies. This power has been studied under laboratory conditions. [Footnote: See, for example, Diagnostische Assoziation Studien, conducted at the Psychiatric University Clinic in Zurich under the direction of Dr. C. G. Jung. These tests were carried on principally under the so-called Krapelin-Aschaffenburg classification. They show reaction time, classify response to the stimulant word as inner, outer, and clang, show separate results for the first and second hundred words, for reaction time and reaction quality when the subject is distracted by holding an idea in mind, or when he replies while beating time with a metronome. Some of the results are summarized in Jung, *Analytical Psychology*, Ch. II, transl. by Dr. Constance E. Long.] The Zurich Association Studies indicate clearly that slight mental fatigue, an inner disturbance of attention or an external distraction, tend to "flatten" the quality of the response. An example of the very "flat" type is the clang association (cat-hat), a reaction to the sound and not to the sense of the stimulant word. One test, for example, shows a 9% increase of clang in the second series of a hundred reactions. Now the clang is almost a repetition, a very primitive form of analogy.

4

If the comparatively simple conditions of a laboratory can so readily flatten out discrimination, what must be the effect of city life? In the laboratory the fatigue is slight enough, the distraction rather trivial. Both are balanced in measure by the subject's interest and self-consciousness. Yet if the beat of a metronome will depress intelligence, what do eight or twelve hours of noise, odor, and heat in a factory, or day upon day among chattering typewriters and telephone bells and slamming doors, do to the political judgments formed on the basis of newspapers read in street-cars and subways? Can anything be heard in the hubbub that does not shriek, or be seen in the general glare that does not flash like an electric sign? The life of the city dweller lacks solitude, silence, ease. The nights are noisy and ablaze. The people of a big city are assaulted by incessant sound, now violent and jagged, now falling into unfinished rhythms, but endless and remorseless. Under modern industrialism thought goes on in a bath of noise. If its discriminations are often flat and foolish, here at least is some small part of the reason. The sovereign people determines life and death and happiness under conditions where experience and experiment alike show thought to be most difficult. "The intolerable burden of thought" is a burden when the conditions make it burdensome. It is no burden when the conditions are favorable. It is as exhilarating to think as it is to dance, and just as natural.

Every man whose business it is to think knows that he must for part of

the day create about himself a pool of silence. But in that helter-skelter which we flatter by the name of civilization, the citizen performs the perilous business of government under the worst possible conditions. A faint recognition of this truth inspires the movement for a shorter work day, for longer vacations, for light, air, order, sunlight and dignity in factories and offices. But if the intellectual quality of our life is to be improved that is only the merest beginning. So long as so many jobs are an endless and, for the worker, an aimless routine, a kind of automatism using one set of muscles in one monotonous pattern, his whole life will tend towards an automatism in which nothing is particularly to be distinguished from anything else unless it is announced with a thunderclap. So long as he is physically imprisoned in crowds by day and even by night his attention will flicker and relax. It will not hold fast and define clearly where he is the victim of all sorts of pother, in a home which needs to be ventilated of its welter of drudgery, shrieking children, raucous assertions, indigestible food, bad air, and suffocating ornament.

Occasionally perhaps we enter a building which is composed and spacious; we go to a theatre where modern stagecraft has cut away distraction, or go to sea, or into a quiet place, and we remember how cluttered, how capricious, how superfluous and clamorous is the ordinary urban life of our time. We learn to understand why our addled minds seize so little with precision, why they are caught up and tossed about in a kind of tarantella by headlines and catch-words, why so often they cannot tell things apart or discern identity in apparent differences.

5

But this external disorder is complicated further by internal. Experiment shows that the speed, the accuracy, and the intellectual quality of association is deranged by what we are taught to call emotional conflicts. Measured in fifths of a second, a series of a hundred stimuli containing both neutral and hot words may show a variation as between 5 and 32 or even a total failure to respond at all. [Footnote: Jung, *Clark Lectures*.] Obviously our public opinion is in intermittent contact with complexes of all sorts; with ambition and economic interest, personal animosity, racial prejudice, class feeling and what not. They distort our reading, our thinking, our talking and our behavior in a great variety of ways.

And finally since opinions do not stop at the normal members of society, since for the purposes of an election, a propaganda, a following, numbers constitute power, the quality of attention is still further depressed. The mass of absolutely illiterate, of feeble-minded, grossly neurotic, undernourished and frustrated individuals, is very considerable, much more considerable there is reason to think than we generally suppose. Thus a wide popular appeal is circulated among persons who are mentally children or barbarians, people whose lives are a morass of entanglements, people whose vitality is exhausted, shut-in people, and people whose experience has comprehended no factor in the problem under discussion. The stream of public opinion is stopped by them in little eddies of misunderstanding, where it is discolored with prejudice and far fetched analogy.

A "broad appeal" takes account of the quality of association, and is made to those susceptibilities which are widely distributed. A

"narrow" or a "special" appeal is one made to those susceptibilities which are uncommon. But the same individual may respond with very different quality to different stimuli, or to the same stimuli at different times. Human susceptibilities are like an alpine country. There are isolated peaks, there are extensive but separated plateaus, and there are deeper strata which are quite continuous for nearly all mankind. Thus the individuals whose susceptibilities reach the rarefied atmosphere of those peaks where there exists an exquisite difference between Frege and Peano, or between Sassetta's earlier and later periods, may be good staunch Republicans at another level of appeal, and when they are starving and afraid, indistinguishable from any other starving and frightened person. No wonder that the magazines with the large circulations prefer the face of a pretty girl to any other trade mark, a face, pretty enough to be alluring, but innocent enough to be acceptable. For the "psychic level" on which the stimulus acts determines whether the public is to be potentially a large or a small one.

6

Thus the environment with which our public opinions deal is refracted in many ways, by censorship and privacy at the source, by physical and social barriers at the other end, by scanty attention, by the poverty of language, by distraction, by unconscious constellations of feeling, by wear and tear, violence, monotony. These limitations upon our access to that environment combine with the obscurity and complexity of the facts themselves to thwart clearness and justice of perception, to substitute misleading fictions for workable ideas, and to deprive us of adequate checks upon those who consciously strive to mislead.

PART III

STEREOTYPES

CHAPTER 6. STEREOTYPES

- " 7. STEREOTYPES AS DEFENSE
- " 8. BLIND SPOTS AND THEIR VALUE
- " 9. CODES AND THEIR ENEMIES
- " 10. THE DETECTION OF STEREOTYPES

CHAPTER VI

STEREOTYPES

1

Each of us lives and works on a small part of the earth's surface, moves in a small circle, and of these acquaintances knows only a few intimately. Of any public event that has wide effects we see at best only a phase and an aspect. This is as true of the eminent insiders who draft treaties, make laws, and issue orders, as it is of those who have treaties framed for them, laws promulgated to them, orders given at them. Inevitably our opinions cover a bigger space, a longer reach

of time, a greater number of things, than we can directly observe. They have, therefore, to be pieced together out of what others have reported and what we can imagine.

Yet even the eyewitness does not bring back a naïve picture of the scene. [Footnote: _E. g. cf._ Edmond Locard, *L'Enquête Criminelle et les Méthodes Scientifiques*.] A great deal of interesting material has been gathered in late years on the credibility of the witness, which shows, as an able reviewer of Dr. Locard's book says in *The Times* (London) Literary Supplement (August 18, 1921), that credibility varies as to classes of witnesses and classes of events, and also as to type of perception. Thus, perceptions of touch, odor, and taste have low evidential value. Our hearing is defective and arbitrary when it judges the source and direction of sound, and in listening to the talk of other people "words which are not heard will be supplied by the witness in all good faith. He will have a theory of the purport of the conversation, and will arrange the sounds he heard to fit it." Even visual perceptions are liable to great error, as in identification, recognition, judgment of distance, estimates of numbers, for example, the size of a crowd. In the untrained observer, the sense of time is highly variable. All these original weaknesses are complicated by tricks of memory, and the incessant creative quality of the imagination. _Cf._ also Sherrington, *The Integrative Action of the Nervous System*, pp. 318-327.

The late Professor Hugo Münsterberg wrote a popular book on this subject called *On the Witness Stand*.] For experience seems to show that he himself brings something to the scene which later he takes away from it, that oftener than not what he imagines to be the account of an event is really a transfiguration of it. Few facts in consciousness seem to be merely given. Most facts in consciousness seem to be partly made. A report is the joint product of the knower and known, in which the role of the observer is always selective and usually creative. The facts we see depend on where we are placed, and the habits of our eyes.

An unfamiliar scene is like the baby's world, "one great, blooming, buzzing confusion." [Footnote: Wm. James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 488.] This is the way, says Mr. John Dewey, [Footnote: John Dewey, *How We Think*, pg 121.] that any new thing strikes an adult, so far as the thing is really new and strange. "Foreign languages that we do not understand always seem jibberings, babblings, in which it is impossible to fix a definite, clear-cut, individualized group of sounds. The countryman in the crowded street, the landlubber at sea, the ignoramus in sport at a contest between experts in a complicated game, are further instances. Put an inexperienced man in a factory, and at first the work seems to him a meaningless medley. All strangers of another race proverbially look alike to the visiting stranger. Only gross differences of size or color are perceived by an outsider in a flock of sheep, each of which is perfectly individualized to the shepherd. A diffusive blur and an indiscriminately shifting suction characterize what we do not understand. The problem of the acquisition of meaning by things, or (stated in another way) of forming habits of simple apprehension, is thus the problem of introducing (1) *definiteness* and *distinction* and (2) *consistency* or *stability* of meaning into what is otherwise vague and wavering."

But the kind of definiteness and consistency introduced depends upon

who introduces them. In a later passage [Footnote: *op. cit.*, p. 133.] Dewey gives an example of how differently an experienced layman and a chemist might define the word metal. "Smoothness, hardness, glossiness, and brilliancy, heavy weight for its size ... the serviceable properties of capacity for being hammered and pulled without breaking, of being softened by heat and hardened by cold, of retaining the shape and form given, of resistance to pressure and decay, would probably be included" in the layman's definition. But the chemist would likely as not ignore these esthetic and utilitarian qualities, and define a metal as "any chemical element that enters into combination with oxygen so as to form a base."

For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture. Of the great men who assembled at Paris to settle the affairs of mankind, how many were there who were able to see much of the Europe about them, rather than their commitments about Europe? Could anyone have penetrated the mind of M. Clemenceau, would he have found there images of the Europe of 1919, or a great sediment of stereotyped ideas accumulated and hardened in a long and pugnacious existence? Did he see the Germans of 1919, or the German type as he had learned to see it since 1871? He saw the type, and among the reports that came to him from Germany, he took to heart those reports, and, it seems, those only, which fitted the type that was in his mind. If a junker blustered, that was an authentic German; if a labor leader confessed the guilt of the empire, he was not an authentic German.

At a Congress of Psychology in Göttingen an interesting experiment was made with a crowd of presumably trained observers. [Footnote: A. von Gennep, *La formation des légendes*, pp. 158-159. Cited F. van Langenhove, *The Growth of a Legend*, pp. 120-122.]

"Not far from the hall in which the Congress was sitting there was a public fete with a masked ball. Suddenly the door of the hall was thrown open and a clown rushed in madly pursued by a negro, revolver in hand. They stopped in the middle of the room fighting; the clown fell, the negro leapt upon him, fired, and then both rushed out of the hall. The whole incident hardly lasted twenty seconds.

"The President asked those present to write immediately a report since there was sure to be a judicial inquiry. Forty reports were sent in. Only one had less than 20% of mistakes in regard to the principal facts; fourteen had 20% to 40% of mistakes; twelve from 40% to 50%; thirteen more than 50%. Moreover in twenty-four accounts 10% of the details were pure inventions and this proportion was exceeded in ten accounts and diminished in six. Briefly a quarter of the accounts were false.

"It goes without saying that the whole scene had been arranged and even photographed in advance. The ten false reports may then be relegated to the category of tales and legends; twenty-four accounts are half legendary, and six have a value approximating to exact evidence."

Thus out of forty trained observers writing a responsible account of a scene that had just happened before their eyes, more than a majority

saw a scene that had not taken place. What then did they see? One would suppose it was easier to tell what had occurred, than to invent something which had not occurred. They saw their stereotype of such a brawl. All of them had in the course of their lives acquired a series of images of brawls, and these images flickered before their eyes. In one man these images displaced less than 20% of the actual scene, in thirteen men more than half. In thirty-four out of the forty observers the stereotypes preempted at least one-tenth of the scene.

A distinguished art critic has said [Footnote: Bernard Berenson, *The Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance*, pp. 60, *et seq.*] that "what with the almost numberless shapes assumed by an object. ... What with our insensitiveness and inattention, things scarcely would have for us features and outlines so determined and clear that we could recall them at will, but for the stereotyped shapes art has lent them." The truth is even broader than that, for the stereotyped shapes lent to the world come not merely from art, in the sense of painting and sculpture and literature, but from our moral codes and our social philosophies and our political agitations as well. Substitute in the following passage of Mr. Berenson's the words 'politics,' 'business,' and 'society,' for the word 'art' and the sentences will be no less true: "... unless years devoted to the study of all schools of art have taught us also to see with our own eyes, we soon fall into the habit of moulding whatever we look at into the forms borrowed from the one art with which we are acquainted. There is our standard of artistic reality. Let anyone give us shapes and colors which we cannot instantly match in our paltry stock of hackneyed forms and tints, and we shake our heads at his failure to reproduce things as we know they certainly are, or we accuse him of insincerity."

Mr. Berenson speaks of our displeasure when a painter "does not visualize objects exactly as we do," and of the difficulty of appreciating the art of the Middle Ages because since then "our manner of visualizing forms has changed in a thousand ways." [Footnote: *Cf.* also his comment on *Dante's Visual Images*, and his *Early Illustrators* in *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (First Series), p. 13. "We cannot help dressing Virgil as a Roman, and giving him a 'classical profile' and 'statuesque carriage,' but Dante's visual image of Virgil was probably no less mediaeval, no more based on a critical reconstruction of antiquity, than his entire conception of the Roman poet. Fourteenth Century illustrators make Virgil look like a mediaeval scholar, dressed in cap and gown, and there is no reason why Dante's visual image of him should have been other than this."] He goes on to show how in regard to the human figure we have been taught to see what we do see. "Created by Donatello and Masaccio, and sanctioned by the Humanists, the new canon of the human figure, the new cast of features ... presented to the ruling classes of that time the type of human being most likely to win the day in the combat of human forces... Who had the power to break through this new standard of vision and, out of the chaos of things, to select shapes more definitely expressive of reality than those fixed by men of genius? No one had such power. People had perforce to see things in that way and in no other, and to see only the shapes depicted, to love only the ideals presented...." [Footnote: *The Central Italian Painters*, pp. 66-67.]

2

If we cannot fully understand the acts of other people, until we know

what they think they know, then in order to do justice we have to appraise not only the information which has been at their disposal, but the minds through which they have filtered it. For the accepted types, the current patterns, the standard versions, intercept information on its way to consciousness. Americanization, for example, is superficially at least the substitution of American for European stereotypes. Thus the peasant who might see his landlord as if he were the lord of the manor, his employer as he saw the local magnate, is taught by Americanization to see the landlord and employer according to American standards. This constitutes a change of mind, which is, in effect, when the inoculation succeeds, a change of vision. His eye sees differently. One kindly gentlewoman has confessed that the stereotypes are of such overweening importance, that when hers are not indulged, she at least is unable to accept the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God: "we are strangely affected by the clothes we wear. Garments create a mental and social atmosphere. What can be hoped for the Americanism of a man who insists on employing a London tailor? One's very food affects his Americanism. What kind of American consciousness can grow in the atmosphere of sauerkraut and Limburger cheese? Or what can you expect of the Americanism of the man whose breath always reeks of garlic?" [Footnote: Cited by Mr. Edward Hale Bierstadt, *New Republic*, June 1 1921 p. 21.]

This lady might well have been the patron of a pageant which a friend of mine once attended. It was called the Melting Pot, and it was given on the Fourth of July in an automobile town where many foreign-born workers are employed. In the center of the baseball park at second base stood a huge wooden and canvas pot. There were flights of steps up to the rim on two sides. After the audience had settled itself, and the band had played, a procession came through an opening at one side of the field. It was made up of men of all the foreign nationalities employed in the factories. They wore their native costumes, they were singing their national songs; they danced their folk dances, and carried the banners of all Europe. The master of ceremonies was the principal of the grade school dressed as Uncle Sam. He led them to the pot. He directed them up the steps to the rim, and inside. He called them out again on the other side. They came, dressed in derby hats, coats, pants, vest, stiff collar and polka-dot tie, undoubtedly, said my friend, each with an Eversharp pencil in his pocket, and all singing the Star-Spangled Banner.

To the promoters of this pageant, and probably to most of the actors, it seemed as if they had managed to express the most intimate difficulty to friendly association between the older peoples of America and the newer. The contradiction of their stereotypes interfered with the full recognition of their common humanity. The people who change their names know this. They mean to change themselves, and the attitude of strangers toward them.

There is, of course, some connection between the scene outside and the mind through which we watch it, just as there are some long-haired men and short-haired women in radical gatherings. But to the hurried observer a slight connection is enough. If there are two bobbed heads and four beards in the audience, it will be a bobbed and bearded audience to the reporter who knows beforehand that such gatherings are composed of people with these tastes in the management of their hair. There is a connection between our vision and the facts, but it is often a strange connection. A man has rarely looked at a landscape, let us say, except to examine its possibilities for division into

building lots, but he has seen a number of landscapes hanging in the parlor. And from them he has learned to think of a landscape as a rosy sunset, or as a country road with a church steeple and a silver moon. One day he goes to the country, and for hours he does not see a single landscape. Then the sun goes down looking rosy. At once he recognizes a landscape and exclaims that it is beautiful. But two days later, when he tries to recall what he saw, the odds are that he will remember chiefly some landscape in a parlor.

Unless he has been drunk or dreaming or insane he did see a sunset, but he saw in it, and above all remembers from it, more of what the oil painting taught him to observe, than what an impressionist painter, for example, or a cultivated Japanese would have seen and taken away with him. And the Japanese and the painter in turn will have seen and remembered more of the form they had learned, unless they happen to be the very rare people who find fresh sight for mankind. In untrained observation we pick recognizable signs out of the environment. The signs stand for ideas, and these ideas we fill out with our stock of images. We do not so much see this man and that sunset; rather we notice that the thing is man or sunset, and then see chiefly what our mind is already full of on those subjects.

3

There is economy in this. For the attempt to see all things freshly and in detail, rather than as types and generalities, is exhausting, and among busy affairs practically out of the question. In a circle of friends, and in relation to close associates or competitors, there is no shortcut through, and no substitute for, an individualized understanding. Those whom we love and admire most are the men and women whose consciousness is peopled thickly with persons rather than with types, who know us rather than the classification into which we might fit. For even without phrasing it to ourselves, we feel intuitively that all classification is in relation to some purpose not necessarily our own; that between two human beings no association has final dignity in which each does not take the other as an end in himself. There is a taint on any contact between two people which does not affirm as an axiom the personal inviolability of both.

But modern life is hurried and multifarious, above all physical distance separates men who are often in vital contact with each other, such as employer and employee, official and voter. There is neither time nor opportunity for intimate acquaintance. Instead we notice a trait which marks a well known type, and fill in the rest of the picture by means of the stereotypes we carry about in our heads. He is an agitator. That much we notice, or are told. Well, an agitator is this sort of person, and so he is this sort of person. He is an intellectual. He is a plutocrat. He is a foreigner. He is a "South European." He is from Back Bay. He is a Harvard Man. How different from the statement: he is a Yale Man. He is a regular fellow. He is a West Pointer. He is an old army sergeant. He is a Greenwich Villager: what don't we know about him then, and about her? He is an international banker. He is from Main Street.

The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception. They

mark out certain objects as familiar or strange, emphasizing the difference, so that the slightly familiar is seen as very familiar, and the somewhat strange as sharply alien. They are aroused by small signs, which may vary from a true index to a vague analogy. Aroused, they flood fresh vision with older images, and project into the world what has been resurrected in memory. Were there no practical uniformities in the environment, there would be no economy and only error in the human habit of accepting foresight for sight. But there are uniformities sufficiently accurate, and the need of economizing attention is so inevitable, that the abandonment of all stereotypes for a wholly innocent approach to experience would impoverish human life.

What matters is the character of the stereotypes, and the gullibility with which we employ them. And these in the end depend upon those inclusive patterns which constitute our philosophy of life. If in that philosophy we assume that the world is codified according to a code which we possess, we are likely to make our reports of what is going on describe a world run by our code. But if our philosophy tells us that each man is only a small part of the world, that his intelligence catches at best only phases and aspects in a coarse net of ideas, then, when we use our stereotypes, we tend to know that they are only stereotypes, to hold them lightly, to modify them gladly. We tend, also, to realize more and more clearly when our ideas started, where they started, how they came to us, why we accepted them. All useful history is antiseptic in this fashion. It enables us to know what fairy tale, what school book, what tradition, what novel, play, picture, phrase, planted one preconception in this mind, another in that mind.

4

Those who wish to censor art do not at least underestimate this influence. They generally misunderstand it, and almost always they are absurdly bent on preventing other people from discovering anything not sanctioned by them. But at any rate, like Plato in his argument about the poets, they feel vaguely that the types acquired through fiction tend to be imposed on reality. Thus there can be little doubt that the moving picture is steadily building up imagery which is then evoked by the words people read in their newspapers. In the whole experience of the race there has been no aid to visualization comparable to the cinema. If a Florentine wished to visualize the saints, he could go to the frescoes in his church, where he might see a vision of saints standardized for his time by Giotto. If an Athenian wished to visualize the gods he went to the temples. But the number of objects which were pictured was not great. And in the East, where the spirit of the second commandment was widely accepted, the portraiture of concrete things was even more meager, and for that reason perhaps the faculty of practical decision was by so much reduced. In the western world, however, during the last few centuries there has been an enormous increase in the volume and scope of secular description, the word picture, the narrative, the illustrated narrative, and finally the moving picture and, perhaps, the talking picture.

Photographs have the kind of authority over imagination to-day, which the printed word had yesterday, and the spoken word before that. They seem utterly real. They come, we imagine, directly to us without human meddling, and they are the most effortless food for the mind conceivable. Any description in words, or even any inert picture,

requires an effort of memory before a picture exists in the mind. But on the screen the whole process of observing, describing, reporting, and then imagining, has been accomplished for you. Without more trouble than is needed to stay awake the result which your imagination is always aiming at is reeled off on the screen. The shadowy idea becomes vivid; your hazy notion, let us say, of the Ku Klux Klan, thanks to Mr. Griffiths, takes vivid shape when you see the Birth of a Nation. Historically it may be the wrong shape, morally it may be a pernicious shape, but it is a shape, and I doubt whether anyone who has seen the film and does not know more about the Ku Klux Klan than Mr. Griffiths, will ever hear the name again without seeing those white horsemen.

5

And so when we speak of the mind of a group of people, of the French mind, the militarist mind, the bolshevik mind, we are liable to serious confusion unless we agree to separate the instinctive equipment from the stereotypes, the patterns, and the formulae which play so decisive a part in building up the mental world to which the native character is adapted and responds. Failure to make this distinction accounts for oceans of loose talk about collective minds, national souls, and race psychology. To be sure a stereotype may be so consistently and authoritatively transmitted in each generation from parent to child that it seems almost like a biological fact. In some respects, we may indeed have become, as Mr. Wallas says, [Footnote: Graham Wallas, *Our Social Heritage*, p. 17.] biologically parasitic upon our social heritage. But certainly there is not the least scientific evidence which would enable anyone to argue that men are born with the political habits of the country in which they are born. In so far as political habits are alike in a nation, the first places to look for an explanation are the nursery, the school, the church, not in that limbo inhabited by Group Minds and National Souls. Until you have thoroughly failed to see tradition being handed on from parents, teachers, priests, and uncles, it is a solecism of the worst order to ascribe political differences to the germ plasm.

It is possible to generalize tentatively and with a decent humility about comparative differences within the same category of education and experience. Yet even this is a tricky enterprise. For almost no two experiences are exactly alike, not even of two children in the same household. The older son never does have the experience of being the younger. And therefore, until we are able to discount the difference in nurture, we must withhold judgment about differences of nature. As well judge the productivity of two soils by comparing their yield before you know which is in Labrador and which in Iowa, whether they have been cultivated and enriched, exhausted, or allowed to run wild.

CHAPTER VII

STEREOTYPES AS DEFENSE

1

THERE is another reason, besides economy of effort, why we so often

hold to our stereotypes when we might pursue a more disinterested vision. The systems of stereotypes may be the core of our personal tradition, the defenses of our position in society.

They are an ordered, more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves. They may not be a complete picture of the world, but they are a picture of a possible world to which we are adapted. In that world people and things have their well-known places, and do certain expected things. We feel at home there. We fit in. We are members. We know the way around. There we find the charm of the familiar, the normal, the dependable; its grooves and shapes are where we are accustomed to find them. And though we have abandoned much that might have tempted us before we creased ourselves into that mould, once we are firmly in, it fits as snugly as an old shoe.

No wonder, then, that any disturbance of the stereotypes seems like an attack upon the foundations of the universe. It is an attack upon the foundations of our universe, and, where big things are at stake, we do not readily admit that there is any distinction between our universe and the universe. A world which turns out to be one in which those we honor are unworthy, and those we despise are noble, is nerve-racking. There is anarchy if our order of precedence is not the only possible one. For if the meek should indeed inherit the earth, if the first should be last, if those who are without sin alone may cast a stone, if to Caesar you render only the things that are Caesar's, then the foundations of self-respect would be shaken for those who have arranged their lives as if these maxims were not true. A pattern of stereotypes is not neutral. It is not merely a way of substituting order for the great blooming, buzzing confusion of reality. It is not merely a short cut. It is all these things and something more. It is the guarantee of our self-respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights. The stereotypes are, therefore, highly charged with the feelings that are attached to them. They are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy.

2

When, for example, in the fourth century B. C., Aristotle wrote his defense of slavery in the face of increasing skepticism, [Footnote: Zimmern: Greek Commonwealth. See his footnote, p. 383.] the Athenian slaves were in great part indistinguishable from free citizens. Mr. Zimmern quotes an amusing passage from the Old Oligarch explaining the good treatment of the slaves. "Suppose it were legal for a slave to be beaten by a citizen, it would frequently happen that an Athenian might be mistaken for a slave or an alien and receive a beating;--since the Athenian people is not better clothed than the slave or alien, nor in personal appearance is there any superiority." This absence of distinction would naturally tend to dissolve the institution. If free men and slaves looked alike, what basis was there for treating them so differently? It was this confusion which Aristotle set himself to clear away in the first book of his Politics. With unerring instinct he understood that to justify slavery he must teach the Greeks a way of seeing their slaves that comported with the continuance of slavery.

So, said Aristotle, there are beings who are slaves by nature.

[Footnote: Politics, Bk. 1, Ch. 5.] "He then is by nature formed a slave, who is fitted to become the chattel of another person, and on that account is so." All this really says is that whoever happens to be a slave is by nature intended to be one. Logically the statement is worthless, but in fact it is not a proposition at all, and logic has nothing to do with it. It is a stereotype, or rather it is part of a stereotype. The rest follows almost immediately. After asserting that slaves perceive reason, but are not endowed with the use of it, Aristotle insists that "it is the intention of nature to make the bodies of slaves and free men different from each other, that the one should be robust for their necessary purposes, but the other erect; useless indeed for such servile labours, but fit for civil life... It is clear then that some men are free by nature, and others are slaves. ..."

If we ask ourselves what is the matter with Aristotle's argument, we find that he has begun by erecting a great barrier between himself and the facts. When he had said that those who are slaves are by nature intended to be slaves, he at one stroke excluded the fatal question whether those particular men who happened to be slaves were the particular men intended by nature to be slaves. For that question would have tainted each case of slavery with doubt. And since the fact of being a slave was not evidence that a man was destined to be one, no certain test would have remained. Aristotle, therefore, excluded entirely that destructive doubt. Those who are slaves are intended to be slaves. Each slave holder was to look upon his chattels as natural slaves. When his eye had been trained to see them that way, he was to note as confirmation of their servile character the fact that they performed servile work, that they were competent to do servile work, and that they had the muscles to do servile work.

This is the perfect stereotype. Its hallmark is that it precedes the use of reason; is a form of perception, imposes a certain character on the data of our senses before the data reach the intelligence. The stereotype is like the lavender window-panes on Beacon Street, like the door-keeper at a costume ball who judges whether the guest has an appropriate masquerade. There is nothing so obdurate to education or to criticism as the stereotype. It stamps itself upon the evidence in the very act of securing the evidence. That is why the accounts of returning travellers are often an interesting tale of what the traveller carried abroad with him on his trip. If he carried chiefly his appetite, a zeal for tiled bathrooms, a conviction that the Pullman car is the acme of human comfort, and a belief that it is proper to tip waiters, taxicab drivers, and barbers, but under no circumstances station agents and ushers, then his Odyssey will be replete with good meals and bad meals, bathing adventures, compartment-train escapades, and voracious demands for money. Or if he is a more serious soul he may while on tour have found himself at celebrated spots. Having touched base, and cast one furtive glance at the monument, he buried his head in Baedeker, read every word through, and moved on to the next celebrated spot; and thus returned with a compact and orderly impression of Europe, rated one star, or two.

In some measure, stimuli from the outside, especially when they are printed or spoken words, evoke some part of a system of stereotypes, so that the actual sensation and the preconception occupy consciousness at the same time. The two are blended, much as if we looked at red through blue glasses and saw green. If what we are looking at corresponds successfully with what we anticipated, the

stereotype is reinforced for the future, as it is in a man who knows in advance that the Japanese are cunning and has the bad luck to run across two dishonest Japanese.

If the experience contradicts the stereotype, one of two things happens. If the man is no longer plastic, or if some powerful interest makes it highly inconvenient to rearrange his stereotypes, he pooh-poohs the contradiction as an exception that proves the rule, discredits the witness, finds a flaw somewhere, and manages to forget it. But if he is still curious and open-minded, the novelty is taken into the picture, and allowed to modify it. Sometimes, if the incident is striking enough, and if he has felt a general discomfort with his established scheme, he may be shaken to such an extent as to distrust all accepted ways of looking at life, and to expect that normally a thing will not be what it is generally supposed to be. In the extreme case, especially if he is literary, he may develop a passion for inverting the moral canon by making Judas, Benedict Arnold, or Caesar Borgia the hero of his tale.

3

The role played by the stereotype can be seen in the German tales about Belgian snipers. Those tales curiously enough were first refuted by an organization of German Catholic priests known as Pax. [Footnote: Fernand van Langenhove, *The Growth of a Legend.* The author is a Belgian sociologist.] The existence of atrocity stories is itself not remarkable, nor that the German people gladly believed them. But it is remarkable that a great conservative body of patriotic Germans should have set out as early as August 16, 1914, to contradict a collection of slanders on the enemy, even though such slanders were of the utmost value in soothing the troubled conscience of their fellow countrymen. Why should the Jesuit order in particular have set out to destroy a fiction so important to the fighting morale of Germany?

I quote from M. van Langenhove's account:

"Hardly had the German armies entered Belgium when strange rumors began to circulate. They spread from place to place, they were reproduced by the press, and they soon permeated the whole of Germany. It was said that the Belgian people, *instigated by the clergy,* had intervened perfidiously in the hostilities; had attacked by surprise isolated detachments; had indicated to the enemy the positions occupied by the troops; that old men, and even children, had been guilty of horrible atrocities upon wounded and defenseless German soldiers, tearing out their eyes and cutting off fingers, nose or ears; *that the priests from their pulpits had exhorted the people to commit these crimes, promising them as a reward the kingdom of heaven, and had even taken the lead in this barbarity.*

"Public credulity accepted these stories. The highest powers in the state welcomed them without hesitation and endorsed them with their authority...

"In this way public opinion in Germany was disturbed and a lively indignation manifested itself, *directed especially against the priests* who were held responsible for the barbarities attributed to the Belgians... By a natural diversion *the anger* to which they were a prey *was directed* by the Germans *against the Catholic clergy generally.* Protestants allowed the old religious

hatred to be relighted in their minds and delivered themselves to attacks against Catholics. A new *_Kulturkampf_* was let loose.

"The Catholics did not delay in taking action against this hostile attitude." (Italics mine) [Footnote: *_Op. cit._*, pp. 5-7]

There may have been some sniping. It would be extraordinary if every angry Belgian had rushed to the library, opened a manual of international law, and had informed himself whether he had a right to take potshot at the infernal nuisance tramping through his streets. It would be no less extraordinary if an army that had never been under fire, did not regard every bullet that came its way as unauthorized, because it was inconvenient, and indeed as somehow a violation of the rules of the *Kriegspiel*, which then constituted its only experience of war. One can imagine the more sensitive bent on convincing themselves that the people to whom they were doing such terrible things must be terrible people. And so the legend may have been spun until it reached the censors and propagandists, who, whether they believed it or not, saw its value, and let it loose on the German civilians. They too were not altogether sorry to find that the people they were outraging were sub-human. And, above all, since the legend came from their heroes, they were not only entitled to believe it, they were unpatriotic if they did not.

But where so much is left to the imagination because the scene of action is lost in the fog of war, there is no check and no control. The legend of the ferocious Belgian priests soon tapped an old hatred. For in the minds of most patriotic protestant Germans, especially of the upper classes, the picture of Bismarck's victories included a long quarrel with the Roman Catholics. By a process of association, Belgian priests became priests, and hatred of Belgians a vent for all their hatreds. These German protestants did what some Americans did when under the stress of war they created a compound object of hatred out of the enemy abroad and all their opponents at home. Against this synthetic enemy, the Hun in Germany and the Hun within the Gate, they launched all the animosity that was in them.

The Catholic resistance to the atrocity tales was, of course, defensive. It was aimed at those particular fictions which aroused animosity against all Catholics, rather than against Belgian Catholics alone. The *_Informations Pax_*, says M. van Langenhove, had only an ecclesiastical bearing and "confined their attention almost exclusively to the reprehensible acts attributed to the priests." And yet one cannot help wondering a little about what was set in motion in the minds of German Catholics by this revelation of what Bismarck's empire meant in relation to them; and also whether there was any obscure connection between that knowledge and the fact that the prominent German politician who was willing in the armistice to sign the death warrant of the empire was Erzberger, [Footnote: Since this was written, Erzberger has been assassinated.] the leader of the Catholic Centre Party.

CHAPTER VIII

BLIND SPOTS AND THEIR VALUE

I HAVE been speaking of stereotypes rather than ideals, because the word ideal is usually reserved for what we consider the good, the true and the beautiful. Thus it carries the hint that here is something to be copied or attained. But our repertory of fixed impressions is wider than that. It contains ideal swindlers, ideal Tammany politicians, ideal jingoes, ideal agitators, ideal enemies. Our stereotyped world is not necessarily the world we should like it to be. It is simply the kind of world we expect it to be. If events correspond there is a sense of familiarity, and we feel that we are moving with the movement of events. Our slave must be a slave by nature, if we are Athenians who wish to have no qualms. If we have told our friends that we do eighteen holes of golf in 95, we tell them after doing the course in 110, that we are not ourselves to-day. That is to say, we are not acquainted with the duffer who fozzled fifteen strokes.

Most of us would deal with affairs through a rather haphazard and shifting assortment of stereotypes, if a comparatively few men in each generation were not constantly engaged in arranging, standardizing, and improving them into logical systems, known as the Laws of Political Economy, the Principles of Politics, and the like. Generally when we write about culture, tradition, and the group mind, we are thinking of these systems perfected by men of genius. Now there is no disputing the necessity of constant study and criticism of these idealized versions, but the historian of people, the politician, and the publicity man cannot stop there. For what operates in history is not the systematic idea as a genius formulated it, but shifting imitations, replicas, counterfeits, analogies, and distortions in individual minds.

Thus Marxism is not necessarily what Karl Marx wrote in *Das Kapital*, but whatever it is that all the warring sects believe, who claim to be the faithful. From the gospels you cannot deduce the history of Christianity, nor from the Constitution the political history of America. It is *Das Kapital* as conceived, the gospels as preached and the preachment as understood, the Constitution as interpreted and administered, to which you have to go. For while there is a reciprocating influence between the standard version and the current versions, it is these current versions as distributed among men which affect their behavior. [Footnote: But unfortunately it is ever so much harder to know this actual culture than it is to summarize and to comment upon the works of genius. The actual culture exists in people far too busy to indulge in the strange trade of formulating their beliefs. They record them only incidentally, and the student rarely knows how typical are his data. Perhaps the best he can do is to follow Lord Bryce's suggestion [*Modern Democracies*, Vol. i, p. 156] that he move freely "among all sorts and conditions of men," to seek out the unbiased persons in every neighborhood who have skill in sizing up. "There is a flair which long practise and 'sympathetic touch' bestow. The trained observer learns how to profit by small indications, as an old seaman discerns, sooner than the landsman, the signs of coming storm." There is, in short, a vast amount of guess work involved, and it is no wonder that scholars, who enjoy precision, so often confine their attentions to the neater formulations of other scholars.]

"The theory of Relativity," says a critic whose eyelids, like the Lady Lisa's, are a little weary, "promises to develop into a principle as

adequate to universal application as was the theory of Evolution. This latter theory, from being a technical biological hypothesis, became an inspiring guide to workers in practically every branch of knowledge: manners and customs, morals, religions, philosophies, arts, steam engines, electric tramways--everything had 'evolved.' 'Evolution' became a very general term; it also became imprecise until, in many cases, the original, definite meaning of the word was lost, and the theory it had been evoked to describe was misunderstood. We are hardy enough to prophesy a similar career and fate for the theory of Relativity. The technical physical theory, at present imperfectly understood, will become still more vague and dim. History repeats itself, and Relativity, like Evolution, after receiving a number of intelligible but somewhat inaccurate popular expositions in its scientific aspect, will be launched on a world-conquering career. We suggest that, by that time, it will probably be called Relativismus. Many of these larger applications will doubtless be justified; some will be absurd and a considerable number will, we imagine, reduce to truisms. And the physical theory, the mere seed of this mighty growth, will become once more the purely technical concern of scientific men." [Footnote: The Times (London), Literary Supplement, June 2, 1921, p. 352. Professor Einstein said when he was in America in 1921 that people tended to overestimate the influence of his theory, and to under-estimate its certainty.]

But for such a world-conquering career an idea must correspond, however imprecisely, to something. Professor Bury shows for how long a time the idea of progress remained a speculative toy. "It is not easy," he writes, [Footnote: J. B. Bury, The Idea of Progress, p. 324.] "for a new idea of the speculative order to penetrate and inform the general consciousness of a community until it has assumed some external and concrete embodiment, or is recommended by some striking material evidence. In the case of Progress both these conditions were fulfilled (in England) in the period 1820-1850." The most striking evidence was furnished by the mechanical revolution. "Men who were born at the beginning of the century had seen, before they had passed the age of thirty, the rapid development of steam navigation, the illumination of towns and houses by gas, the opening of the first railway." In the consciousness of the average householder miracles like these formed the pattern of his belief in the perfectibility of the human race.

Tennyson, who was in philosophical matters a fairly normal person, tells us that when he went by the first train from Liverpool to Manchester (1830) he thought that the wheels ran in grooves. Then he wrote this line:

"Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change." [Footnote: 2 Tennyson, Memoir by his Son, Vol. I, p. 195. Cited by Bury, op. cit., p. 326.]

And so a notion more or less applicable to a journey between Liverpool and Manchester was generalized into a pattern of the universe "for ever." This pattern, taken up by others, reinforced by dazzling inventions, imposed an optimistic turn upon the theory of evolution. That theory, of course, is, as Professor Bury says, neutral between pessimism and optimism. But it promised continual change, and the changes visible in the world marked such extraordinary conquests of nature, that the popular mind made a blend of the two. Evolution first in Darwin himself, and then more elaborately in Herbert Spencer, was a

"progress towards perfection."

2

The stereotype represented by such words as "progress" and "perfection" was composed fundamentally of mechanical inventions. And mechanical it has remained, on the whole, to this day. In America more than anywhere else, the spectacle of mechanical progress has made so deep an impression, that it has suffused the whole moral code. An American will endure almost any insult except the charge that he is not progressive. Be he of long native ancestry, or a recent immigrant, the aspect that has always struck his eye is the immense physical growth of American civilization. That constitutes a fundamental stereotype through which he views the world: the country village will become the great metropolis, the modest building a skyscraper, what is small shall be big; what is slow shall be fast; what is poor shall be rich; what is few shall be many; whatever is shall be more so.

Not every American, of course, sees the world this way. Henry Adams didn't, and William Allen White doesn't. But those men do, who in the magazines devoted to the religion of success appear as Makers of America. They mean just about that when they preach evolution, progress, prosperity, being constructive, the American way of doing things. It is easy to laugh, but, in fact, they are using a very great pattern of human endeavor. For one thing it adopts an impersonal criterion; for another it adopts an earthly criterion; for a third it is habituating men to think quantitatively. To be sure the ideal confuses excellence with size, happiness with speed, and human nature with contraption. Yet the same motives are at work which have ever actuated any moral code, or ever will. The desire for the biggest, the fastest, the highest, or if you are a maker of wristwatches or microscopes the smallest; the love in short of the superlative and the "peerless," is in essence and possibility a noble passion.

Certainly the American version of progress has fitted an extraordinary range of facts in the economic situation and in human nature. It turned an unusual amount of pugnacity, acquisitiveness, and lust of power into productive work. Nor has it, until more recently perhaps, seriously frustrated the active nature of the active members of the community. They have made a civilization which provides them who made it with what they feel to be ample satisfaction in work, mating and play, and the rush of their victory over mountains, wildernesses, distance, and human competition has even done duty for that part of religious feeling which is a sense of communion with the purpose of the universe. The pattern has been a success so nearly perfect in the sequence of ideals, practice, and results, that any challenge to it is called un-American.

And yet, this pattern is a very partial and inadequate way of representing the world. The habit of thinking about progress as "development" has meant that many aspects of the environment were simply neglected. With the stereotype of "progress" before their eyes, Americans have in the mass seen little that did not accord with that progress. They saw the expansion of cities, but not the accretion of slums; they cheered the census statistics, but refused to consider overcrowding; they pointed with pride to their growth, but would not see the drift from the land, or the unassimilated immigration. They expanded industry furiously at reckless cost to their natural resources; they built up gigantic corporations without arranging for

industrial relations. They grew to be one of the most powerful nations on earth without preparing their institutions or their minds for the ending of their isolation. They stumbled into the World War morally and physically unready, and they stumbled out again, much disillusioned, but hardly more experienced.

In the World War the good and the evil influence of the American stereotype was plainly visible. The idea that the war could be won by recruiting unlimited armies, raising unlimited credits, building an unlimited number of ships, producing unlimited munitions, and concentrating without limit on these alone, fitted the traditional stereotype, and resulted in something like a physical miracle. [Footnote: I have in mind the transportation and supply of two million troops overseas. Prof. Wesley Mitchell points out that the total production of goods after our entrance into the war did not greatly increase in volume over that of the year 1916; but that production for war purposes did increase.] But among those most affected by the stereotype, there was no place for the consideration of what the fruits of victory were, or how they were to be attained. Therefore, aims were ignored, or regarded as automatic, and victory was conceived, because the stereotype demanded it, as nothing but an annihilating victory in the field. In peace time you did not ask what the fastest motor car was for, and in war you did not ask what the completest victory was for. Yet in Paris the pattern did not fit the facts. In peace you can go on endlessly supplanting small things with big ones, and big ones with bigger ones; in war when you have won absolute victory, you cannot go on to a more absolute victory. You have to do something on an entirely different pattern. And if you lack such a pattern, the end of the war is to you what it was to so many good people, an anticlimax in a dreary and savorless world.

This marks the point where the stereotype and the facts, that cannot be ignored, definitely part company. There is always such a point, because our images of how things behave are simpler and more fixed than the ebb and flow of affairs. There comes a time, therefore, when the blind spots come from the edge of vision into the center. Then unless there are critics who have the courage to sound an alarm, and leaders capable of understanding the change, and a people tolerant by habit, the stereotype, instead of economizing effort, and focussing energy as it did in 1917 and 1918, may frustrate effort and waste men's energy by blinding them, as it did for those people who cried for a Carthaginian peace in 1919 and deplored the Treaty of Versailles in 1921.

3

Uncritically held, the stereotype not only censors out much that needs to be taken into account, but when the day of reckoning comes, and the stereotype is shattered, likely as not that which it did wisely take into account is ship-wrecked with it. That is the punishment assessed by Mr. Bernard Shaw against Free Trade, Free Contract, Free Competition, Natural Liberty, Laissez-faire, and Darwinism. A hundred years ago, when he would surely have been one of the tartest advocates of these doctrines, he would not have seen them as he sees them to-day, in the Infidel Half Century, [Footnote: _Back to Methuselah_. Preface.] to be excuses for "'doing the other fellow down' with impunity, all interference by a guiding government, all organization except police organization to protect legalized fraud against fisticuffs, all attempt to introduce human purpose and design

and forethought into the industrial welter being 'contrary to the laws of political economy'" He would have seen, then, as one of the pioneers of the march to the plains of heaven [Footnote: _The Quintessence of Ibsenism_] that, of the kind of human purpose and design and forethought to be found in a government like that of Queen Victoria's uncles, the less the better. He would have seen, not the strong doing the weak down, but the foolish doing the strong down. He would have seen purposes, designs and forethoughts at work, obstructing invention, obstructing enterprise, obstructing what he would infallibly have recognized as the next move of Creative Evolution.

Even now Mr. Shaw is none too eager for the guidance of any guiding government he knows, but in theory he has turned a full loop against laissez-faire. Most advanced thinking before the war had made the same turn against the established notion that if you unloosed everything, wisdom would bubble up, and establish harmony. Since the war, with its definite demonstration of guiding governments, assisted by censors, propagandists, and spies, Roebuck Ramsden and Natural Liberty have been readmitted to the company of serious thinkers.

One thing is common to these cycles. There is in each set of stereotypes a point where effort ceases and things happen of their own accord, as you would like them to. The progressive stereotype, powerful to incite work, almost completely obliterates the attempt to decide what work and why that work. Laissez-faire, a blessed release from stupid officialdom, assumes that men will move by spontaneous combustion towards a pre-established harmony. Collectivism, an antidote to ruthless selfishness, seems, in the Marxian mind, to suppose an economic determinism towards efficiency and wisdom on the part of socialist officials. Strong government, imperialism at home and abroad, at its best deeply conscious of the price of disorder, relies at last on the notion that all that matters to the governed will be known by the governors. In each theory there is a spot of blind automatism.

That spot covers up some fact, which if it were taken into account, would check the vital movement that the stereotype provokes. If the progressive had to ask himself, like the Chinaman in the joke, what he wanted to do with the time he saved by breaking the record, if the advocate of laissez-faire had to contemplate not only free and exuberant energies of men, but what some people call their human nature, if the collectivist let the center of his attention be occupied with the problem of how he is to secure his officials, if the imperialist dared to doubt his own inspiration, you would find more Hamlet and less Henry the Fifth. For these blind spots keep away distracting images, which with their attendant emotions, might cause hesitation and infirmity of purpose. Consequently the stereotype not only saves time in a busy life and is a defense of our position in society, but tends to preserve us from all the bewildering effect of trying to see the world steadily and see it whole.

CHAPTER IX

CODES AND THEIR ENEMIES

ANYONE who has stood at the end of a railroad platform waiting for a friend, will recall what queer people he mistook for him. The shape of a hat, a slightly characteristic gait, evoked the vivid picture in his mind's eye. In sleep a tinkle may sound like the pealing of a great bell; the distant stroke of a hammer like a thunderclap. For our constellations of imagery will vibrate to a stimulus that is perhaps but vaguely similar to some aspect of them. They may, in hallucination, flood the whole consciousness. They may enter very little into perception, though I am inclined to think that such an experience is extremely rare and highly sophisticated, as when we gaze blankly at a familiar word or object, and it gradually ceases to be familiar. Certainly for the most part, the way we see things is a combination of what is there and of what we expected to find. The heavens are not the same to an astronomer as to a pair of lovers; a page of Kant will start a different train of thought in a Kantian and in a radical empiricist; the Tahitian belle is a better looking person to her Tahitian suitor than to the readers of the National Geographic Magazine.

Expertness in any subject is, in fact, a multiplication of the number of aspects we are prepared to discover, plus the habit of discounting our expectations. Where to the ignoramus all things look alike, and life is just one thing after another, to the specialist things are highly individual. For a chauffeur, an epicure, a connoisseur, a member of the President's cabinet, or a professor's wife, there are evident distinctions and qualities, not at all evident to the casual person who discusses automobiles, wines, old masters, Republicans, and college faculties.

But in our public opinions few can be expert, while life is, as Mr. Bernard Shaw has made plain, so short. Those who are expert are so on only a few topics. Even among the expert soldiers, as we learned during the war, expert cavalrymen were not necessarily brilliant with trench-warfare and tanks. Indeed, sometimes a little expertness on a small topic may simply exaggerate our normal human habit of trying to squeeze into our stereotypes all that can be squeezed, and of casting into outer darkness that which does not fit.

Whatever we recognize as familiar we tend, if we are not very careful, to visualize with the aid of images already in our mind. Thus in the American view of Progress and Success there is a definite picture of human nature and of society. It is the kind of human nature and the kind of society which logically produce the kind of progress that is regarded as ideal. And then, when we seek to describe or explain actually successful men, and events that have really happened, we read back into them the qualities that are presupposed in the stereotypes.

These qualities were standardized rather innocently by the older economists. They set out to describe the social system under which they lived, and found it too complicated for words. So they constructed what they sincerely hoped was a simplified diagram, not so different in principle and in veracity from the parallelogram with legs and head in a child's drawing of a complicated cow. The scheme consisted of a capitalist who had diligently saved capital from his labor, an entrepreneur who conceived a socially useful demand and organized a factory, a collection of workmen who freely contracted, take it or leave it, for their labor, a landlord, and a group of consumers who bought in the cheapest market those goods which by the

ready use of the pleasure-pain calculus they knew would give them the most pleasure. The model worked. The kind of people, which the model assumed, living in the sort of world the model assumed, invariably cooperated harmoniously in the books where the model was described.

With modification and embroidery, this pure fiction, used by economists to simplify their thinking, was retailed and popularized until for large sections of the population it prevailed as the economic mythology of the day. It supplied a standard version of capitalist, promoter, worker and consumer in a society that was naturally more bent on achieving success than on explaining it. The buildings which rose, and the bank accounts which accumulated, were evidence that the stereotype of how the thing had been done was accurate. And those who benefited most by success came to believe they were the kind of men they were supposed to be. No wonder that the candid friends of successful men, when they read the official biography and the obituary, have to restrain themselves from asking whether this is indeed their friend.

2

To the vanquished and the victims, the official portraiture was, of course, unrecognizable. For while those who exemplified progress did not often pause to inquire whether they had arrived according to the route laid down by the economists, or by some other just as creditable, the unsuccessful people did inquire. "No one," says William James, [Footnote: *The Letters of William James*, Vol. I, p.65] "sees further into a generalization than his own knowledge of detail extends." The captains of industry saw in the great trusts monuments of (their) success; their defeated competitors saw the monuments of (their) failure. So the captains expounded the economies and virtues of big business, asked to be let alone, said they were the agents of prosperity, and the developers of trade. The vanquished insisted upon the wastes and brutalities of the trusts, and called loudly upon the Department of Justice to free business from conspiracies. In the same situation one side saw progress, economy, and a splendid development; the other, reaction, extravagance, and a restraint of trade. Volumes of statistics, anecdotes about the real truth and the inside truth, the deeper and the larger truth, were published to prove both sides of the argument.

For when a system of stereotypes is well fixed, our attention is called to those facts which support it, and diverted from those which contradict. So perhaps it is because they are attuned to find it, that kindly people discover so much reason for kindness, malicious people so much malice. We speak quite accurately of seeing through rose-colored spectacles, or with a jaundiced eye. If, as Philip Littell once wrote of a distinguished professor, we see life as through a glass darkly, our stereotypes of what the best people and the lower classes are like will not be contaminated by understanding. What is alien will be rejected, what is different will fall upon unseeing eyes. We do not see what our eyes are not accustomed to take into account. Sometimes consciously, more often without knowing it, we are impressed by those facts which fit our philosophy.

3

This philosophy is a more or less organized series of images for describing the unseen world. But not only for describing it. For

judging it as well. And, therefore, the stereotypes are loaded with preference, suffused with affection or dislike, attached to fears, lusts, strong wishes, pride, hope. Whatever invokes the stereotype is judged with the appropriate sentiment. Except where we deliberately keep prejudice in suspense, we do not study a man and judge him to be bad. We see a bad man. We see a dewy morn, a blushing maiden, a sainted priest, a humorless Englishman, a dangerous Red, a carefree bohemian, a lazy Hindu, a wily Oriental, a dreaming Slav, a volatile Irishman, a greedy Jew, a 100% American. In the workaday world that is often the real judgment, long in advance of the evidence, and it contains within itself the conclusion which the evidence is pretty certain to confirm. Neither justice, nor mercy, nor truth, enter into such a judgment, for the judgment has preceded the evidence. Yet a people without prejudices, a people with altogether neutral vision, is so unthinkable in any civilization of which it is useful to think, that no scheme of education could be based upon that ideal. Prejudice can be detected, discounted, and refined, but so long as finite men must compress into a short schooling preparation for dealing with a vast civilization, they must carry pictures of it around with them, and have prejudices. The quality of their thinking and doing will depend on whether those prejudices are friendly, friendly to other people, to other ideas, whether they evoke love of what is felt to be positively good, rather than hatred of what is not contained in their version of the good.

Morality, good taste and good form first standardize and then emphasize certain of these underlying prejudices. As we adjust ourselves to our code, we adjust the facts we see to that code. Rationally, the facts are neutral to all our views of right and wrong. Actually, our canons determine greatly what we shall perceive and how.

For a moral code is a scheme of conduct applied to a number of typical instances. To behave as the code directs is to serve whatever purpose the code pursues. It may be God's will, or the king's, individual salvation in a good, solid, three dimensional paradise, success on earth, or the service of mankind. In any event the makers of the code fix upon certain typical situations, and then by some form of reasoning or intuition, deduce the kind of behavior which would produce the aim they acknowledge. The rules apply where they apply.

But in daily living how does a man know whether his predicament is the one the law-giver had in mind? He is told not to kill. But if his children are attacked, may he kill to stop a killing? The Ten Commandments are silent on the point. Therefore, around every code there is a cloud of interpreters who deduce more specific cases. Suppose, then, that the doctors of the law decide that he may kill in self-defense. For the next man the doubt is almost as great; how does he know that he is defining self-defense correctly, or that he has not misjudged the facts, imagined the attack, and is really the aggressor? Perhaps he has provoked the attack. But what is a provocation? Exactly these confusions infected the minds of most Germans in August, 1914.

Far more serious in the modern world than any difference of moral code is the difference in the assumptions about facts to which the code is applied. Religious, moral and political formulae are nothing like so far apart as the facts assumed by their votaries. Useful discussion, then, instead of comparing ideals, reexamines the visions of the facts. Thus the rule that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you rests on the belief that human nature is uniform. Mr.

Bernard Shaw's statement that you should not do unto others what you would have them do unto you, because their tastes may be different, rests on the belief that human nature is not uniform. The maxim that competition is the life of trade consists of a whole tome of assumptions about economic motives, industrial relations, and the working of a particular commercial system. The claim that America will never have a merchant marine, unless it is privately owned and managed, assumes a certain proved connection between a certain kind of profit-making and incentive. The justification by the bolshevik propogandist of the dictatorship, espionage, and the terror, because "every state is an apparatus of violence" [Footnote: See *Two Years of Conflict on the Internal Front*, published by the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, Moscow, 1920. Translated by Malcolm W. Davis for the *New York Evening Post*, January 15, 1921.] is an historical judgment, the truth of which is by no means self-evident to a non-communist.

At the core of every moral code there is a picture of human nature, a map of the universe, and a version of history. To human nature (of the sort conceived), in a universe (of the kind imagined), after a history (so understood), the rules of the code apply. So far as the facts of personality, of the environment and of memory are different, by so far the rules of the code are difficult to apply with success. Now every moral code has to conceive human psychology, the material world, and tradition some way or other. But in the codes that are under the influence of science, the conception is known to be an hypothesis, whereas in the codes that come unexamined from the past or bubble up from the caverns of the mind, the conception is not taken as an hypothesis demanding proof or contradiction, but as a fiction accepted without question. In the one case, man is humble about his beliefs, because he knows they are tentative and incomplete; in the other he is dogmatic, because his belief is a completed myth. The moralist who submits to the scientific discipline knows that though he does not know everything, he is in the way of knowing something; the dogmatist, using a myth, believes himself to share part of the insight of omniscience, though he lacks the criteria by which to tell truth from error. For the distinguishing mark of a myth is that truth and error, fact and fable, report and fantasy, are all on the same plane of credibility.

The myth is, then, not necessarily false. It might happen to be wholly true. It may happen to be partly true. If it has affected human conduct a long time, it is almost certain to contain much that is profoundly and importantly true. What a myth never contains is the critical power to separate its truths from its errors. For that power comes only by realizing that no human opinion, whatever its supposed origin, is too exalted for the test of evidence, that every opinion is only somebody's opinion. And if you ask why the test of evidence is preferable to any other, there is no answer unless you are willing to use the test in order to test it.

4

The statement is, I think, susceptible of overwhelming proof, that moral codes assume a particular view of the facts. Under the term moral codes I include all kinds: personal, family, economic, professional, legal, patriotic, international. At the center of each there is a pattern of stereotypes about psychology, sociology, and history. The same view of human nature, institutions or tradition

rarely persists through all our codes. Compare, for example, the economic and the patriotic codes. There is a war supposed to affect all alike. Two men are partners in business. One enlists, the other takes a war contract. The soldier sacrifices everything, perhaps even his life. He is paid a dollar a day, and no one says, no one believes, that you could make a better soldier out of him by any form of economic incentive. That motive disappears out of his human nature. The contractor sacrifices very little, is paid a handsome profit over costs, and few say or believe that he would produce the munitions if there were no economic incentive. That may be unfair to him. The point is that the accepted patriotic code assumes one kind of human nature, the commercial code another. And the codes are probably founded on true expectations to this extent, that when a man adopts a certain code he tends to exhibit the kind of human nature which the code demands.

That is one reason why it is so dangerous to generalize about human nature. A loving father can be a sour boss, an earnest municipal reformer, and a rapacious jingo abroad. His family life, his business career, his politics, and his foreign policy rest on totally different versions of what others are like and of how he should act. These versions differ by codes in the same person, the codes differ somewhat among persons in the same social set, differ widely as between social sets, and between two nations, or two colors, may differ to the point where there is no common assumption whatever. That is why people professing the same stock of religious beliefs can go to war. The element of their belief which determines conduct is that view of the facts which they assume.

That is where codes enter so subtly and so pervasively into the making of public opinion. The orthodox theory holds that a public opinion constitutes a moral judgment on a group of facts. The theory I am suggesting is that, in the present state of education, a public opinion is primarily a moralized and codified version of the facts. I am arguing that the pattern of stereotypes at the center of our codes largely determines what group of facts we shall see, and in what light we shall see them. That is why, with the best will in the world, the news policy of a journal tends to support its editorial policy; why a capitalist sees one set of facts, and certain aspects of human nature, literally sees them; his socialist opponent another set and other aspects, and why each regards the other as unreasonable or perverse, when the real difference between them is a difference of perception. That difference is imposed by the difference between the capitalist and socialist pattern of stereotypes. "There are no classes in America," writes an American editor. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," says the Communist Manifesto. If you have the editor's pattern in your mind, you will see vividly the facts that confirm it, vaguely and ineffectively those that contradict. If you have the communist pattern, you will not only look for different things, but you will see with a totally different emphasis what you and the editor happen to see in common.

5

And since my moral system rests on my accepted version of the facts, he who denies either my moral judgments or my version of the facts, is to me perverse, alien, dangerous. How shall I account for him? The opponent has always to be explained, and the last explanation that we

ever look for is that he sees a different set of facts. Such an explanation we avoid, because it saps the very foundation of our own assurance that we have seen life steadily and seen it whole. It is only when we are in the habit of recognizing our opinions as a partial experience seen through our stereotypes that we become truly tolerant of an opponent. Without that habit, we believe in the absolutism of our own vision, and consequently in the treacherous character of all opposition. For while men are willing to admit that there are two sides to a "question," they do not believe that there are two sides to what they regard as a "fact." And they never do believe it until after long critical education, they are fully conscious of how second-hand and subjective is their apprehension of their social data.

So where two factions see vividly each its own aspect, and contrive their own explanations of what they see, it is almost impossible for them to credit each other with honesty. If the pattern fits their experience at a crucial point, they no longer look upon it as an interpretation. They look upon it as "reality." It may not resemble the reality, except that it culminates in a conclusion which fits a real experience. I may represent my trip from New York to Boston by a straight line on a map, just as a man may regard his triumph as the end of a straight and narrow path. The road by which I actually went to Boston may have involved many detours, much turning and twisting, just as his road may have involved much besides pure enterprise, labor and thrift. But provided I reach Boston and he succeeds, the airline and the straight path will serve as ready made charts. Only when somebody tries to follow them, and does not arrive, do we have to answer objections. If we insist on our charts, and he insists on rejecting them, we soon tend to regard him as a dangerous fool, and he to regard us as liars and hypocrites. Thus we gradually paint portraits of each other. For the opponent presents himself as the man who says, evil be thou my good. He is an annoyance who does not fit into the scheme of things. Nevertheless he interferes. And since that scheme is based in our minds on incontrovertible fact fortified by irresistible logic, some place has to be found for him in the scheme. Rarely in politics or industrial disputes is a place made for him by the simple admission that he has looked upon the same reality and seen another aspect of it. That would shake the whole scheme.

Thus to the Italians in Paris Fiume was Italian It was not merely a city that it would be desirable to include within the Italian kingdom. It was Italian. They fixed their whole mind upon the Italian majority within the legal boundaries of the city itself. The American delegates, having seen more Italians in New York than there are in Fiume, without regarding New York as Italian, fixed their eyes on Fiume as a central European port of entry. They saw vividly the Jugoslavs in the suburbs and the non-Italian hinterland. Some of the Italians in Paris were therefore in need of a convincing explanation of the American perversity. They found it in a rumor which started, no one knows where, that an influential American diplomat was in the snares of a Yugoslav mistress. She had been seen.... He had been seen.... At Versailles just off the boulevard. ... The villa with the large trees.

This is a rather common way of explaining away opposition. In their more libelous form such charges rarely reach the printed page, and a Roosevelt may have to wait years, or a Harding months, before he can force an issue, and end a whispering campaign that has reached into every circle of talk. Public men have to endure a fearful amount of

poisonous clubroom, dinner table, boudoir slander, repeated, elaborated, chuckled over, and regarded as delicious. While this sort of thing is, I believe, less prevalent in America than in Europe, yet rare is the American official about whom somebody is not repeating a scandal.

Out of the opposition we make villains and conspiracies. If prices go up unmercifully the profiteers have conspired; if the newspapers misrepresent the news, there is a capitalist plot; if the rich are too rich, they have been stealing; if a closely fought election is lost, the electorate was corrupted; if a statesman does something of which you disapprove, he has been bought or influenced by some discreditable person. If workingmen are restless, they are the victims of agitators; if they are restless over wide areas, there is a conspiracy on foot. If you do not produce enough aeroplanes, it is the work of spies; if there is trouble in Ireland, it is German or Bolshevik "gold." And if you go stark, staring mad looking for plots, you see all strikes, the Plumb plan, Irish rebellion, Mohammedan unrest, the restoration of King Constantine, the League of Nations, Mexican disorder, the movement to reduce armaments, Sunday movies, short skirts, evasion of the liquor laws, Negro self-assertion, as sub-plots under some grandiose plot engineered either by Moscow, Rome, the Free Masons, the Japanese, or the Elders of Zion.

CHAPTER X

THE DETECTION OF STEREOTYPES

1

Skilled diplomatists, compelled to talk out loud to the warring peoples, learned how to use a large repertory of stereotypes. They were dealing with a precarious alliance of powers, each of which was maintaining its war unity only by the most careful leadership. The ordinary soldier and his wife, heroic and selfless beyond anything in the chronicles of courage, were still not heroic enough to face death gladly for all the ideas which were said by the foreign offices of foreign powers to be essential to the future of civilization. There were ports, and mines, rocky mountain passes, and villages that few soldiers would willingly have crossed No Man's Land to obtain for their allies.

Now it happened in one nation that the war party which was in control of the foreign office, the high command, and most of the press, had claims on the territory of several of its neighbors. These claims were called the Greater Ruritania by the cultivated classes who regarded Kipling, Treitschke, and Maurice Barres as one hundred percent Ruritanian. But the grandiose idea aroused no enthusiasm abroad. So holding this finest flower of the Ruritanian genius, as their poet laureate said, to their hearts, Ruritania's statesmen went forth to divide and conquer. They divided the claim into sectors. For each piece they invoked that stereotype which some one or more of their allies found it difficult to resist, because that ally had claims for which it hoped to find approval by the use of this same stereotype.

The first sector happened to be a mountainous region inhabited by

alien peasants. Ruritania demanded it to complete her natural geographical frontier. If you fixed your attention long enough on the ineffable value of what is natural, those alien peasants just dissolved into fog, and only the slope of the mountains was visible. The next sector was inhabited by Ruritarians, and on the principle that no people ought to live under alien rule, they were re-annexed. Then came a city of considerable commercial importance, not inhabited by Ruritarians. But until the Eighteenth Century it had been part of Ruritania, and on the principle of Historic Right it was annexed. Farther on there was a splendid mineral deposit owned by aliens and worked by aliens. On the principle of reparation for damage it was annexed. Beyond this there was a territory inhabited 97% by aliens, constituting the natural geographical frontier of another nation, never historically a part of Ruritania. But one of the provinces which had been federated into Ruritania had formerly traded in those markets, and the upper class culture was Ruritanian. On the principle of cultural superiority and the necessity of defending civilization, the lands were claimed. Finally, there was a port wholly disconnected from Ruritania geographically, ethnically, economically, historically, traditionally. It was demanded on the ground that it was needed for national defense.

In the treaties that concluded the Great War you can multiply examples of this kind. Now I do not wish to imply that I think it was possible to resettle Europe consistently on any one of these principles. I am certain that it was not. The very use of these principles, so pretentious and so absolute, meant that the spirit of accommodation did not prevail and that, therefore, the substance of peace was not there. For the moment you start to discuss factories, mines, mountains, or even political authority, as perfect examples of some eternal principle or other, you are not arguing, you are fighting. That eternal principle censors out all the objections, isolates the issue from its background and its context, and sets going in you some strong emotion, appropriate enough to the principle, highly inappropriate to the docks, warehouses, and real estate. And having started in that mood you cannot stop. A real danger exists. To meet it you have to invoke more absolute principles in order to defend what is open to attack. Then you have to defend the defenses, erect buffers, and buffers for the buffers, until the whole affair is so scrambled that it seems less dangerous to fight than to keep on talking.

There are certain clues which often help in detecting the false absolutism of a stereotype. In the case of the Ruritanian propaganda the principles blanketed each other so rapidly that one could readily see how the argument had been constructed. The series of contradictions showed that for each sector that stereotype was employed which would obliterate all the facts that interfered with the claim. Contradiction of this sort is often a good clue.

2

Inability to take account of space is another. In the spring of 1918, for example, large numbers of people, appalled by the withdrawal of Russia, demanded the "reestablishment of an Eastern Front." The war, as they had conceived it, was on two fronts, and when one of them disappeared there was an instant demand that it be recreated. The unemployed Japanese army was to man the front, substituting for the Russian. But there was one insuperable obstacle. Between Vladivostok and the eastern battleline there were five thousand miles of country,

spanned by one broken down railway. Yet those five thousand miles would not stay in the minds of the enthusiasts. So overwhelming was their conviction that an eastern front was needed, and so great their confidence in the valor of the Japanese army, that, mentally, they had projected that army from Vladivostok to Poland on a magic carpet. In vain our military authorities argued that to land troops on the rim of Siberia had as little to do with reaching the Germans, as climbing from the cellar to the roof of the Woolworth building had to do with reaching the moon.

The stereotype in this instance was the war on two fronts. Ever since men had begun to imagine the Great War they had conceived Germany held between France and Russia. One generation of strategists, and perhaps two, had lived with that visual image as the starting point of all their calculations. For nearly four years every battle-map they saw had deepened the impression that this was the war. When affairs took a new turn, it was not easy to see them as they were then. They were seen through the stereotype, and facts which conflicted with it, such as the distance from Japan to Poland, were incapable of coming vividly into consciousness.

It is interesting to note that the American authorities dealt with the new facts more realistically than the French. In part, this was because (previous to 1914) they had no preconception of a war upon the continent; in part because the Americans, engrossed in the mobilization of their forces, had a vision of the western front which was itself a stereotype that excluded from their consciousness any very vivid sense of the other theatres of war. In the spring of 1918 this American view could not compete with the traditional French view, because while the Americans believed enormously in their own powers, the French at that time (before Cantigny and the Second Marne) had the gravest doubts. The American confidence suffused the American stereotype, gave it that power to possess consciousness, that liveliness and sensible pungency, that stimulating effect upon the will, that emotional interest as an object of desire, that congruity with the activity in hand, which James notes as characteristic of what we regard as "real." [Footnote: Principles of Psychology, Vol. II, p. 300.] The French in despair remained fixed on their accepted image. And when facts, gross geographical facts, would not fit with the preconception, they were either censored out of mind, or the facts were themselves stretched out of shape. Thus the difficulty of the Japanese reaching the Germans five thousand miles away was, in measure, overcome by bringing the Germans more than half way to meet them. Between March and June 1918, there was supposed to be a German army operating in Eastern Siberia. This phantom army consisted of some German prisoners actually seen, more German prisoners thought about, and chiefly of the delusion that those five thousand intervening miles did not really exist. [Footnote: See in this connection Mr. Charles Grasty's interview with Marshal Foch, New York Times, February 26, 1918. "Germany is walking through Russia. America and Japan, who are in a position to do so, should go to meet her in Siberia." See also the resolution by Senator King of Utah, June 10, 1918, and Mr. Taft's statement in the New York Times, June 11, 1918, and the appeal to America on May 5, 1918, by Mr. A. J. Sack, Director of the Russian Information Bureau: "If Germany were in the Allied place... she would have 3,000,000 fighting on the East front within a year."]

A true conception of space is not a simple matter. If I draw a straight line on a map between Bombay and Hong Kong and measure the distance, I have learned nothing whatever about the distance I should have to cover on a voyage. And even if I measure the actual distance that I must traverse, I still know very little until I know what ships are in the service, when they run, how fast they go, whether I can secure accommodation and afford to pay for it. In practical life space is a matter of available transportation, not of geometrical planes, as the old railroad magnate knew when he threatened to make grass grow in the streets of a city that had offended him. If I am motoring and ask how far it is to my destination, I curse as an unmitigated booby the man who tells me it is three miles, and does not mention a six mile detour. It does me no good to be told that it is three miles if you walk. I might as well be told it is one mile as the crow flies. I do not fly like a crow, and I am not walking either. I must know that it is nine miles for a motor car, and also, if that is the case, that six of them are ruts and puddles. I call the pedestrian a nuisance who tells me it is three miles and think evil of the aviator who told me it was one mile. Both of them are talking about the space they have to cover, not the space I must cover.

In the drawing of boundary lines absurd complications have arisen through failure to conceive the practical geography of a region. Under some general formula like self-determination statesmen have at various times drawn lines on maps, which, when surveyed on the spot, ran through the middle of a factory, down the center of a village street, diagonally across the nave of a church, or between the kitchen and bedroom of a peasant's cottage. There have been frontiers in a grazing country which separated pasture from water, pasture from market, and in an industrial country, railheads from railroad. On the colored ethnic map the line was ethnically just, that is to say, just in the world of that ethnic map.

4

But time, no less than space, fares badly. A common example is that of the man who tries by making an elaborate will to control his money long after his death. "It had been the purpose of the first William James," writes his great-grandson Henry James, [Footnote: *The Letters of William James*, Vol. I, p. 6.] "to provide that his children (several of whom were under age when he died) should qualify themselves by industry and experience to enjoy the large patrimony which he expected to bequeath to them, and with that in view he left a will which was a voluminous compound of restraints and instructions. He showed thereby how great were both his confidence in his own judgment and his solicitude for the moral welfare of his descendants." The courts upset the will. For the law in its objection to perpetuities recognizes that there are distinct limits to the usefulness of allowing anyone to impose his moral stencil upon an unknown future. But the desire to impose it is a very human trait, so human that the law permits it to operate for a limited time after death.

The amending clause of any constitution is a good index of the confidence the authors entertained about the reach of their opinions in the succeeding generations. There are, I believe, American state constitutions which are almost incapable of amendment. The men who made them could have had but little sense of the flux of time: to them the Here and Now was so brilliantly certain, the Hereafter so vague or

so terrifying, that they had the courage to say how life should run after they were gone. And then because constitutions are difficult to amend, zealous people with a taste for mortmain have loved to write on this imperishable brass all kinds of rules and restrictions that, given any decent humility about the future, ought to be no more permanent than an ordinary statute.

A presumption about time enters widely into our opinions. To one person an institution which has existed for the whole of his conscious life is part of the permanent furniture of the universe: to another it is ephemeral. Geological time is very different from biological time. Social time is most complex. The statesman has to decide whether to calculate for the emergency or for the long run. Some decisions have to be made on the basis of what will happen in the next two hours; others on what will happen in a week, a month, a season, a decade, when the children have grown up, or their children's children. An important part of wisdom is the ability to distinguish the time-conception that properly belongs to the thing in hand. The person who uses the wrong time-conception ranges from the dreamer who ignores the present to the philistine who can see nothing else. A true scale of values has a very acute sense of relative time.

Distant time, past and future, has somehow to be conceived. But as James says, "of the longer duration we have no direct 'realizing' sense." [Footnote: *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 638.] The longest duration which we immediately feel is what is called the "specious present." It endures, according to Titchener, for about six seconds. [Footnote: Cited by Warren, *Human Psychology*, p. 255.] "All impressions within this period of time are present to us *at once*. This makes it possible for us to perceive changes and events as well as stationary objects. The perceptual present is supplemented by the ideational present. Through the combination of perceptions with memory images, entire days, months, and even years of the past are brought together into the present."

In this ideational present, vividness, as James said, is proportionate to the number of discriminations we perceive within it. Thus a vacation in which we were bored with nothing to do passes slowly while we are in it, but seems very short in memory. Great activity kills time rapidly, but in memory its duration is long. On the relation between the amount we discriminate and our time perspective James has an interesting passage: [Footnote: *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 639.]

"We have every reason to think that creatures may possibly differ enormously in the amounts of duration which they intuitively feel, and in the fineness of the events that may fill it. Von Baer has indulged in some interesting computations of the effect of such differences in changing the aspect of Nature. Suppose we were able, within the length of a second, to note 10,000 events distinctly, instead of barely 10 as now; [Footnote: In the moving picture this effect is admirably produced by the ultra-rapid camera.] if our life were then destined to hold the same number of impressions, it might be 1000 times as short. We should live less than a month, and personally know nothing of the change of seasons. If born in winter, we should believe in summer as we now believe in the heats of the carboniferous era. The motions of organic beings would be so slow to our senses as to be inferred, not seen. The sun would stand still in the sky, the moon be almost free from change, and so on. But now reverse the hypothesis and suppose a being to get only one 1000th part of the sensations we get in a given time, and

consequently to live 1000 times as long. Winters and summers will be to him like quarters of an hour. Mushrooms and the swifter growing plants will shoot into being so rapidly as to appear instantaneous creations; annual shrubs will rise and fall from the earth like restless boiling water springs; the motions of animals will be as invisible as are to us the movements of bullets and cannon-balls; the sun will scour through the sky like a meteor, leaving a fiery trail behind him, etc."

5

In his Outline of History Mr. Wells has made a gallant effort to visualize "the true proportions of historical to geological time" [Footnote: 1 Vol. II, p. 605. See also James Harvey Robinson, _The New History,_ p. 239.] On a scale which represents the time from Columbus to ourselves by three inches of space, the reader would have to walk 55 feet to see the date of the painters of the Altamara caves, 550 feet to see the earlier Neanderthals, a mile or so to the last of the dinosaurs. More or less precise chronology does not begin until after 1000 B.C., and at that time "Sargon I of the Akkadian-Sumerian Empire was a remote memory,... more remote than is Constantine the Great from the world of the present day.... Hammurabi had been dead a thousand years... Stonehedge in England was already a thousand years old."

Mr. Wells was writing with a purpose. "In the brief period of ten thousand years these units (into which men have combined) have grown from the small family tribe of the early neolithic culture to the vast united realms--vast yet still too small and partial--of the present time." Mr. Wells hoped by changing the time perspective on our present problems to change the moral perspective. Yet the astronomical measure of time, the geological, the biological, any telescopic measure which minimizes the present is not "more true" than a microscopic. Mr. Simeon Strunsky is right when he insists that "if Mr. Wells is thinking of his subtitle, The Probable Future of Mankind, he is entitled to ask for any number of centuries to work out his solution. If he is thinking of the salvaging of this western civilization, reeling under the effects of the Great War, he must think in decades and scores of years." [Footnote: In a review of _The Salvaging of Civilization, The Literary Review of the N. Y. Evening Post_, June 18, 1921, p. 5.] It all depends upon the practical purpose for which you adopt the measure. There are situations when the time perspective needs to be lengthened, and others when it needs to be shortened.

The man who says that it does not matter if 15,000,000 Chinese die of famine, because in two generations the birthrate will make up the loss, has used a time perspective to excuse his inertia. A person who pauperizes a healthy young man because he is sentimentally overimpressed with an immediate difficulty has lost sight of the duration of the beggar's life. The people who for the sake of an immediate peace are willing to buy off an aggressive empire by indulging its appetite have allowed a specious present to interfere with the peace of their children. The people who will not be patient with a troublesome neighbor, who want to bring everything to a "showdown" are no less the victims of a specious present.

6

Into almost every social problem the proper calculation of time

enters. Suppose, for example, it is a question of timber. Some trees grow faster than others. Then a sound forest policy is one in which the amount of each species and of each age cut in each season is made good by replanting. In so far as that calculation is correct the truest economy has been reached. To cut less is waste, and to cut more is exploitation. But there may come an emergency, say the need for aeroplane spruce in a war, when the year's allowance must be exceeded. An alert government will recognize that and regard the restoration of the balance as a charge upon the future.

Coal involves a different theory of time, because coal, unlike a tree, is produced on the scale of geological time. The supply is limited. Therefore a correct social policy involves intricate computation of the available reserves of the world, the indicated possibilities, the present rate of use, the present economy of use, and the alternative fuels. But when that computation has been reached it must finally be squared with an ideal standard involving time. Suppose, for example, that engineers conclude that the present fuels are being exhausted at a certain rate; that barring new discoveries industry will have to enter a phase of contraction at some definite time in the future. We have then to determine how much thrift and self-denial we will use, after all feasible economies have been exercised, in order not to rob posterity. But what shall we consider posterity? Our grandchildren? Our great grandchildren? Perhaps we shall decide to calculate on a hundred years, believing that to be ample time for the discovery of alternative fuels if the necessity is made clear at once. The figures are, of course, hypothetical. But in calculating that way we shall be employing what reason we have. We shall be giving social time its place in public opinion. Let us now imagine a somewhat different case: a contract between a city and a trolley-car company. The company says that it will not invest its capital unless it is granted a monopoly of the main highway for ninety-nine years. In the minds of the men who make that demand ninety-nine years is so long as to mean "forever." But suppose there is reason to think that surface cars, run from a central power plant on tracks, are going out of fashion in twenty years. Then it is a most unwise contract to make, for you are virtually condemning a future generation to inferior transportation. In making such a contract the city officials lack a realizing sense of ninety-nine years. Far better to give the company a subsidy now in order to attract capital than to stimulate investment by indulging a fallacious sense of eternity. No city official and no company official has a sense of real time when he talks about ninety-nine years.

Popular history is a happy hunting ground of time confusions. To the average Englishman, for example, the behavior of Cromwell, the corruption of the Act of Union, the Famine of 1847 are wrongs suffered by people long dead and done by actors long dead with whom no living person, Irish or English, has any real connection. But in the mind of a patriotic Irishman these same events are almost contemporary. His memory is like one of those historical paintings, where Virgil and Dante sit side by side conversing. These perspectives and foreshortenings are a great barrier between peoples. It is ever so difficult for a person of one tradition to remember what is contemporary in the tradition of another.

Almost nothing that goes by the name of Historic Rights or Historic Wrongs can be called a truly objective view of the past. Take, for example, the Franco-German debate about Alsace-Lorraine. It all depends on the original date you select. If you start with the Rauraci

and Sequani, the lands are historically part of Ancient Gaul. If you prefer Henry I, they are historically a German territory; if you take 1273 they belong to the House of Austria; if you take 1648 and the Peace of Westphalia, most of them are French; if you take Louis XIV and the year 1688 they are almost all French. If you are using the argument from history you are fairly certain to select those dates in the past which support your view of what should be done now.

Arguments about "races" and nationalities often betray the same arbitrary view of time. During the war, under the influence of powerful feeling, the difference between "Teutons" on the one hand, and "Anglo-Saxons" and French on the other, was popularly believed to be an eternal difference. They had always been opposing races. Yet a generation ago, historians, like Freeman, were emphasizing the common Teutonic origin of the West European peoples, and ethnologists would certainly insist that the Germans, English, and the greater part of the French are branches of what was once a common stock. The general rule is: if you like a people to-day you come down the branches to the trunk; if you dislike them you insist that the separate branches are separate trunks. In one case you fix your attention on the period before they were distinguishable; in the other on the period after which they became distinct. And the view which fits the mood is taken as the "truth."

An amiable variation is the family tree. Usually one couple are appointed the original ancestors, if possible, a couple associated with an honorific event like the Norman Conquest. That couple have no ancestors. They are not descendants. Yet they were the descendants of ancestors, and the expression that So-and-So was the founder of his house means not that he is the Adam of his family, but that he is the particular ancestor from whom it is desirable to start, or perhaps the earliest ancestor of which there is a record. But genealogical tables exhibit a deeper prejudice. Unless the female line happens to be especially remarkable descent is traced down through the males. The tree is male. At various moments females accrue to it as itinerant bees light upon an ancient apple tree.

7

But the future is the most illusive time of all. Our temptation here is to jump over necessary steps in the sequence; and as we are governed by hope or doubt, to exaggerate or to minimize the time required to complete various parts of a process. The discussion of the role to be exercised by wage-earners in the management of industry is riddled with this difficulty. For management is a word that covers many functions. [Footnote: Cf. Carter L. Goodrich, *The Frontier of Control*.] Some of these require no training; some require a little training; others can be learned only in a lifetime. And the truly discriminating program of industrial democratization would be one based on the proper time sequence, so that the assumption of responsibility would run parallel to a complementary program of industrial training. The proposal for a sudden dictatorship of the proletariat is an attempt to do away with the intervening time of preparation; the resistance to all sharing of responsibility an attempt to deny the alteration of human capacity in the course of time. Primitive notions of democracy, such as rotation in office, and contempt for the expert, are really nothing but the old myth that the Goddess of Wisdom sprang mature and fully armed from the brow of Jove. They assume that what it takes years to learn need not be learned at

all.

Whenever the phrase "backward people" is used as the basis of a policy, the conception of time is a decisive element. The Covenant of the League of Nations says, [Footnote: Article XIX.] for example, that "the character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people," as well as on other grounds. Certain communities, it asserts, "have reached a stage of development" where their independence can be provisionally recognized, subject to advice and assistance "until such time as they are able to stand alone." The way in which the mandatories and the mandated conceive that time will influence deeply their relations. Thus in the case of Cuba the judgment of the American government virtually coincided with that of the Cuban patriots, and though there has been trouble, there is no finer page in the history of how strong powers have dealt with the weak. Oftener in that history the estimates have not coincided. Where the imperial people, whatever its public expressions, has been deeply convinced that the backwardness of the backward was so hopeless as not to be worth remedying, or so profitable that it was not desirable to remedy it, the tie has festered and poisoned the peace of the world. There have been a few cases, very few, where backwardness has meant to the ruling power the need for a program of forwardness, a program with definite standards and definite estimates of time. Far more frequently, so frequently in fact as to seem the rule, backwardness has been conceived as an intrinsic and eternal mark of inferiority. And then every attempt to be less backward has been frowned upon as the sedition, which, under these conditions, it undoubtedly is. In our own race wars we can see some of the results of the failure to realize that time would gradually obliterate the slave morality of the Negro, and that social adjustment based on this morality would begin to break down.

It is hard not to picture the future as if it obeyed our present purposes, to annihilate whatever delays our desire, or immortalize whatever stands between us and our fears.

8

In putting together our public opinions, not only do we have to picture more space than we can see with our eyes, and more time than we can feel, but we have to describe and judge more people, more actions, more things than we can ever count, or vividly imagine. We have to summarize and generalize. We have to pick out samples, and treat them as typical.

To pick fairly a good sample of a large class is not easy. The problem belongs to the science of statistics, and it is a most difficult affair for anyone whose mathematics is primitive, and mine remain azoic in spite of the half dozen manuals which I once devoutly imagined that I understood. All they have done for me is to make me a little more conscious of how hard it is to classify and to sample, how readily we spread a little butter over the whole universe.

Some time ago a group of social workers in Sheffield, England, started out to substitute an accurate picture of the mental equipment of the workers of that city for the impressionistic one they had. [Footnote: The Equipment of the Worker.] They wished to say, with some decent grounds for saying it, how the workers of Sheffield were equipped. They found, as we all find the moment we refuse to let our

first notion prevail, that they were beset with complications. Of the test they employed nothing need be said here except that it was a large questionnaire. For the sake of the illustration, assume that the questions were a fair test of mental equipment for English city life. Theoretically, then, those questions should have been put to every member of the working class. But it is not so easy to know who are the working class. However, assume again that the census knows how to classify them. Then there were roughly 104,000 men and 107,000 women who ought to have been questioned. They possessed the answers which would justify or refute the casual phrase about the "ignorant workers" or the "intelligent workers." But nobody could think of questioning the whole two hundred thousand.

So the social workers consulted an eminent statistician, Professor Bowley. He advised them that not less than 408 men and 408 women would prove to be a fair sample. According to mathematical calculation this number would not show a greater deviation from the average than 1 in 22. [Footnote: *Op. cit.*, p. 65.] They had, therefore, to question at least 816 people before they could pretend to talk about the average workingman. But which 816 people should they approach? "We might have gathered particulars concerning workers to whom one or another of us had a pre-inquiry access; we might have worked through philanthropic gentlemen and ladies who were in contact with certain sections of workers at a club, a mission, an infirmary, a place of worship, a settlement. But such a method of selection would produce entirely worthless results. The workers thus selected would not be in any sense representative of what is popularly called 'the average run of workers;' they would represent nothing but the little coteries to which they belonged.

"The right way of securing 'victims,' to which at immense cost of time and labour we rigidly adhered, is to get hold of your workers by some 'neutral' or 'accidental' or 'random' method of approach." This they did. And after all these precautions they came to no more definite conclusion than that on their classification and according to their questionnaire, among 200,000 Sheffield workers "about one quarter" were "well equipped," "approaching three-quarters" were "inadequately equipped" and that "about one-fifteenth" were "mal-equipped."

Compare this conscientious and almost pedantic method of arriving at an opinion, with our usual judgments about masses of people, about the volatile Irish, and the logical French, and the disciplined Germans, and the ignorant Slavs, and the honest Chinese, and the untrustworthy Japanese, and so on and so on. All these are generalizations drawn from samples, but the samples are selected by a method that statistically is wholly unsound. Thus the employer will judge labor by the most troublesome employee or the most docile that he knows, and many a radical group has imagined that it was a fair sample of the working class. How many women's views on the "servant question" are little more than the reflection of their own treatment of their servants? The tendency of the casual mind is to pick out or stumble upon a sample which supports or defies its prejudices, and then to make it the representative of a whole class.

A great deal of confusion arises when people decline to classify themselves as we have classified them. Prophecy would be so much easier if only they would stay where we put them. But, as a matter of fact, a phrase like the working class will cover only some of the truth for a part of the time. When you take all the people, below a

certain level of income, and call them the working class, you cannot help assuming that the people so classified will behave in accordance with your stereotype. Just who those people are you are not quite certain. Factory hands and mine workers fit in more or less, but farm hands, small farmers, peddlers, little shop keepers, clerks, servants, soldiers, policemen, firemen slip out of the net. The tendency, when you are appealing to the "working class," is to fix your attention on two or three million more or less confirmed trade unionists, and treat them as Labor; the other seventeen or eighteen million, who might qualify statistically, are tacitly endowed with the point of view ascribed to the organized nucleus. How very misleading it was to impute to the British working class in 1918-1921 the point of view expressed in the resolutions of the Trades Union Congress or in the pamphlets written by intellectuals.

The stereotype of Labor as Emancipator selects the evidence which supports itself and rejects the other. And so parallel with the real movements of working men there exists a fiction of the Labor Movement, in which an idealized mass moves towards an ideal goal. The fiction deals with the future. In the future possibilities are almost indistinguishable from probabilities and probabilities from certainties. If the future is long enough, the human will might turn what is just conceivable into what is very likely, and what is likely into what is sure to happen. James called this the faith ladder, and said that "it is a slope of goodwill on which in the larger questions of life men habitually live." [Footnote: William James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 224.]

"1. There is nothing absurd in a certain view of the world being true, nothing contradictory;

2. It *might* have been true under certain conditions;

3. It *may* be true even now;

4. It is *fit* to be true;

5. It *ought* to be true;

6. It *must* be true;

7. It *shall* be true, at any rate true for me."

And, as he added in another place, [Footnote: *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 329.] "your acting thus may in certain special cases be a means of making it securely true in the end." Yet no one would have insisted more than he, that, so far as we know how, we must avoid substituting the goal for the starting point, must avoid reading back into the present what courage, effort and skill might create in the future. Yet this truism is inordinately difficult to live by, because every one of us is so little trained in the selection of our samples.

If we believe that a certain thing ought to be true, we can almost always find either an instance where it is true, or someone who believes it ought to be true. It is ever so hard when a concrete fact illustrates a hope to weigh that fact properly. When the first six people we meet agree with us, it is not easy to remember that they may all have read the same newspaper at breakfast. And yet we cannot send out a questionnaire to 816 random samples every time we wish to

estimate a probability. In dealing with any large mass of facts, the presumption is against our having picked true samples, if we are acting on a casual impression.

9

And when we try to go one step further in order to seek the causes and effects of unseen and complicated affairs, haphazard opinion is very tricky. There are few big issues in public life where cause and effect are obvious at once. They are not obvious to scholars who have devoted years, let us say, to studying business cycles, or price and wage movements, or the migration and the assimilation of peoples, or the diplomatic purposes of foreign powers. Yet somehow we are all supposed to have opinions on these matters, and it is not surprising that the commonest form of reasoning is the intuitive, *post hoc ergo propter hoc*.

The more untrained a mind, the more readily it works out a theory that two things which catch its attention at the same time are causally connected. We have already dwelt at some length on the way things reach our attention. We have seen that our access to information is obstructed and uncertain, and that our apprehension is deeply controlled by our stereotypes; that the evidence available to our reason is subject to illusions of defense, prestige, morality, space, time, and sampling. We must note now that with this initial taint, public opinions are still further beset, because in a series of events seen mostly through stereotypes, we readily accept sequence or parallelism as equivalent to cause and effect.

This is most likely to happen when two ideas that come together arouse the same feeling. If they come together they are likely to arouse the same feeling; and even when they do not arrive together a powerful feeling attached to one is likely to suck out of all the corners of memory any idea that feels about the same. Thus everything painful tends to collect into one system of cause and effect, and likewise everything pleasant.

"Ild Ilm (1675) This day I hear that G[od] has shot an arrow into the midst of this Town. The small pox is in an ordinary ye sign of the Swan, the ordinary Keepers name is Windsor. His daughter is sick of the disease. It is observable that this disease begins at an alehouse, to testify God's displeasure agt the sin of drunkenness & yt of multiplying alehouses!" [Footnote: *_The Heart of the Puritan_*, p. 177, edited by Elizabeth Deering Hanscom.]

Thus Increase Mather, and thus in the year 1919 a distinguished Professor of Celestial Mechanics discussing the Einstein theory:

"It may well be that.... Bolshevist uprisings are in reality the visible objects of some underlying, deep, mental disturbance, world-wide in character.... This same spirit of unrest has invaded science." [Footnote: Cited in *_The New Republic_*, Dec. 24, 1919, p. 120.]

In hating one thing violently, we readily associate with it as cause or effect most of the other things we hate or fear violently. They may have no more connection than smallpox and alehouses, or Relativity and Bolshevism, but they are bound together in the same emotion. In a superstitious mind, like that of the Professor of Celestial Mechanics,

emotion is a stream of molten lava which catches and imbeds whatever it touches. When you excavate in it you find, as in a buried city, all sorts of objects ludicrously entangled in each other. Anything can be related to anything else, provided it feels like it. Nor has a mind in such a state any way of knowing how preposterous it is. Ancient fears, reinforced by more recent fears, coagulate into a snarl of fears where anything that is dreaded is the cause of anything else that is dreaded.

10

Generally it all culminates in the fabrication of a system of all evil, and of another which is the system of all good. Then our love of the absolute shows itself. For we do not like qualifying adverbs. [Footnote: _Cf_. Freud's discussion of absolutism in dreams, _Interpretation of Dreams_, Chapter VI, especially pp. 288, _et seq_.] They clutter up sentences, and interfere with irresistible feeling. We prefer most to more, least to less, we dislike the words rather, perhaps, if, or, but, toward, not quite, almost, temporarily, partly. Yet nearly every opinion about public affairs needs to be deflated by some word of this sort. But in our free moments everything tends to behave absolutely,--one hundred percent, everywhere, forever.

It is not enough to say that our side is more right than the enemy's, that our victory will help democracy more than his. One must insist that our victory will end war forever, and make the world safe for democracy. And when the war is over, though we have thwarted a greater evil than those which still afflict us, the relativity of the result fades out, the absoluteness of the present evil overcomes our spirit, and we feel that we are helpless because we have not been irresistible. Between omnipotence and impotence the pendulum swings.

Real space, real time, real numbers, real connections, real weights are lost. The perspective and the background and the dimensions of action are clipped and frozen in the stereotype.

PART IV

INTERESTS

CHAPTER 11. THE ENLISTING OF INTEREST

" 12. SELF-INTEREST RECONSIDERED

CHAPTER XI

THE ENLISTING OF INTEREST

I

BUT the human mind is not a film which registers once and for all each impression that comes through its shutters and lenses. The human mind is endlessly and persistently creative. The pictures fade or combine,

are sharpened here, condensed there, as we make them more completely our own. They do not lie inert upon the surface of the mind, but are reworked by the poetic faculty into a personal expression of ourselves. We distribute the emphasis and participate in the action.

In order to do this we tend to personalize quantities, and to dramatize relations. As some sort of allegory, except in acutely sophisticated minds, the affairs of the world are represented. Social Movements, Economic Forces, National Interests, Public Opinion are treated as persons, or persons like the Pope, the President, Lenin, Morgan or the King become ideas and institutions. The deepest of all the stereotypes is the human stereotype which imputes human nature to inanimate or collective things.

The bewildering variety of our impressions, even after they have been censored in all kinds of ways, tends to force us to adopt the greater economy of the allegory. So great is the multitude of things that we cannot keep them vividly in mind. Usually, then, we name them, and let the name stand for the whole impression. But a name is porous. Old meanings slip out and new ones slip in, and the attempt to retain the full meaning of the name is almost as fatiguing as trying to recall the original impressions. Yet names are a poor currency for thought. They are too empty, too abstract, too inhuman. And so we begin to see the name through some personal stereotype, to read into it, finally to see in it the incarnation of some human quality.

Yet human qualities are themselves vague and fluctuating. They are best remembered by a physical sign. And therefore, the human qualities we tend to ascribe to the names of our impressions, themselves tend to be visualized in physical metaphors. The people of England, the history of England, condense into England, and England becomes John Bull, who is jovial and fat, not too clever, but well able to take care of himself. The migration of a people may appear to some as the meandering of a river, and to others like a devastating flood. The courage people display may be objectified as a rock; their purpose as a road, their doubts as forks of the road, their difficulties as ruts and rocks, their progress as a fertile valley. If they mobilize their dread-naughts they unsheath a sword. If their army surrenders they are thrown to earth. If they are oppressed they are on the rack or under the harrow.

When public affairs are popularized in speeches, headlines, plays, moving pictures, cartoons, novels, statues or paintings, their transformation into a human interest requires first abstraction from the original, and then animation of what has been abstracted. We cannot be much interested in, or much moved by, the things we do not see. Of public affairs each of us sees very little, and therefore, they remain dull and unappetizing, until somebody, with the makings of an artist, has translated them into a moving picture. Thus the abstraction, imposed upon our knowledge of reality by all the limitations of our access and of our prejudices, is compensated. Not being omnipresent and omniscient we cannot see much of what we have to think and talk about. Being flesh and blood we will not feed on words and names and gray theory. Being artists of a sort we paint pictures, stage dramas and draw cartoons out of the abstractions.

Or, if possible, we find gifted men who can visualize for us. For people are not all endowed to the same degree with the pictorial faculty. Yet one may, I imagine, assert with Bergson that the

practical intelligence is most closely adapted to spatial qualities. [Footnote: *Creative Evolution*, Chs. III, IV.] A "clear" thinker is almost always a good visualizer. But for that same reason, because he is "cinematographic," he is often by that much external and insensitive. For the people who have intuition, which is probably another name for musical or muscular perception, often appreciate the quality of an event and the inwardness of an act far better than the visualizer. They have more understanding when the crucial element is a desire that is never crudely overt, and appears on the surface only in a veiled gesture, or in a rhythm of speech. Visualization may catch the stimulus and the result. But the intermediate and internal is often as badly caricatured by a visualizer, as is the intention of the composer by an enormous soprano in the sweet maiden's part.

Nevertheless, though they have often a peculiar justice, intuitions remain highly private and largely incommunicable. But social intercourse depends on communication, and while a person can often steer his own life with the utmost grace by virtue of his intuitions, he usually has great difficulty in making them real to others. When he talks about them they sound like a sheaf of mist. For while intuition does give a fairer perception of human feeling, the reason with its spatial and tactile prejudice can do little with that perception. Therefore, where action depends on whether a number of people are of one mind, it is probably true that in the first instance no idea is lucid for practical decision until it has visual or tactile value. But it is also true, that no visual idea is significant to us until it has enveloped some stress of our own personality. Until it releases or resists, depresses or enhances, some craving of our own, it remains one of the objects which do not matter.

2

Pictures have always been the surest way of conveying an idea, and next in order, words that call up pictures in memory. But the idea conveyed is not fully our own until we have identified ourselves with some aspect of the picture. The identification, or what Vernon Lee has called empathy, [Footnote: *Beauty and Ugliness*.] may be almost infinitely subtle and symbolic. The mimicry may be performed without our being aware of it, and sometimes in a way that would horrify those sections of our personality which support our self-respect. In sophisticated people the participation may not be in the fate of the hero, but in the fate of the whole idea to which both hero and villain are essential. But these are refinements.

In popular representation the handles for identification are almost always marked. You know who the hero is at once. And no work promises to be easily popular where the marking is not definite and the choice clear. [Footnote: A fact which bears heavily on the character of news. *Cf.* Part VII.] But that is not enough. The audience must have something to do, and the contemplation of the true, the good and the beautiful is not something to do. In order not to sit inertly in the presence of the picture, and this applies as much to newspaper stories as to fiction and the cinema, the audience must be exercised by the image. Now there are two forms of exercise which far transcend all others, both as to ease with which they are aroused, and eagerness with which stimuli for them are sought. They are sexual passion and fighting, and the two have so many associations with each other, blend into each other so intimately, that a fight about sex outranks every

other theme in the breadth of its appeal. There is none so engrossing or so careless of all distinctions of culture and frontiers.

The sexual motif figures hardly at all in American political imagery. Except in certain minor ecstasies of war, in an occasional scandal, or in phases of the racial conflict with Negroes or Asiatics, to speak of it at all would seem far-fetched. Only in moving pictures, novels, and some magazine fiction are industrial relations, business competition, politics, and diplomacy tangled up with the girl and the other woman. But the fighting motif appears at every turn. Politics is interesting

when there is a fight, or as we say, an issue. And in order to make politics popular, issues have to be found, even when in truth and justice, there are none.--none, in the sense that the differences of judgment, or principle, or fact, do not call for the enlistment of pugnacity. [Footnote: Cf. Frances Taylor Patterson, Cinema Craftsmanship, pp. 31-32. "III. If the plot lacks suspense: 1. Add an antagonist, 2. Add an obstacle, 3. Add a problem, 4. Emphasize one of the questions in the minds of the spectator..."]

But where pugnacity is not enlisted, those of us who are not directly involved find it hard to keep up our interest. For those who are involved the absorption may be real enough to hold them even when no issue is involved. They may be exercised by sheer joy in activity, or by subtle rivalry or invention. But for those to whom the whole problem is external and distant, these other faculties do not easily come into play. In order that the faint image of the affair shall mean something to them, they must be allowed to exercise the love of struggle, suspense, and victory.

Miss Patterson [Footnote: Op. cit., pp. 6-7.] insists that "suspense... constitutes the difference between the masterpieces in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the pictures at the Rivoli or the Rialto Theatres." Had she made it clear that the masterpieces lack either an easy mode of identification or a theme popular for this generation, she would be wholly right in saying that this "explains why the people straggle into the Metropolitan by twos and threes and struggle into the Rialto and Rivoli by hundreds. The twos and threes look at a picture in the Art Museum for less than ten minutes--unless they chance to be art students, critics, or connoisseurs. The hundreds in the Rivoli or the Rialto look at the picture for more than an hour. As far as beauty is concerned there can be no comparison of the merits of the two pictures. Yet the motion picture draws more people and holds them at attention longer than do the masterpieces, not through any intrinsic merit of its own, but because it depicts unfolding events, the outcome of which the audience is breathlessly waiting. It possesses the element of struggle, which never fails to arouse suspense."

In order then that the distant situation shall not be a gray flicker on the edge of attention, it should be capable of translation into pictures in which the opportunity for identification is recognizable. Unless that happens it will interest only a few for a little while. It will belong to the sights seen but not felt, to the sensations that beat on our sense organs, and are not acknowledged. We have to take sides. We have to be able to take sides. In the recesses of our being we must step out of the audience on to the stage, and wrestle as the hero for the victory of good over evil. We must breathe into the allegory the breath of our life.

And so, in spite of the critics, a verdict is rendered in the old controversy about realism and romanticism. Our popular taste is to have the drama originate in a setting realistic enough to make identification plausible and to have it terminate in a setting romantic enough to be desirable, but not so romantic as to be inconceivable. In between the beginning and the end the canons are liberal, but the true beginning and the happy ending are landmarks. The moving picture audience rejects fantasy logically developed, because in pure fantasy there is no familiar foothold in the age of machines. It rejects realism relentlessly pursued because it does not enjoy defeat in a struggle that has become its own.

What will be accepted as true, as realistic, as good, as evil, as desirable, is not eternally fixed. These are fixed by stereotypes, acquired from earlier experiences and carried over into judgment of later ones. And, therefore, if the financial investment in each film and in popular magazines were not so exorbitant as to require instant and widespread popularity, men of spirit and imagination would be able to use the screen and the periodical, as one might dream of their being used, to enlarge and to refine, to verify and criticize the repertory of images with which our imaginations work. But, given the present costs, the men who make moving pictures, like the church and the court painters of other ages, must adhere to the stereotypes that they find, or pay the price of frustrating expectation. The stereotypes can be altered, but not in time to guarantee success when the film is released six months from now.

The men who do alter the stereotypes, the pioneering artists and critics, are naturally depressed and angered at managers and editors who protect their investments. They are risking everything, then why not the others? That is not quite fair, for in their righteous fury they have forgotten their own rewards, which are beyond any that their employers can hope to feel. They could not, and would not if they could, change places. And they have forgotten another thing in the unceasing war with Philistia. They have forgotten that they are measuring their own success by standards that artists and wise men of the past would never have dreamed of invoking. They are asking for circulations and audiences that were never considered by any artist until the last few generations. And when they do not get them, they are disappointed.

Those who catch on, like Sinclair Lewis in "Main Street," are men who have succeeded in projecting definitely what great numbers of other people were obscurely trying to say inside their heads. "You have said it for me." They establish a new form which is then endlessly copied until it, too, becomes a stereotype of perception. The next pioneer finds it difficult to make the public see Main Street any other way. And he, like the forerunners of Sinclair Lewis, has a quarrel with the public.

This quarrel is due not only to the conflict of stereotypes, but to the pioneering artist's reverence for his material. Whatever the plane he chooses, on that plane he remains. If he is dealing with the inwardness of an event he follows it to its conclusion regardless of the pain it causes. He will not tag his fantasy to help anyone, or cry peace where there is no peace. There is his America. But big audiences

have no stomach for such severity. They are more interested in themselves than in anything else in the world. The selves in which they are interested are the selves that have been revealed by schools and by tradition. They insist that a work of art shall be a vehicle with a step where they can climb aboard, and that they shall ride, not according to the contours of the country, but to a land where for an hour there are no clocks to punch and no dishes to wash. To satisfy these demands there exists an intermediate class of artists who are able and willing to confuse the planes, to piece together a realistic-romantic compound out of the inventions of greater men, and, as Miss Patterson advises, give "what real life so rarely does-the triumphant resolution of a set of difficulties; the anguish of virtue and the triumph of sin... changed to the glorifications of virtue and the eternal punishment of its enemy." [Footnote: _Op. cit._, p. 46. "The hero and heroine must in general possess youth, beauty, goodness, exalted self-sacrifice, and unalterable constancy."]

4

The ideologies of politics obey these rules. The foothold of realism is always there. The picture of some real evil, such as the German threat or class conflict, is recognizable in the argument. There is a description of some aspect of the world which is convincing because it agrees with familiar ideas. But as the ideology deals with an unseen future, as well as with a tangible present, it soon crosses imperceptibly the frontier of verification. In describing the present you are more or less tied down to common experience. In describing what nobody has experienced you are bound to let go. You stand at Armageddon, more or less, but you battle for the Lord, perhaps.... A true beginning, true according to the standards prevailing, and a happy ending. Every Marxist is hard as nails about the brutalities of the present, and mostly sunshine about the day after the dictatorship. So were the war propagandists: there was not a bestial quality in human nature they did not find everywhere east of the Rhine, or west of it if they were Germans. The bestiality was there all right. But after the victory, eternal peace. Plenty of this is quite cynically deliberate. For the skilful propagandist knows that while you must start with a plausible analysis, you must not keep on analyzing, because the tedium of real political accomplishment will soon destroy interest. So the propagandist exhausts the interest in reality by a tolerably plausible beginning, and then stokes up energy for a long voyage by brandishing a passport to heaven.

The formula works when the public fiction enmeshes itself with a private urgency. But once enmeshed, in the heat of battle, the original self and the original stereotype which effected the junction may be wholly lost to sight.

CHAPTER XII

SELF-INTEREST RECONSIDERED

1

THEREFORE, the identical story is not the same story to all who hear it. Each will enter it at a slightly different point, since no two

experiences are exactly alike; he will reenact it in his own way, and transfuse it with his own feelings. Sometimes an artist of compelling skill will force us to enter into lives altogether unlike our own, lives that seem at first glance dull, repulsive, or eccentric. But that is rare. In almost every story that catches our attention we become a character and act out the role with a pantomime of our own. The pantomime may be subtle or gross, may be sympathetic to the story, or only crudely analogous; but it will consist of those feelings which are aroused by our conception of the role. And so, the original theme as it circulates, is stressed, twisted, and embroidered by all the minds through which it goes. It is as if a play of Shakespeare's were rewritten each time it is performed with all the changes of emphasis and meaning that the actors and audience inspired.

Something very like that seems to have happened to the stories in the sagas before they were definitively written down. In our time the printed record, such as it is, checks the exuberance of each individual's fancy. But against rumor there is little or no checks and the original story, true or invented, grows wings and horns, hoofs and beaks, as the artist in each gossip works upon it. The first narrator's account does not keep its shape and proportions. It is edited and revised by all who played with it as they heard it, used it for day dreams, and passed it on. [Footnote: For an interesting example, see the case described by C. J. Jung, *_Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse_*, 1911, Vol. I, p. 81. Translated by Constance Long, in *_Analytical Psychology_*, Ch. IV.]

Consequently the more mixed the audience, the greater will be the variation in the response. For as the audience grows larger, the number of common words diminishes. Thus the common factors in the story become more abstract. This story, lacking precise character of its own, is heard by people of highly varied character. They give it their own character.

2

The character they give it varies not only with sex and age, race and religion and social position, but within these cruder classifications, according to the inherited and acquired constitution of the individual, his faculties, his career, the progress of his career, an emphasized aspect of his career, his moods and tenses, or his place on the board in any of the games of life that he is playing. What reaches him of public affairs, a few lines of print, some photographs, anecdotes, and some casual experience of his own, he conceives through his set patterns and recreates with his own emotions. He does not take his personal problems as partial samples of the greater environment. He takes his stories of the greater environment as a mimic enlargement of his private life.

But not necessarily of that private life as he would describe it to himself. For in his private life the choices are narrow, and much of himself is squeezed down and out of sight where it cannot directly govern his outward behavior. And thus, beside the more average people who project the happiness of their own lives into a general good will, or their unhappiness into suspicion and hate, there are the outwardly happy people who are brutal everywhere but in their own circle, as well as the people who, the more they detest their families, their friends, their jobs, the more they overflow with love for mankind.

As you descend from generalities to detail, it becomes more apparent that the character in which men deal with their affairs is not fixed. Possibly their different selves have a common stem and common qualities, but the branches and the twigs have many forms. Nobody confronts every situation with the same character. His character varies in some degree through the sheer influence of time and accumulating memory, since he is not an automaton. His character varies, not only in time, but according to circumstance. The legend of the solitary Englishman in the South Seas, who invariably shaves and puts on a black tie for dinner, bears witness to his own intuitive and civilized fear of losing the character which he has acquired. So do diaries, and albums, and souvenirs, old letters, and old clothes, and the love of unchanging routine testify to our sense of how hard it is to step twice in the Heraclitan river.

There is no one self always at work. And therefore it is of great importance in the formation of any public opinion, what self is engaged. The Japanese ask the right to settle in California. Clearly it makes a whole lot of difference whether you conceive the demand as a desire to grow fruit or to marry the white man's daughter. If two nations are disputing a piece of territory, it matters greatly whether the people regard the negotiations as a real estate deal, an attempt to humiliate them, or, in the excited and provocative language which usually enclounds these arguments, as a rape. For the self which takes charge of the instincts when we are thinking about lemons or distant acres is very different from the self which appears when we are thinking even potentially as the outraged head of a family. In one case the private feeling which enters into the opinion is tepid, in the other, red hot. And so while it is so true as to be mere tautology that "self-interest" determines opinion, the statement is not illuminating, until we know which self out of many selects and directs the interest so conceived.

Religious teaching and popular wisdom have always distinguished several personalities in each human being. They have been called the Higher and Lower, the Spiritual and the Material, the Divine and the Carnal; and although we may not wholly accept this classification, we cannot fail to observe that distinctions exist. Instead of two antithetic selves, a modern man would probably note a good many not so sharply separated. He would say that the distinction drawn by theologians was arbitrary and external, because many different selves were grouped together as higher provided they fitted into the theologian's categories, but he would recognize nevertheless that here was an authentic clue to the variety of human nature.

We have learned to note many selves, and to be a little less ready to issue judgment upon them. We understand that we see the same body, but often a different man, depending on whether he is dealing with a social equal, a social inferior, or a social superior; on whether he is making love to a woman he is eligible to marry, or to one whom he is not; on whether he is courting a woman, or whether he considers himself her proprietor; on whether he is dealing with his children, his partners, his most trusted subordinates, the boss who can make him or break him; on whether he is struggling for the necessities of life, or successful; on whether he is dealing with a friendly alien, or a despised one; on whether he is in great danger, or in perfect security; on whether he is alone in Paris or among his family in Peoria.

People differ widely, of course, in the consistency of their characters, so widely that they may cover the whole gamut of differences between a split soul like Dr. Jekyll's and an utterly singleminded Brand, Parsifal, or Don Quixote. If the selves are too unrelated, we distrust the man; if they are too inflexibly on one track we find him arid, stubborn, or eccentric. In the repertory of characters, meager for the isolated and the self-sufficient, highly varied for the adaptable, there is a whole range of selves, from that one at the top which we should wish God to see, to those at the bottom that we ourselves do not dare to see. There may be octaves for the family,--father, Jehovah, tyrant,--husband, proprietor, male,--lover, lecher,--for the occupation,--employer, master, exploiter,--competitor, intriguer, enemy,--subordinate, courtier, snob. Some never come out into public view. Others are called out only by exceptional circumstances. But the characters take their form from a man's conception of the situation in which he finds himself. If the environment to which he is sensitive happens to be the smart set, he will imitate the character he conceives to be appropriate. That character will tend to act as modulator of his bearing, his speech, his choice of subjects, his preferences. Much of the comedy of life lies here, in the way people imagine their characters for situations that are strange to them: the professor among promoters, the deacon at a poker game, the cockney in the country, the paste diamond among real diamonds.

3

Into the making of a man's characters there enters a variety of influences not easily separated. [Footnote: For an interesting sketch of the more noteworthy early attempts to explain character, see the chapter called "The Antecedents of the Study of Character and Temperament," in Joseph Jastrow's *The Psychology of Conviction*.] The analysis in its fundamentals is perhaps still as doubtful as it was in the fifth century B. C. when Hippocrates formulated the doctrine of the humors, distinguished the sanguine, the melancholic, the choleric, and the phlegmatic dispositions, and ascribed them to the blood, the black bile, the yellow bile, and the phlegm. The latest theories, such as one finds them in Cannon, [Footnote: *Bodily Changes in Pleasure, Pain and Anger*.] Adler, [Footnote: *The Neurotic Constitution*.] Kempf, [Footnote: *The Autonomic Functions and the Personality; Psychopathology. Cf.* also Louis Berman: *The Glands Regulating Personality*.] appear to follow much the same scent, from the outward behavior and the inner consciousness to the physiology of the body. But in spite of an immensely improved technique, no one would be likely to claim that there are settled conclusions which enable us to set apart nature from nurture, and abstract the native character from the acquired. It is only in what Joseph Jastrow has called the slums of psychology that the explanation of character is regarded as a fixed system to be applied by phrenologists, palmists, fortune-tellers, mind-readers, and a few political professors. There you will still find it asserted that "the Chinese are fond of colors, and have their eyebrows much vaulted" while "the heads of the Calmucks are depressed from above, but very large laterally, about the organ which gives the inclination to acquire; and this nation's propensity to steal, etc., is admitted." [Footnote: *Jastrow, op. cit.*, p. 156.]

The modern psychologists are disposed to regard the outward behavior of an adult as an equation between a number of variables, such as the resistance of the environment, repressed cravings of several

maturities, and the manifest personality. [Footnote: Formulated by Kempf, *Psychopathology*, p. 74, as follows:

Manifest wishes }
over }
Later Repressed Wishes }
Over } opposed by the resistance of the
Adolescent Repressed Wishes } environment=Behavior
Over }
Preadolescent Repressed Wishes }

] They permit us to suppose, though I have not seen the notion formulated, that the repression or control of cravings is fixed not in relation to the whole person all the time, but more or less in respect to his various selves. There are things he will not do as a patriot that he will do when he is not thinking of himself as a patriot. No doubt there are impulses, more or less incipient in childhood, that are never exercised again in the whole of a man's life, except as they enter obscurely and indirectly into combination with other impulses. But even that is not certain, since repression is not irretrievable. For just as psychoanalysis can bring to the surface a buried impulse, so can social situations. [Footnote: *Cf.* the very interesting book of Everett Dean Martin, *The Behavior of Crowds*.

Also Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II, Ch. 25. "For the passions of men, which asunder are moderate, as the heat of one brand, in an assembly are like many brands, that inflame one another, especially when they blow one another with orations...."

LeBon, *The Crowd*, elaborates this observation of Hobbes's.] It is only when our surroundings remain normal and placid, when what is expected of us by those we meet is consistent, that we live without knowledge of many of our dispositions. When the unexpected occurs, we learn much about ourselves that we did not know.

The selves, which we construct with the help of all who influence us, prescribe which impulses, how emphasized, how directed, are appropriate to certain typical situations for which we have learned prepared attitudes. For a recognizable type of experience, there is a character which controls the outward manifestations of our whole being. Murderous hate is, for example, controlled in civil life. Though you choke with rage, you must not display it as a parent, child, employer, politician. You would not wish to display a personality that exudes murderous hate. You frown upon it, and the people around you also frown. But if a war breaks out, the chances are that everybody you admire will begin to feel the justification of killing and hating. At first the vent for these feelings is very narrow. The selves which come to the front are those which are attuned to a real love of country, the kind of feeling that you find in Rupert Brooke, and in Sir Edward Grey's speech on August 3, 1914, and in President Wilson's address to Congress on April 2, 1917. The reality of war is still abhorred, and what war actually means is learned but gradually. For previous wars are only transfigured memories. In that honeymoon phase, the realists of war rightly insist that the nation is not yet awake, and reassure each other by saying: "Wait for the casualty lists." Gradually the impulse to kill becomes the main business, and all those characters which might modify it, disintegrate. The impulse becomes central, is sanctified, and gradually turns unmanageable. It seeks a vent not alone on the idea of the enemy, which is all the enemy most people actually see during the

war, but upon all the persons and objects and ideas that have always been hateful. Hatred of the enemy is legitimate. These other hatreds have themselves legitimized by the crudest analogy, and by what, once having cooled off, we recognize as the most far-fetched analogy. It takes a long time to subdue so powerful an impulse once it goes loose. And therefore, when the war is over in fact, it takes time and struggle to regain self-control, and to deal with the problems of peace in civilian character.

Modern war, as Mr. Herbert Croly has said, is inherent in the political structure of modern society, but outlawed by its ideals. For the civilian population there exists no ideal code of conduct in war, such as the soldier still possesses and chivalry once prescribed. The civilians are without standards, except those that the best of them manage to improvise. The only standards they possess make war an accursed thing. Yet though the war may be a necessary one, no moral training has prepared them for it. Only their higher selves have a code and patterns, and when they have to act in what the higher regards as a lower character profound disturbance results.

The preparation of characters for all the situations in which men may find themselves is one function of a moral education. Clearly then, it depends for its success upon the sincerity and knowledge with which the environment has been explored. For in a world falsely conceived, our own characters are falsely conceived, and we misbehave. So the moralist must choose: either he must offer a pattern of conduct for every phase of life, however distasteful some of its phases may be, or he must guarantee that his pupils will never be confronted by the situations he disapproves. Either he must abolish war, or teach people how to wage it with the greatest psychic economy; either he must abolish the economic life of man and feed him with stardust and dew, or he must investigate all the perplexities of economic life and offer patterns of conduct which are applicable in a world where no man is self-supporting. But that is just what the prevailing moral culture so generally refuses to do. In its best aspects it is diffident at the awful complication of the modern world. In its worst, it is just cowardly. Now whether the moralists study economics and politics and psychology, or whether the social scientists educate the moralists is no great matter. Each generation will go unprepared into the modern world, unless it has been taught to conceive the kind of personality it will have to be among the issues it will most likely meet.

4

Most of this the naive view of self-interest leaves out of account. It forgets that self and interest are both conceived somehow, and that for the most part they are conventionally conceived. The ordinary doctrine of self-interest usually omits altogether the cognitive function. So insistent is it on the fact that human beings finally refer all things to themselves, that it does not stop to notice that men's ideas of all things and of themselves are not instinctive. They are acquired.

Thus it may be true enough, as James Madison wrote in the tenth paper of the Federalist, that "a landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views." But if you examine the context of Madison's paper, you discover something

which I think throws light upon that view of instinctive fatalism, called sometimes the economic interpretation of history. Madison was arguing for the federal constitution, and "among the numerous advantages of the union" he set forth "its tendency to break and control the violence of faction." Faction was what worried Madison. And the causes of faction he traced to "the nature of man," where latent dispositions are "brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for preeminence and power, or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other, than to cooperate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property."

Madison's theory, therefore, is that the propensity to faction may be kindled by religious or political opinions, by leaders, but most commonly by the distribution of property. Yet note that Madison claims only that men are divided by their relation to property. He does not say that their property and their opinions are cause and effect, but that differences of property are the causes of differences of opinion. The pivotal word in Madison's argument is "different." From the existence of differing economic situations you can tentatively infer a probable difference of opinions, but you cannot infer what those opinions will necessarily be.

This reservation cuts radically into the claims of the theory as that theory is usually held. That the reservation is necessary, the enormous contradiction between dogma and practice among orthodox socialists bears witness. They argue that the next stage in social evolution is the inevitable result of the present stage. But in order to produce that inevitable next stage they organize and agitate to produce "class consciousness." Why, one asks, does not the economic situation produce consciousness of class in everybody? It just doesn't, that is all. And therefore the proud claim will not stand that the socialist philosophy rests on prophetic insight into destiny. It rests on an hypothesis about human nature. [Footnote: Cf. Thorstein Veblen, "The Socialist Economics of Karl Marx and His Followers," in The Place of Science in Modern Civilization, esp. pp. 413-418.]

The socialist practice is based on a belief that if men are economically situated in different ways, they can then be induced to hold certain views. Undoubtedly they often come to believe, or can be induced to believe different things, as they are, for example, landlords or tenants, employees or employers, skilled or unskilled laborers, wageworkers or salaried men, buyers or sellers, farmers or middle-men, exporters or importers, creditors or debtors. Differences of income make a profound difference in contact and opportunity. Men who work at machines will tend, as Mr. Thorstein Veblen has so brilliantly demonstrated, [Footnote: The Theory of Business Enterprise.] to interpret experience differently from handicraftsmen

or traders. If this were all that the materialistic conception of politics asserted, the theory would be an immensely valuable hypothesis that every interpreter of opinion would have to use. But he would often have to abandon the theory, and he would always have to be on guard. For in trying to explain a certain public opinion, it is rarely obvious which of a man's many social relations is effecting a particular opinion. Does Smith's opinion arise from his problems as a landlord, an importer, an owner of railway shares, or an employer? Does Jones's opinion, Jones being a weaver in a textile mill, come from the attitude of his boss, the competition of new immigrants, his wife's grocery bills, or the ever present contract with the firm which is selling him a Ford car and a house and lot on the instalment plan? Without special inquiry you cannot tell. The economic determinist cannot tell.

A man's various economic contacts limit or enlarge the range of his opinions. But which of the contacts, in what guise, on what theory, the materialistic conception of politics cannot predict. It can predict, with a high degree of probability, that if a man owns a factory, his ownership will figure in those opinions which seem to have some bearing on that factory. But how the function of being an owner will figure, no economic determinist as such, can tell you. There is no fixed set of opinions on any question that go with being the owner of a factory, no views on labor, on property, on management, let alone views on less immediate matters. The determinist can predict that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the owner will resist attempts to deprive him of ownership, or that he will favor legislation which he thinks will increase his profits. But since there is no magic in ownership which enables a business man to know what laws will make him prosper, there is no chain of cause and effect described in economic materialism which enables anyone to prophesy whether the owner will take a long view or a short one, a competitive or a cooperative.

Did the theory have the validity which is so often claimed for it, it would enable us to prophesy. We could analyze the economic interests of a people, and deduce what the people was bound to do. Marx tried that, and after a good guess about the trusts, went wholly wrong. The first socialist experiment came, not as he predicted, out of the culmination of capitalist

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