THE ETHICAL RECORD

5p

Vol. 78, No. 10 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1973

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Published by

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Conway Hall Humanist Centre
Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Coming at Conway Hall

Sunday, November 4

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: RICHARD CLEMENTS** on **Tyrrell and Catholic Modernism.** Soprano solos: Linda Rand

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**

6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** Ian Partridge, Jennifer Partridge. Schubert Schwanengesang, Britten Winter Words, Purcell

Tuesday, November 6

7.00 p.m—**Discussion** introduced by **G. K. YOUNG. Authority in Human Society**

Sunday, November 11

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: DR. JOHN LEWIS** on **Is a Secular Religion Possible?** Contralto solos: Irene Clements.

3.00 p.m.—**Forum: The Survival of Brazil's Primitive Indians** with **Dr. Stafford Lightman** (includes films)

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**

6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** Alberni String Quartet. Beethoven C Op 29, Mozart Gmi K516 String Quintets, Haydn Efl Op 76 No 6 String Quartet

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The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the Society

EDITORIAL

Immorality or Enlightenment?

THE GROWING number of secular marriages taking place in Conway Hall and other Humanist centres is an interesting sign of the times.

Those who find themselves in love, but who have no orthodox religious faith, are finding such ceremonies socially acceptable for the purpose of legalising their proposed co-habitation. And this is to their credit.

In a more revolutionary vein, several countries now permit homosexual marriages, and several hundred such marriages now take place each year. And this again is surely to the credit of the betrothed, who must have great courage to put forward, and proudly, their situation to the public at large.

Those people—both in heterosexual and homosexual affairs—who decide not to legalise their happiness, but instead merely move in somewhere together, exhibit a different kind of courage. Organised religion losing its grip, marriages are today largely matters of legal formality. But a wedding ceremony is still a mark of respectability, even if largely symbolic. Those who wish not to be hypocritical come to places like Conway Hall. But the unmarried couples living in "wedded" bliss show a public contempt for the niceties of "respectable" society.

There is nothing to show that the attitude to life as demonstrated by people who "live together" is in any way inferior to the average, nor dangerous or subversive to society as a whole. Moreover, the attitude is one of complete frankness. Those who marry in register offices and other secular establishments do so usually to give one or other of the parties a sense of security. Perhaps another reason is that of wishing to legalise the relationship, and perhaps even some do so in order to attract social acceptance. These are, of course, valid and human reasons.

Those who do not formally marry often feel they are striking a blow for freedom from ritual and officialdom, and because they feel their own relationship is strictly personal and needs no stamp of approval.

What all this means to us is that, as establishment religions fade away, we must provide alternatives to the rituals to which mankind has become used, by way of replacement. The Humanist movement as a whole has the means to provide these services, and we have Conway Hall, where they can be performed in a suitable atmosphere. The next stage of human development is the drawing away from rituals altogether, but nature must take its gradual course. Those who talked of immorality when registry office weddings began, those who talked of unnatural and nauseating scandals when homosexual weddings were authorised in the socially advanced countries, have long since passed. Those who decry the devolution of ritual and the coming of informality, will, in their turn, fade away.

Freedom—A Biological Imperative

BY

MICHAEL DUANE

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At the somatic level the human being can be seen to be a collection of inter-related and self-regulating systems of almost unimaginable complexity, for maintaining the whole organism in balance with itself and with the environment. For example, the skin, nourished by blood vessels over its entire surface, is permeated with a fine tissue of nerves that convey informa- to the central nervous system (CNS) which, in turn issues "instructions" to alter the texture of the skin so as to increase or decrease the loss of heat and moisture according to the internal fluid content and salinity of the organism and the external conditions of humidity and temperature. An itch develops when the accumulation of dead cells on the surface interferes with normal functioning, and the resulting scratching clears away the useless layers, as it seeks also to clear away potentially noxious irritants. The whole system of nerves connecting all the other systems to the CNS and intercommunicating groups of systems and groups of cell assemblies in the brain itself, has to be maintained at an optimum chemical state both to transmit the bioelectrical traffic necessary for the whole organism and to recuperate its own expenditure of energy and tissue.

Something of the complexity of the whole human organism can be dimly imagined when one looks at the vast amount of knowledge that has accumulated about each of the systems in the human body, or if one looks at what is being discovered about the work of the DNA molecule itself. The most complicated computers yet invented can do only what men have designed them to do, and that is always only a tiny fraction of the total range of activity available to man. They cannot "think" outside the limits built into them; they cannot repair themselves; they cannot carry on a conversation beyond their programme; they cannot seek new sources of power or procreate. They are machines not organisms.

What has all this to do with freedom? To see this we have to understand how certain developments in evolution caused man to differ from other living creatures quite fundamentally in certain respects. In this short paper I can do no more than touch on some central features in that development, but it will be enough, I believe, to show that freedom is necessary for the full growth of man and that the necessity for freedom derives from his biological structure and its relation to his environment, including other men, and not simply from western philosophical preference for certain forms of culture rather than for others. The concept of freedom will be seen to correlate with the range of communication available to man, and his readiness to risk even death in expanding the boundaries of freedom to arise when his essential human activity—communication—is frustrated.

Enlightenment

Our better understanding of the vital interrelationships that bind us to all the other inhabitants of the biosphere—animals, plants and bacteria—has modified our desire to keep creatures in captivity in order to study them. We now realise that we can more fully understand their behaviour when we can see them in the whole context of their natural environment. Freedom for animals means more than the removal of physical restraint; it means the provision of the kind of milieu in which they have evolved during the latest stages of their development. For man, too, freedom means more than freedom from restraint. It means the provision of foods and physical activity to promote health and growth; of the kinds of relationship with other

human beings that cause him to develop the skills of communication, the powers of empathy and the patterns of behaviour and valuation that enable him to live as a member of a group.

To the extent that man's behaviour is innately determined (i.e. that he must breathe or die; that he must rest; that he must eat and drink), to that extent he is not "free" because the control of these activities lies outside his conscious volition. In these fields his behaviour is determined by his sensori-motor cortex or the "old brain". To the extent that his behaviour shows some element of choice or variability within his control, to that extent he can be said to be free. Such activities are controlled by the associative cortex or the "new brain".

D. O. Hebb pointed out that the position occupied on the evolutionary scale by any individual organism is related to the ratio of its associative cortex to its sensori-motor cortex (the A/S ratio). The associative cortex is that part of the brain later to evolve as a result of "new selective pressures . . . consequent upon the use of tools. . . . The important point is that size of brain, insofar as it can be measured by cranial capacity, has increased some threefold subsequent to the use and manufacture of implements." It is concerned with activities which indicate some element of choice, adaptability or variation from the fixed pattern of "innate", "inbuilt" or "genetically determined" forms of behaviour.

The sensori-motor cortex has to do with all activities relating to homeostasis or the maintenance of balance within and between the various systems that form the whole organism, and between the individual and his environment. The smaller the A/S ratio, the more fully the individual is "pre-programmed" by genetic endowment for specific reactions to changes in the environment, and the more fully its reactions are determined by that environment.

Variable Factors

The larger the A/S ratio, the greater the number of variations possible in behaviour because the individual can "envisage" more options for action as a result of previous experiences based, initially, on random activity or on activity directed by adult members of the species. In other words, man can stop and think, i.e. compare the present situation and the problem presented with his store of memories of similar or allied situations, before taking action. But the caterpillars, following one another round the rim of the flower-pot until they drop off exhausted or dead, have neither the brain structures and functioning that we call "memory" nor the inter-generational relationships that would make variations in behaviour possible. They have no choice because they have no memories. Being pre-programmed for action in all the situations they are likely to encounter such memories would be an unnecessary burden. For the caterpillar, as for the red salmon, adaptability is maintained at the species level by the survival of those individuals whose genetic mutations are best suited to the demands of the environment. These survivors procreate new members with improved equipment. Man, in addition to the improved physique that resulted from natural selection, has acquired the power to adapt the environment to himself.

Man's evolution ran parallel to other vertebrates for a long time. The operation of his limbs is similar because the structures are similar; oxygen is taken from the air in similar ways; digestive processes are similar; the chemical content of the blood is controlled in similar ways—because men and other land-based vertebrates have come from the same or allied stocks, have inhabited regions on or above the surface of the globe with many common characteristics and have, therefore, been subjected to many similar forces. Those mutations that developed higher A/S ratios gained the power to "think", i.e. to anticipate the consequences of action, at however primitive

a level. Konrad Lorenz gives an example of primitive thought when describing the dilemma faced by a cichlid presented with a morsel of worm while carrying one of its young in its mouth. After some hesitation it dropped the baby which, with its swim-bladder contracted, sank to the bottom. Then, after eating the tit-bit, the cichlid picked up the baby and returned to the nest.

Man, in common with some of the higher apes, "abandoned" some of the more localised forms of adaptation such as shells, protective coloration and wings, and came to rely increasingly on the developing associative cortex. The increase in the rate of selective variation seems to have parallelled, however roughly, the change from a biosphere consisting almost entirely of water at a temperature kept within fairly narrow limits, to a biopshere including water, marsh and land ranging in fertility and physical form from desert to swamp or mountain, and in temperature and humidity from arctic to torrid. Conditions out of the water changed more rapidly than those in the water so the pace of evolution increased for land creatures. It became necessary to be able to respond to stimuli that varied not only from day to day but from moment to moment in both quantity and quality. Those with the greatest resources for different forms of response, i.e. those with the highest A/S ratios, survived.

But man's abandonment of specific or localised forms of adaptation, while leaving him more intelligent, increased his individual vulnerability. Unarmed man alone is no match for a tiger or a rattlesnake. Collectively he can dig a tiger-pit, invent a rifle and produce a snake-serum. Collectively he can survive, but gregariousness now becomes a condition for survival. In turn, mechanisms appear that have the effect of ensuring that future generations continue to act collectively. Such mechanisms are seen in the imprinting of human babies on human faces and in the prolonged infancy of the human young during which, since they are relatively free from pre-programming by instinctual endowment, they can acquire the skills necessary to survive such as hunting, farming or fishing, and especially the communication skills that extend the range and effectiveness of co-operation. As we shall see later, one of the effects of language is to reinforce in the individual the systems of value and the modes of perception that lock him even further into the group structure of relationships.

Language—the Core of Our Humanity

When it is possible for the brain to form associations between a signal (sound, gesture or other visual or tactile event) and the sight, feel, smell, noise or touch of the actual object, then language, the second signal system, can be established. The man who sees a tiger and reacts with fear, flight, by firing a rifle or shouting for help, is reacting to a first signal, the direct impact of the tiger on his sense of sight. When he shouts "Tiger!", his friends, from whom the tiger is hidden by a clump of bushes, react to a second signal by then behaving as the first man did to the first signal. Had he shouted in a foreign language or calmly said "Look out!" their reactions would almost certainly have been different. The precise form of their reactions depends on there having been established a complex of feelings and actions in association with the word "tiger". This complex would have been compounded of direct experience of tigers, of accounts of what tigers could do from people with direct experience and of feelings of apprehension and fear communicated by others.

An important discovery pointing to the place of language in binding the infant to adults is that babies can hear fully for at least two months before birth. The consequences, in terms of associations built up around the mother's voice, began to become clear to me when I found also that babies most easily fall asleep when they hear a tape-recording of the tranquil

beating of a human heart. For at least two months before birth the experience of being sustained in a state of light sleep, of being protected by the amniotic fluid from undue shock, of being fed even before demand through transfer to the infant's bloodstream of food substances from the mother's bloodstream and of being kept at a constant temperature, are well associated with the mother's heartbeat and the sound of her voice. It was Luria's remark that "the child is born conditioned to his mother's voice" that drove me to discover what anyone can do for himself, viz. to place his ear on a woman's midriff at about the point where a baby's head would be for two months before birth, to cover his other ear and to ask the woman to speak softly. I found that the voice can be heard easily and distinctly. I found, too, that I was aware of deeply buried sensations of security and comfort called out by hearing a voice modified in this way. Clearly then, the mother's voice, and her heartbeat when the baby is being carried in the nursing position close to her heart, serve to reassure the infant, fresh from the "traumatic" experience of birth, that the new world is not totally alien. He has been conditioned to respond to his mother's voice as he responded to the total experience within the womb by remaining in a light sleep, relaxed and available for the whole process of growth.

Mother Comfort

Young mothers have noticed that newborn infants can be calmed when they hear mother's voice from a nearby room or, even, when they hear their footsteps approaching. In the absence of a high level of instinctual pre-programming the mother's voice is now the means whereby the infant is introduced to the whole of human culture. Her voice, with all its previous associations, helps to induce in him feelings of pleasure and reassurance in association with all the novel experiences he is to undergo, and to prepare for and reinforce the actual satisfactions obtained from suckling and body contact. The mother's voice and, gradually, her language—how and what she says—become, during the earliest months of infancy, one of the most powerful instruments for linking the child to the culture of his parents. How else is the newborn infant, just arrived (in the words of William James) into this "big, blooming, buzzing, confusion", to discriminate, out of the myriads of sensory stimuli with which he is assailed, those that are relevant to him at this moment of time? The importance of the mother's voice is further borne out by the fact that babies born deaf and babies whose mothers are dumb or whose experience lacks human speech have difficulty in reaching normal levels of language capacity and, therefore, of intelligence. It would seem to give some support to the old wives' tale that "a tranquil mother will have a tranquil baby", when one considers the range of bodily tensions and psychomatic disturbances caused by emotional disharmony. We are still very largely ignorant of the precise forms and effects of pre-natal influences on the life pattern of the young child.

The breakthrough to language, by making reflection possible, created human consciousness or self-awareness, without which the concept of freedom would be impossible. Personal freedom is realised when a desire to act can be expressed in ways that are felt by the individual to be satisfactory, but the desire to act springs from physical need and can be so modified by the culture in which the individual has grown that its direct expression may not always be possible. A member of the Orthodox Jewish faith will want to eat when he is hungry, but if the only food available is pork he will not feel free to eat it and will refrain, in spite of great hunger, so long as he is confident that he will find other food that he may lawfully eat. He may *feel* that he is acting "freely", but his culture has built into the pattern of his values such an aversion to pork or such fear of the consequences of eating it that he will be prepared to suffer actual distress rather than give way to his hunger.

Until linguistics began to take the forms associated with the name of Noam Chomsky it was commonly assumed that language had "evolved" when men found that organs used for other purposes—lungs, throat, tongue, lips, eyes and limbs—could be used to communicate, and that the capacity and, more importantly, the desire to communicate was socially induced. It was also assumed that the differences between the languages of more sophisticated civilisations and simpler or more primitive cultures were differences in levels of efficiency and flexibility in expressing ideas. More recent thinking has, however, caused us radically to modify this latter view:

> "Language is the communicative process *par excellence* in every known society, and it is exceedingly important to observe that whatever may be the shortcomings of a primitive society judged from the vantage point of civilisation its language inevitably forms as sure, complete and potentially creative an apparatus of referential symbolism as the most sophisticated language we know of." Edward Sapir: *Encyclopaedia of Social Studies*, 1959.

B. F. Skinner has made perhaps the most recent major attempt to erect a theory on the older belief about the discovery of language. His thesis is that language is a pattern of conditioned responses to certain stimuli, and that the outcome of stimuli is predictable. Chomsky demolished this view by showing that the results achieved in stimulus/response experiments under simple and closely controlled conditions could not be applied to the normal situation in which language is used. His own thesis, expressed in *Syntactic Structures* and *Cartesian Linguistics*, is that, on the basis of some rapidly acquired "rules" caught from his speech environment, the child, using inbuilt mechanisms for dealing with the organisation of experience, can generate in a creative manner an infinite number of statements not possible according to older theories of language acquisition relying on imitation as the central activity in the learning of language.

Parallel with this development has been the work of Lev Vygotsky and A. R. Luria in showing that an important function of language is that of being a "servo-mechanism of auto-regulation and control of behaviour". Vygotsky reformulated Piaget's view of children's speech at a certain stage as "egocentric speech" and showed that the actual function of speech at that stage is to help the child to regulate what he is doing. This speech, previously acquired from co-operative action undertaken with adults, serves as a pattern or symbolic model for action and, therefore, regulates that action in a more economic manner than random "trial and error" behaviour could do. He showed, further, that thought is speech that has become internalised as "silent speech" and that it serves the same function of regulating behaviour.

How You Say It

A more recent extension of the concept of language as a regulator of behaviour has come with the work of Basil Bernstein and his colleagues. He has shown that because the work role of the middle-class (viz. that of organising, controlling and developing the industrial, commercial, educational and cultural complex of society) is done through language, written and spoken, and through the derived languages of mathematics, science, blueprints, films and diagrams, the middle-class quickly build into their children a feeling that language is the most powerful conceptual tool for understanding and expressing ideas. They, therefore, establish in their young a high valuation on education and a strongly internalised system of values that has the effect of causing them to act and think in a culturally cohesive way.

The lower social classes and, in particular, the unskilled and semi-skilled manual groups, because their work makes little or no demands for the

understanding or expression of complicated processes or relationships; because they have little or no part in helping to control or regulate society, or even minor sections of society, and because so much of their time at work is spent in manipulating objects without the need to express in words the forms of that manipulation when not engaged in the actual activity, do not develop a conception of language as a means of social and individual control to anything like the degree that is regarded as normal by the higher social groups. They do not, therefore, acquire a high valuation for education, and the socialisation of their children through language is done at a far less intensive level.

When we now look at the total process of education, including family and work experience as well as pre-school and formal education, we see a wide spectrum of educational opportunity in this country with a maximum of opportunity for the higher social classes and a minimum for the lower. Since the quality of the education offered correlates closely with training in the ability to communicate, especially in the areas of language, mathematics and science, we see that the higher social classes, by giving their children a head-start in language before they go to school, win for them (through the process of educational selection at the age of eleven plus and even earlier in the streaming of primary schools, and through the prolonged education that leads them to the universities) those places of decision and control in our society that marks them out as the elite.

Lower Orders

The lower social groups, without the home training in language and, therefore, the ambition to succeed academically, find themselves in overlarge classes, with poorly trained teachers and a school-life that ends for most at the age of 15. Inevitably they find themselves doing the most menial and poorly-paid jobs in our society without the language and conceptual skills seriously to want to alter their place or, if they do, so to organise themselves that they can act effectively.

Freedom is concerned, in the last resort, with power. "Power and freedom are identical" wrote Friedrich Engels. Freedom is freedom to bring about physical changes in the distribution of food, in the allocation of housing and in the use of the industrial, commercial, scientific, educational and other resources that can help to maximise the range and quality of human communication for all. All the other conditions of freedom—freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of belief, freedom from restraint—are but the means to the end of making it possible for people to unite so as to change the environment for human purposes or to preserve it from damage. We should speak, perhaps, of "freedoms" because, in practice, we are more often concerned in trying to decide whether X's freedom to do A is more important than Y's freedom to do B. Looked at from the viewpoint of man as a species, distinctive from all other living creatures in his need for unity and in the means by which he achieves unity—language—such a decision might seem to be simple. "Does this act conduce to the welfare of *all* men, irrespective of race, colour or creed?", but such a question can rarely be asked because, as I have tried to indicate, the individual's mode of perception and his patterns of value, built into him by the experiences peculiar to his geography, his culture and, particularly, his language, conspire to delay man's arrival at a clear insight into the central condition of his existence, namely, that *all* men are brothers; that, for the survival of the intelligent but fragile human species, love is essential.

In the harshly selfish and competitive culture hammered out by western countries from fear and mistrust, such statements are relegated to the "pending" trays of our society, along with the philosophy, poetry, religion and other attempts by men to get to grips with themselves and their condition.

So religious leaders—I do not refer to the ordinary run of popes, archbishops or other administrators of clerical institutions—poets and philosophers of all cultures and times from Socrates to Martin Luther King, are ignored or, if they cannot be ignored, killed.

(Summary of a Lecture given on January 21)

The Hutterians of North America

BY

PETER CADOGAN

ONE way or another we hear a good deal about Utopias at South Place, but mostly in the context of imaginative literature. Traditionally they are means of comparing the spirit of an actual age with the spirit of an imaginary one as a means of throwing light on the very foundations of our society.

But visions aside there have been countless attempts to establish ideal societies in the here and now. All over England today young people especially are trying new experiments in living together in communes, so that there is a practical as well as a theoretical interest in looking at the one classical exercise in community living that has thriven now for nearly 450 years—that of the Hutterians and their eventual settlement in North America.

In the nineteenth century there were scores of communal experiments based on the ideas of Robert Owen and Fourier starting with New Lanark in the 1820s. They were all heroic failures. They were political and economic schemes, reactions against the "dark satanic mills" of the industrial revolution. They had no religious basis in any belief that the spirit of man was such that life *had* to be lived in a different way; that compassion and belonging, human relations, vocation and ritual, *institutionalised in every detail of community* was the right and only way to live.

There were people, however, who did think in this way. The extraordinary thing is that although they have an unbroken history since 1529 they were not "discovered" until 1968! Historians, sociologists, political scientists and others have somehow managed to ignore them completely until today. Since 1968 a series of books and articles in learned periodicals have changed the picture.

Beginnings

The Reformation, as such, began in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 99 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenburg and proclaimed the priesthood of all believers. (The Reformation's precursors like John Wycliffe, John Huss and Joan of Arc had launched movements that were put down.) With Lutheranism in one hand and the vernacular Bible in the other, another unofficial reformation, the Radical Reformation, began. The Anabaptists were born. In rejecting child baptism in favour of that of consenting adults they asserted their fundamental objection to a sacramental priesthood and began to explore the meaning of equality at its deepest level. Luther, Zwingli, and the German Princes who supported them, were appalled at this revolution from below that they themselves had let loose and endeavoured to crush it in the Peasants War of 1525. They were largely successful. The continent of Europe never produced a Cromwell to defend its religious revolution.

But those with the deepest convictions refused to give up. Jacob Hutter was the minister of an Anabaptist congregation in the Tyrol that held out

against the Prince-Bishops of Salzburg and Brixen throughout the 1520s. His congregation like others further north in Moravia had added a new dimension to their Anabaptism. They had read in the Acts of the Apostles that the early Christians had had "all things in common". They resolved to do likewise. His congregation spread a cloak on the ground and on it all the members put all their money and valuables and vowed never to return to private property. They were as good as their word.

Hutter believed that he was an Apostle chosen to lead the elect and that God had from the beginning ordained the communal way of life for man, a way of life in which *all* activities were to be considered sacred. If the rest of the world had fallen, they had not and would not. They would go out into the wilderness and turn it into a garden.

They searched the Bible and the Church Fathers for precedents and they found plenty. They adopted the Therapeutae described by Philo of Alexandria—now known to be the Essenes of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Church and State put a price on Hutter's head and after seven years successful work in laying the foundations of the brotherhood that bears his name to this day he was caught, horribly tortured and burnt at the stake on February 25, 1536. Peter Riedeman took up his torch and wrote *The Account* (Rechenschaft) that defined the four principles of the Hutterian creed.

Firstly that the community is the true church driven into the wilderness and there to be built by spiritual diligence and self-discipline. Secondly that "they are not of this world" (John 17) and that they live together under the conditions of brotherly love, sharing, and togetherness—having all things in common.

Thirdly "gelassenheit", surrender, yielding to God, the conquest of self—seeing the most ordinary problems of living together as being the test. (Thus washing up, peeling the potatoes and doing the dirty unpleasant jobs are fundamental exercises—everything is an expression of the sacrament of communal living.)

And fourthly since the community embodies the whole will of God and outside it there could be no salvation, there had to be full and absolute obedience to the community itself, i.e. to its eldership. In practice since the communities are always small, there is no hierarchical structure, no professional priesthood and all relationships are on an immediate face-to-face basis the word "obedience" does not have the authoritarian overtones with which we usually associate it.

Like the founders of South Place they were Universalists, i.e. believing that "all can be saved" and thus rejecting the Catholic sacraments and predestination; and even demoting adult baptism as subordinate to the principle and practice of community.

Their Pilgrimage

From the Tyrol to Moravia, from there to Transylvania and then for about a hundred years in Russia; on to the USA just less than a century ago and finally during World War I to Canada and their present home; the pattern is similar throughout. At first they are made welcome as craftsmen or farmers, they establish themselves and prosper. Then come political changes in the host country and they are called upon to do military service and to submit to other requirements of church and state that flatly contradict their creed and way of life. They refuse and persecution and expulsion follow. They were driven out of the US because of their rejection of military service and made very welcome in Canada where the great prairies were much under-populated and there the flight from the land was a problem.

There are now over 250 communities mostly in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. They are all farms, the houses are turned in to the centre so

the view from the road is not very prepossessing. The average population is about 120 made up of 17 fathers, 17 mothers and nearly 100 children. A new bruderhof will have about 70 people and the oldest up to 200; but when the number gets to about 130 then the serious preparations for division into two begins. As it gets bigger they find themselves facing the danger of personality conflicts and associated factions. That is the warning light. The remedy is always the same and it has never failed yet to get back to smallness.

The farm produces cattle, sheep, pigs, fruit, vegetables, poultry and honey. They used to produce grain but found that it was simpler and better to buy it in bulk. Their own products are marketed when their own needs have been satisfied and the money accumulates in the bank. They use the latest and best agricultural equipment and follow "the world's" agriculture very closely. By the strictest modern standards they are among the best and most efficient farmers in the world. They make all their own clothes and by a strange tradition men's clothing never has buttons—they use hooks and eyes that the men make themselves. Their style of clothing has changed hardly at all over the centuries.

They are brought up to speak three languages, Tyrolese, German and English. After early years in the kindergarten the children go to school until the age of 15. Every morning they go first to the German School where the German Teacher (one of the community) teaches them the German language and the history and traditions of the Hutterian communities. They then go to the ordinary school which is run on the bruderhof by a teacher from outside (who may live in, if he or she wishes to do so) and in this way the requirements of Canadian law are met.

Elder Statesmen

The government of the community is in the hands of the 17 men and the committee of five elders—the Minister, the Steward, the Farm Manager and two others elected for life. The women play their own distinctive part round the needs of the children, gardening, food preparation and food preserving. Since the average number of children per family is ten the need for some such division of labour as this is plain! There is no evidence of any conflict between the sexes.

Jobs are allocated on a rota basis and although people are brought up to learn every trade in farming they tend to gravitate to the one they like most and concentrate on that. Men retire in their 'forties but go on working in their own time and in their own way.

The children eat in the School House. All the adults eat together in the Dining Hall—men and women separately. There are no kitchens in any of the houses round about. Houses are allocated to newly-weds and changed as their family increases. There is, of course, no rent. No money is used on the bruderhof. If necessity requires someone to go into town he will take money with him from the common fund to buy what is necessary, including a pint of beer!

Furniture and decoration are rudimentary—even the windoms have no curtains. There are no pictures on the walls, there is no radio, no TV, no record players, no musical instruments and no newspapers except those of the Hutterians themselves. This is all done on principle—these things are of the world they are not part of.

They are good neighbours. If other Canadians are in trouble they will be the first to help and will then retire unobtrusively. They are polite but not sociable since socially they are sufficient unto themselves.

Sunday is the big day. In the morning the whole community gathers in the Dining Hall for the main religious service of the week. It lasts two hours and some of the younger children get rather bored! They not only sing the same hymns as they have done for centuries, they also have the

same sermons read to them. They are as familiar with stability as we are with change.

Each community appoints an Assistant Minister so that there will be two Ministers ready when the time for division into two comes. There will also, of course, be the successor at hand in the event of the death of the Minister.

The physical health on the community is good and the mental health such that there is no drunkenness, no crime, no divorce, no suicide and no homosexuality. Very few ever leave the communities and of those that do nearly all come back after a few years. People are free to leave at any time. The women are midwives to each other and having paid their full share of taxes the communities call on the help of Canadian doctors and hospitals as and when serious illness warrants it.

Offences are mostly for things like having a radio or a guitar hidden away somewhere! Standard retribution is akin to being sent to Coventry—the offender has to work by himself, eat by himself and is denied the communion of the community until he has publicly repented and been received back into the community in the course of a Sunday morning service. The trouble is then left behind and forgotten about.

The one problem they have not solved is that of higher education and related cultural activities—the enjoyment of literature, music, painting and the history and philosophy of the world beyond their own. But their achievement is so extraordinary that one is inclined to think that in time they will cross that hurdle too.

Lessons?

They have proved in practice that all material problems *can* be solved and that it is immaterial questions that are really critical; that success does not require greed, ambition, competition and exploitation; that a community can survive against incredible odds if it translates compassion sharing into real terms and lives by them; and that this can be done by handpicking in the first place and breeding in the bone in the second; that monogamy does work and that our apparently limitless mental ails are the unnatural product of failing to do what our very nature requires—live in community, and finally that small is beautiful.

(*Summary of a Lecture given on April 8*)

CONWAY DISCUSSION

Camus

ALBERT CAMUS was born in 1914 in an Algerian village of working-class French parents. Of inferior stock, he was on the same economic level as the subject people. His father was killed in the First World War, leaving an impoverished family. But despite this Camus received a good education at the Lyceé. In 1930 he contracted TB after which he went to live with his uncle, who was a well-educated man, and undoubtedly influenced his nephew. Thus began Dr. Francis Clarke-Lowes in his address on Camus.

In 1934 Camus joined the Communist Party, but left it again a year or two later. While doing a series of non-descript jobs he studied philosophy part-time at Algiers University. He also married, but soon separated from his wife.

Camus' literary career started in 1937 when he joined the staff of the newspaper *Algiers-Republican*, wrote reviews of contemporary literature, and reported on social conditions. He volunteered for military service at the beginning of the war, but was turned down on medical grounds. In

1940 *Algiers-Republican* folded up, so after marrying again, he went to Paris where he joined the staff of *Paris Soir*. The same year he completed his first novel *L'Etranger* (The Outsider). Following the German invasion he returned to Algeria and took a post as a teacher in his wife's home town, Oran.

Two years later Camus returned to France to work for the Resistance, on their underground paper *Combat*. He remained editor of this paper until 1947, when he published *La Peste* (the Plague). In 1951 there followed *L' homme Revolté* (The Rebel) in which he condemned revolutionary violence and brought himself thereby into conflict wih Jean-Paul Sartre. His last novel *La Chute* was published in 1956. In 1960 Camus died in a motor accident.

Conor Cruise O'Brian, the Irish critic, wrote of Camus "Probably no European writer of his time left so deep a mark on the imagination, and at the same time on the moral and political consciousness of his generation and the next".

How Should We Live?

Camus was not a man who held consistently to a particular philosophy throughout his life. Like Rousseau, his moral standpoint can be divided into three distinct chronological periods, each one of which is typified by his three main novels, *L'Etranger, La Peste and La Chute.*

In *L'Etranger* we see a man who lives for the present and refuses to allow others to change his convictions. In *La Peste* Dr. Rieux comes to the conclusion that the service of others gives his life meaning. *La Chute* shows a man learning to live by coming to terms with his conscience. I have chosen to restrict myself to the attitude portrayed by Mersault in *L'Etranger.*

Mersault's religion is the body and physical sensations. He has no principles except truth to his feelings, and is free of any inhibitions imposed by society. He picks up a girl at the swimming pool just after his mother's funeral. This so shocks conventional opinion that when he is tried for shooting an Arab in self-defence he is found guilty and condemned to death. He refuses to allow his lawyer to get him off the hook by "proving" that he had not behaved callously at his mother's funeral. The fact was that Mersault had grown away from his mother, and felt very little when she died.

The fact also was that after returning from the funeral he had met a girl whom he liked and had taken her to bed. He was not propared to lie about his real feelings, and as a result he was executed. When the chaplain came to offer him salvation in the next life he replied: "A life in which I can remember this life on earth. That is all I want of it".

There is something vital about Mersault's philosophy which is infectious. But it will not suffice simply to live as the spirit moves us. Mersault himself gets involved in a discreditable affair with a man who assaults his mistress. Mersault aides and abets him, not because he thinks he is right, but because he likes the man. He does not consider the consequences of his action. Principles must sometimes intrude into our lives if we are to have a chance of fulfilment. Where Mersault is right is that without *recognising* our feelings for what they are, and satisfying them (*with discrimination*) we hardly live at all. As he said of the priest: "Living as he did like a corpse, he couldn't even be sure of being alive. It might look as if my hands were empty. Actually I was sure of myself, sure about everything, far surer than he; sure of my present life and of this death that was coming".

Camus himself saw that Mersault's philosophy was not sufficient, and as I have indicated, portrayed radically different stances in *La Peste* and *La Chute.* But they are different stories!

(*Report of a talk given on* 19 *December*, 1972)

For the Record

BY

THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Sci-Fi and So Pla

At the Annual Reunion I mentioned that we proposed to have a series of meetings about science fiction in January and asked for any ideas and contacts members might have. Afterwards over tea Margaret Fowler told me that the man to talk to was George Hay of the Environmental Consortium (who has helped us before with ideas and speakers). A couple of days later Margaret rang up at 11.25 am to tell me that George had invited me to a press conference on sci-fi called for 11.30 that same day. I had five minutes to get to the Press Club off Fleet Street! I blessed the thoughtful fathers of Conway Hall who had placed us so centrally and with the help of Mr Honda of Japan got there more or less on time.

The room was packed with intelligent looking men (hardly any women), most of them young, listening rather sceptically to the PR man from the Festival of Science Fiction and Space Exploration which was about to take place in Sunderland from October 23 to November 25. My talent-scouting eye roamed round the room and I asked George to point Brian Aldiss out to me. He did so I squeezed through the bodies to introduce myself. Brian Aldiss is one of our leading sci fi writers and his history of sci fi itself, *Billion Year Spree*, is due out on November 1. His latest novel, *Frankenstein Unbound*, came out in September.

Talking to Aldiss and to others was an interesting experience. It appears that some years ago sci fi writers began to realise that they were getting themselves into a self-defeating corner full of ray guns and technology and if they didn't watch out they would be as well and finally typed as the writers of westerns and detective stories. They backed out, or some of them did, and began to experiment with psychology and social relations as well as with machines and "space". Hubbard, the founder of scientology, began it seems, as a sci-fi writer who found his sci-fi being taken as gospel!

Our awareness of this at South Place began a couple of years ago when Chris Evans described how the new religions currently being imported from the US were based on a marriage of science fiction and psycho-therapy. This makes it an ethical question. The issue is this—is this new compound, and the undoubted interest its occasions, going to serve good imaginative and reasonable ends or those of the self-seeking mind-bender? It remains to be seen. Our role is not just a passive one. We shall take some part in this process in January. George Hay will be here and Brian Aldiss and Chris Evans are both possibles.

A footnote to this: Francis Clarke-Lowes tells me that he has seen the new Russian sci-fi film *Solaris*, now on general release, and that it makes *2001* look very old hat. *2001* was much marred by the peculiar mystical religiosity if its opening and closing scenes.

Of Friends and Relations

Nigel Sinnott has been succeeded as Editor of *The Freethinker* by Chris Morey. I'm told that Nigel has gone to work for the Ancient Monments people (of the Civil Service) and as a natural historian and archivist that should suit him well. Chris is a Librarian, a member of South Place too, and engaged in reorganising our Library in his spare time. *The Freethinker* is now monthly instead of weekly and it comes out in the middle of the month. I have written a long review article for the October issue on the subject of Dr. Schumacher's book *Small is Beautiful*. The book is full of ideas that will commend themselves to many of our

members, especially those who have heard Dr Schumacher in person at *South Place.*

I know that a number of our members are actively interested in health food ideas. Last year we had a good series of meetings on this and related subjects. You might like to know about the monthly journal SEED. Having taken it myself for about a year I must say it seems to be pretty good—news, ideas and straight info. We stock a few copies on our bookstall. The annual subscription, if you are interested, is £1.80 and the address is 269 Portobello Road, London W11.

Peace News has taken a momentous decision—yet to be acted on. The paper has had to face the fact that the organised peace movement is dying if not dead because international war in the West has become a thing of the past. But violence, the threat of violence, tyranny, authoritarianism and even civil war (as in Ireland) have a future, it seems. This means that the kind of people who previously made up the peace movement will now be engaged in "the alternative society" movement, environmental issues, civil liberties and "community politics". PN has decided to face this and change its identity to meet the challenge. It has also decided to go fortnightly to provide more time for properly prepared and considered articles and judgments; and to go "litho" on grounds of economy and improved layout. The paper will move to Nottingham and may possibly change its name. That is a *lot* of changes! I am sure we all wish it well—peace is one of our perennials at *South Place.*

The London School of Non-Violence looks as though it may be in for a new lease of life. Satish Kumar, who founded it, is back in London. It meets every Monday and Wednesday in the Crypt of St. Martins-in-the-Fields and the current programme is on the board in our Library. Non-violence as an idea has had a bad press for the last five years or so but now the pendulum is swinging again and that is a good sign.

Margaret Pearce

Margaret has decided that it is time to move on after three years as Hall Manager and Lettings Secretary at Conway Hall. She will be difficult to replace. Everyone brings their own special talent and interest to their job. She took up the reorganisation procedure began by Nigel Sinnott and completed it. Then, first as "acting" and then officially as actual Assistant Registrar—she did a vast amount of work reorganising our membership records and sorting out endless series of problems that we had in that department. As a qualified caterer she conceived and delivered (if she'll pardon the image!) our new-look Annual Dinners and long may they prosper. She organised and presided over the Poetry and Music evenings of the last two years and with Lindsey Harris and myself invented the South Place party in its now tried and tested form. She has designed and made posters, seen to the overall redesign and re-equipment of our two kitchens and taken all sorts of weights off my shoulders when the work load in the office piled up. *South Place* is one place where demarcation disputes are just about unthinkable! I am sure that she has the best wishes of all of us for her future.

Coming at Conway Hall

There is no *Ethical Record* in December as its place is taken by the publication of the Conway Memorial Lecture .So this November/December issue publishes the programmes for two months. You can depend upon it that Richard Clements treatment of Catholic Modernism will be very different to Avro Manhattan's examination of the Vatican billions. It will make an interesting contrast. Dr. John Lewis is to make his personal contribution to our "great debate" on November 11; and Tom Evans will consider community values and local democracy (is there something deeper behind the Liberal revival?) on the 18th. Peter Cronin will do a full day

on the 25th. In the morning he will talk about Francis Bacon as one of the founder-thinkers of modern Britain and in the afternoon at the Forum will expound the Bacon-Shakespeare case. I have heard him do this in private and you may be assured that it is quite fascinating. I came away quite convinced that Bacon was Shakespeare. This is the biggest and best who-dun-it in English Literature. And November 25 looks like being quite a party. It really will be worth while to come in from outlying parts to make a day of it.

In December Harold Blackham will use his unrivalled memories and scholarship to look at the question of the achievement and failure of the Ethical Movement in this country (and I think in the US too). Then Lord Brockway will ask the interesting question: Did the Empire End Too Soon? As one of the architects of colonial freedom this is a fascinating subject for him to take on. Then in the last meeting before Christmas I shall talk about Cromwell, our chief of men. This is how Milton described him and that description has been taken by Antonia Fraser as the title of her recent biography of Old Noll. It is a fine book but it leaves something out. If you want to know what that is, then December 16 is the day!

The Young Idea

The Tuesday theme for November is "Democracy, Participation and Leadership". George K. Young will lead off on the 6th and I know that we can expect one of those closely argued cases prepared in every detail with great care and scholarship. Mr. Young is one of this country's most controversial men. He has just done a meeting (not for us) in which he was challenged to explain how he could be a member of both the Monday Club and South Place! Our membership ranges from the Monday Club to the Marxists and why not? We don't label people. They are what they are as individuals and by that they will be judged by other individuals. On the 13th Mike Arbel will talk about kibbutzim and the lessons that we can learn from their experience. The month will conclude with a discussion on community politics (as distinct from party politics) on the 27th. The third Tuesday of course is the day of the 55th Conway Memorial Lecture by Jonathan Miller on *The Uses of Pain*. At his request, and by decision of the General Committee, I shall take the chair.

The other two Forums are those of November 11 and December 9. In the first one Dr. Stafford Lightman will talk about the survival of Brazil's primitive Indians. He has been out there and knows this harrowing subject at first hand. He will show a three quarter of an hour film (projected by the BHA Film Unit) to illustrate his talk. In December Bill Freeman of Briant Colour Printers will describe the extraordinary work-in experience they had there. He is the Father of the Chapel of trade unionists involved.

That leaves the Tuesday meetings for December. We shall, as usual, not have a theme and so far as possible get our own members and attenders to introduce the subjects chosen. On the 4th Mark Moskovisz will talk about co-counselling and on the 11th Francis Clark-Lowes "Mind, The New Religion?" The last one is yet to be arranged.

Monday December 24 we shall have a party at 7.0 p.m. Its principal ingredients will be food, drink, music and good company. We always have a centre-piece of some kind at a party (unless it is after a meeting) and this time it will take its form from the festive season—present giving, story telling, party pieces. If you would like to give and receive the idea is to bring something wrapped and worth not more than 25p (a test for one's imagination in 1973!) And don't forget to bring either some food or a bottle.

PS On a big impersonal office block near Conway Hall someone put a sticker: "Please don't feed the programmers!" It made my day!

PETER CADOGAN

The Hope For Mankind

This article is an abstract, by the Editor, from **Humanist Manifesto II,** *recently published by* **The Humanist,** *the American magazine of humanism. Signatories to the Manifesto include Isaac Asimov, H. J. Blackham, Brigid Brophy, Francis Crick, Peter Draper, H. J. Eysenck, Antony Flew, Kenneth Furness, Hector Hawton, James Hemming, Margaret Knight, Paul Kurtz, Corliss Lamont, Christopher Macy, Lord Ritchie-Calder, Adrei Sakharov, J. P. van Praag.*

THE NEXT CENTURY can and should be the humanistic century. Science will enable us to control the environment and provide for ourselves, provided caution is used.

The fulfilment of each individual should be the goal of mankind. Humanism can give personal meaning and significance to life.

It is an ethical process through which we can all move, above and beyond divisive particulars, dogmatic creeds and ritual customs. Science has largely disproved spiritual religions, which, in any case, encourage dependence on and obedience to, external notions, and most religions are based on fear. A system of ethics, on the other hand, stems from humanity itself, with no theological, spiritual or idealogical reference. The enrichment of life should be our goal.

Reason and intelligence are humanity's most effective tools, but it must be realised that there is no one source of empirical "correct" thinking.

The integrity of the individual is a central humanist value. This embraces dignity, the encouragement of talents and the freedom of choice.

Sexual taboos need to be re-thought, and the right of birth control, abortion and divorce should be more widely recognised. Society should be tolerant towards more enlightened sexual attitudes. Responsible and honest attitudes to interpersonal relationships should be cultivated.

The basic civil liberties should also be recognised in society as a whole, providing due freedom to the individual.

Getting Together

Participation in the maximum practicable number of activities should be instituted. People are more important than social formalities and traditional systems of organisation.

Church and state must be separated.

The yardstick of economic systems should be the economic well-being of individuals, and systems which do not increase this are of little worth.

The principle of moral equality must be furthered through the elimination of all discrimination—racial, religious or sexual.

Minority groups—the aged, infirm, addicted, handicapped, imprisoned, etc., should be able to enjoy the same social standards as the majority.

The building of a world community, transcending all the limits of national sovereignities, is desirable. No part of humankind can be isolated from any other. In a technological world, international dependence is increased, and a world society would simplify matters and improve the lot of every individual. The world society should eschew violence, and rely on courts to resolve conflicts. In any case, the reduction of military budgets is a world imperative.

World poverty must cease. International co-operative planning will aid this, focussing on the administration of decreasing energy reserves.

Communication and transport should be improved world-wide.

Individuals hold the key to fundamental changes. Local and narrow loyalties should be transcended, and co-operative efforts should be commonplace.

The goal for humanity is for each person to strive to be a citizen of the community, of the world.

E.W.

BOOK REVIEW

The Morality of Abortion: Legal and Historical Perpectives. Edited by John T. Noonan, Jr. Harvard University Press. (Paperback) $2.95. London: Oxford University Press, £1.50.

Of all the separate streams flowing in to form the great lake of Permissiveness, legalised abortion is surely one of the most conspicuous. Accepting that the water passed under the bridge long since, are we still satisfied about the course it has taken? All too easily, the reply may seem to be a choice between parading with emotional slogans, on the one hand, and a reckless contempt for any conformity, on the other.

For readers who prefer a wider view, responding to the stringency of logical argument and the hard realities of incisive thought, the set of seven essays in this volume are confidently recommended. Actually this is the third reprinting of a collection which resulted from an international conference held at Harvard in 1967, a fact which attests to the durable worth and interest of the work.

Thanks to the erudition and clarity of the contributors, these 250 pages give a highly informative and balanced account of the legal, social, theological, ethical, marital, embryological, and medical aspects of the conception and growth of the Unborn, with all the corresponding implications of actions to terminate his prospective span of existence.

Balanced, but this cannot of course mean *perfectly* balanced in this changing world, where what *is* and what *ought to be* are both in flux. Almost inevitably some bias towards the past (what has already been experienced, whether as events or as interpretation) can be observed, which some may see as a leaning towards Roman Catholic theology.

Then turn from Noonan to James M. Gustavson's protestant ethical

approach: "the purposes of God for life pertain to more than physical existence: there are conditions for human life that need delineation: physical health, possibilities for future good and meaning that engender and sustain hope, relationships of trust and love, freedom to respond and initiate, etc".

Read too Paul Ramsey on legalities: "We believe that a deeply felt, conscientious belief in or outlook on some public question is really the same, at least in the public forum, as any belief traditionally called religious . . . The conclusion that a conscientious conviction may be *functionally equivalent* to a religious belief appeared to Americans as a proper elevation of conscientious ethical beliefs".

Disturbing to ignorance and prejudice alike, this book will be understood by those who recognise that moral decisions are very often afflicted with regret.

DR. A. L. LOVECY

Your Viewpoint

Man's Proper Growth

With reference to Ralp Ruddock's article "The Making and Breaking of the Self", I should like to point a hopeful finger to the future.

He speaks about the real man, pressurised in society's box, living as it were, in a shell; showing only society's polished surface, not the kernel of his existence; being a full society member at the expense of breaking the shells of his weaker neighbours.

I should like to say that there is hope for the "hard nut", as indeed there is for the soft one, for the shoot of his real nature to break through and flourish.

Already it is happening; insidiously and surely.

And the "happenings" are not drug induced, but "real-self" induced.

People no longer are content to sit back in their glossy and pompous shells of unreality.

Secretly they are getting up, one by one, and coming to meet where they can "freak out"; come out of their shells with the freaky bursting of a child long shut in.

Here and there, all over the country, are Growth Centres, where the child-joyful nature of every man is tended until it attains a mellow maturity, but, nonetheless, life-lovingness.

In these places men become almost as gods. They are free to love and laugh and share their problems. They are free to weep and dance. Above all, they are free to grow.

Significant "methods" are being taught, whereby man can grow up, clear and unpatterned, without his shell as it were.

There *is* hope for man.

His true nature must be expressed.

His innermost conflicts must see the air, in order to untangle and grow straight.

The life-shoot of man is revealed now.

And, if those who have not learned their loving, caring nature; if these, through their not-knowing, do not "nip it in the bud", man indeed will flourish to see the tree of his mind, blossoming exhultantly in the actual world.

SW12 ANN WHITWELL

Evolution of Consciousness: A Problem

The question which is posed here is where or when in animal evolution, consciousness began. It is assumed by analogy that like oneself other humans are conscious when showing awake behaviour and unconscious in deep sleep. By analogy chimps, who have some capacity for grammar and self-reference in sign languages, and also cats, appear to be conscious even if they do not have powers of choice. And so on . . . is a fish, an insect, an amoeba conscious? Where does consciousness start in the scale of animal forms, or when does a monad acquire a window? At what level of neural organisation or activity or of biochemical activity is the threshold crossed from zero consciousness to a conscious level, however dim?

This transition from zero is a leap. Perhaps one can interpret the Genesis Eden story as recording another leap. The kind of increase in self-consciousness described there may be seen as entailing a conscious choice or conscious inhibition of sex. Among chimps there are no doubt conscious inhibitions in general otherwise their behaviour would be chaotic. But chimps show both the capacity for experiment and an at least "unconscious recognition of identity". (Washoe, when asked "who is that in the mirror", replied by signs "me, Washoe'.)

Another point is that the quality and intensity of conscious experiences must vary widely. It is obvious, for example, that a colour-blind or tone-deaf person must have different subjective (conscious) responses from the normal. However, even if it is readily shown that two persons discriminate between a red and a green, it does not necessarily follow that their experiences of each of these wave-lengths is the same. There seems to be no way of knowing. The same applies to intensity of pain and of other feelings.

Subjective experiences can only be communicated to a limited extent by speech, music and so on. It does seem that analogical arguments about the absence or presence of consciousness or its intensity and quality are weak or hardly conclusive. But, induction is itself "a skeleton in the philosophical cupboard"; the point is that scientific method works and thus has a pragmatic value.

Perhaps a combination of sign communication among higher animals and objective measurements such as can be recorded on an encephalograph are the best that can be done. (Telepathy, it seems, cannot add much.) Electrical methods can distinguish between unconscious deep sleep, dreaming and the awake state; but, how far it will enable us to distinguish conscious intensities and qualities remains a great challenge to science.

JERVIS CRESPIN

Sydney, Australia

Conway Hall

The General Secretary's report on the AGM ("For the Record" in your July/August issue) stated that my motion "on the redevelopment of Conway Hall was turned down in the light of two considerations".

First I should like to make it clear that the motion did not propose redevelopment, but merely the re-convening of the committee set up some years ago to look into the desirability and feasibility of any such plan. One would have thought that in a society whose main object includes the word "rational" a motion calling for an inquiry that would cost us nothing and commit us to nothing would have gone through unopposed. As one member said to me after the meeting, "Voting against your motion was like refusing to see the doctor in case the diagnosis was bad".

The Chairman of the meeting was so certain that the motion would go through with a comfortable majority that she actually bent the rules of procedure to allow Peter Cadogan, opposing the motion, to have the last word—which he delivered in his best rhetorical style, standing behind

the official table. This appeared to give his contribution official status, and there can be little doubt that this gave Peter Cadogan a considerable advantage which helped to sway the meeting in his favour. He obviously thinks so himself, since he presumes, in his *Ethical Record* report, to identify his two main arguments as the two considerations in the light of which the meeting defeated my motion.

The first of these considerations—that we cannot act in this matter until clear of our legal and charity status problems—was really no consideration at all, for, as I had explained in proposing the motion, the inquiry would take some while and it would be a good thing to have our plans for the future clear in our minds by the time we are clear of legal obstacles.

The second of the considerations—that we will have an opportunity soon for piecemeal development (of part of our property adjoining Conway Hall), and that this could be within our financial means without having recourse to financiers—was largely an argument on my side, for it is the projected piecemeal development, without regard to the possibility of redeveloping the site as a whole, that lends urgency to my proposal. As for the means of financing a comprehensive scheme, this is, of course, one of the major factors that the committee, if reconvened, would have to look into; and it is quite likely that we could finance the scheme largely, if not entirely, within our own movement.

In spite of the way the vote went at the AGM, it is within the province of the General Committee to reconvene the Property Development Committee whenever they wish to—and I hope they will wish to soon.

BARBARA SMOKER

London SE6

Ritual Party—or Play?

I find myself in agreement with George C. Swade in his objection to the Society introducing a fixed "Yuletide ritual geared to the Anglo-Saxon tradition".

But I see no reason why Humanists cannot celebrate the mid-winter festival, which is twice as old as Christianity. Anyway why should the angels have all the best balloons?

The only question which remains for me is what form the Society should adopt to convey the Humanist message of Peace on earth of Goodwill to all men.

Well, we have Conway Hall, and a stage. What we do not seem to have is a drama group, who could put on a show which conveys to an audience the differing rituals performed by man from the distant past—in an evolutionary manner, and it should not be beyond the wit of a modern Humanist dramatist to give a Humanist interpretation of Peace on earth and Goodwill to all men of our time.

By this method, we should have an interesting dramatic, enlightening party, without committing ourselves to any particular ritual and still convey our love, friendship, loyalty and positive thinking to mankind.

VICTOR S. ROSE

Bromley, Kent.

1972

Humanist Religion

In the October issue Merle Tolfree writes: "The Conway Hall is described as a Humanist Centre, but if the word Humanist does not mean having primary concern for the well-being of man rather than for the propagation of religious attitudes then it is indeed difficult to know what the word stands for".

It is just this concern for the well-being of man, which makes us try to establish and propagate Humanist religious attitudes. May I illustrate

this with a practical example. I let a room to a 26 year old woman, who lives on national assistance. All day she watches the television. She tells me that although she saves each week a few pounds, which she puts on her National Savings account, she is not happy and thinks it is because the television is only black and white. She is now going to rent a colour set. Her problems are not material. The state will continue to supply all her material needs, but her mental welfare cannot be provided for so easily. What she lacks is a stable satisfying religious background which will give her a moral outlook on life, and which tells her what function she can and should fulfill in this world. You can't do this by taking her to the present run-of-the-mill Humanist meeting.

Max Sheldon says that I go back to pre-christian paganism, because I believe Yule-tide has a meaning to human beings of the 20th century and beyond. I don't mind going back even further, if there is something useful to be learned. Recently I read a book of sayings attributed to Confucious who lived some 2,500 years ago. Believe me, that man had some ideas which would not come amiss in 1973. But please, don't think that we religious Humanists only look back to the past. A Humanist religion as such does not yet exist. We feel like pioneers starting something which will be completed by our children and their children. It is wishful thinking to believe that we can really establish a Humanist religion with the present generation, brought up as it is in a Christian country. The fear of being pulled back to superstitions of one's youth, will prevent most people from wholeheartedly committing themselves to any new religion. However, we can but make a start. As Peter Cadogan said: We know where we are coming from and we know where we are going, or something similar.

PHILLIP BUTTINGER

*London SW*17

● As an SPES member of some years standing I have an oar to insert in the recent arguments on our "rational religious sentiment".

The argument has been notable for the non-communication between the "rationalists" and the "religionists" since they plainly mean different things by the word religious and seem unable to extract the substantial issues from the purely verbal one. SPES has always included a variety of different views but the present problem is not, I think, much to do with the proposed Yuletide party or the precise words we use to describe ourselves. Rather it stems from a feeling, which I share, that Peter Cadogan is endeavouring to commit the Society on one side of a divide that we have traditionally straddled. Many of us understood when we joined South Place that the phrase "rational religious sentiment" should not be inspected too closely lest it disintegrate (and I am objecting to "rational sentiment" rather than to "rational religion" here) and the claim that we felt ourselves part of a tradition based on rituals cannot be sustained.

I think we should accept the variety in our ranks and I shall certainly watch with interest Philip Buttingers experiments with rituals. But I also think we should resist all attempts to restrict this variety in ways that violate our customary openness.

DAVID FLINT

*London E*17

The General Secretary replies: I do hope that David Flint and others will try to see that whatever I personally think about the matter is quite secondary. It may well be that in the past we may have tended not to inspect some things "too closely". This is one reason for some of our present troubles. Our circumstances *now* oblige us to be explicit. The situation is

not of our choosing but we have no option but to face it; and at the deepest level that is surely a good thing.

● I do feel sorry that the inclusion in our aims of "the cultivation of a rational religious sentiment" is a stumbling block to many of our members, and I am grieved that we have lost more than one thoroughly good member because of what appears to me to be a disagreement about the meaning of terms.

To me the term religion does not mean adherence to a mythical theory of existence, whether of God or of myself after death. This seems to me to be narrowing very considerably the use of a term which surely can and does include aspirations towards human ideals conceived by humans, communicated to other humans and experienced by humans. Christians and other God-fearing sects do not have the monopoly of good and well-meaning thoughts and yearnings. A religious attitude of mind is a human attitude adopted by humans who feel strongly and deeply about non-material values. These are the kind of considerations which impel people to undertake feats and tasks involving great courage and other human qualities of a high order.

This is what Humanism means for me, and I trust I pursue my aims and ideals with religious zeal. It is religious endeavour, I think, that enables one to meet one's commitments in striving to make one's little bit of the world a better place for having lived in it and in trying to give of oneself in helping fellow humans where help is obviously needed.

This is all very personal but I cannot believe I am alone in feeling religious about things which pertain to values which are not entirely materialistic and mundane.

ROSE BUSH

*London, WC*1

● In his reply to Merle Tolfree (*Record*, October), the General Secretary points out that "the words 'rational religious sentiment' are inscribed in the entrance of Conway Hall and are to be found in all the official contemporary statements of what we are about"; he states that "South Place has always been a religious society", but goes on to concede that "we have certainly changed our interpretation of what we mean by religion"—adding "but then so have enlightened people everywhere".

But then, "SPES" declares itself to be an *ethical* society; moreover, on the back of the *Ethical Record* (my italics here and throughout) the following declaration is to be found: "The Society is a progressive movement which today advocates an *ethical humanism*, the study and discrimination of *ethical* principles based on *humanism*". Is it not then a depreciation of "ethical humanism" to argue that, in order to cover certain human experiences whose cultivation the Society advocates, it is necessary to add "and the cultivation of a rational religious sentiment free from all theological dogma?" (I should perhaps add that invited to membership are "all those who reject supernatural creeds and find themselves in sympathy with our views".)

In short, as a progressive humanist movement, the SPES should surely be moving forwards with "ethical humanism", and not back with a "religion" which, through lack of any consistent meaning—together with its lack of theological dogma and supernatural creeds, might well become unacceptable to "the enlightened", from amongst unofficial religions as well as official ones!

CHARLES BYASS

Farnham Common, Bucks

South Place News

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Mr. J. Brotherton, Bishops Stortford; Mr. J. Byrn, Hounslow, Middx.; Miss J. E. Davies, W4; Mr. T. W. Davies, N16; Mrs. E. Goffe, Sevenoaks, Kent; Mr. P. Heyworth, Oxford; Mr. R. D. Johnson, W1; Mr. F. M. Skinner, Staunton, Glos.

Obituary

We regret to report the death of Mr. Hugh Shayler.

Annual Reunion

Nearly 200 people attended the Annual Reunion on Sunday, September 30—the beginning of the Society's 181st year. Mr. Cadogan presided and introduced the Guest Speaker, Dr. David Stark Murray. He spoke movingly of his memories, ideas and feelings over the many years in which he has been engaged in advocating a comprehensive national health service and of the importance of the non-material values (as against those of the market) in our approach to the fundamental subject of health. Richard Clements moved the Vote of Thanks.

There was then a presentation, made by Rose Bush on behalf of the Society, to George Dowman who had just retired after 53 years of service to the music of the Society—in particular that of our Sunday Morning Meetings. Unhappily he had been taken ill the previous week and was in hospital, but the news of his treatment was reassuring and Mrs Constance Dowman received the presentation on his behalf.

Greetings from kindred societies were brought by Charles Sweeney for the Progressive League, William McIlroy for the National Secular Society, Hector Hawton for the Rationalist Press Association and Kenneth Furness for the British Humanist Association.

The two singers, David Waters and Jean Aird, accompanied by Joyce Langley at the piano, charmed and entertained the whole company with a series of solos and duets. This was after the tea, rather than before it as is usually the case, because of a slight breakdown in communications, but it all worked out well.

At one stage the Chairman had to leave the Chair to forestall what sounded like a renewed outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War in the Club-room upstairs. It all added to the colour of the occasion.

The tea, prepared by Rose Bush and her team who had been "at it" since 11 a.m., was a great success—in line with the tradition handed down by Phoebe Snelling.

Lots of people met old friends and Mr. Hawton revealed that it was Dr. Stark Murray who had, without knowing it, put him in touch with the RPA through a book review back in the 'thirties. New people came along too and South Place was off to a good start for its new season.

Sunday Social

November's social will take place on the 18th, at 3 p.m. Rose Bush will give a talk, illustrated with slides, about her recent round-the-world journey. Tea will be served at 4.30.

Bridge Drive

As usual, the bridge drive takes place on the third Thursday of the month, and for November this means the 15th. It starts at 6.30 p.m. and light refreshments will be served. New members are welcome.

Advertisement

Hall Manger and Lettings Secretary, Conway Hall. Applications are invited for this position, the appointment to take effect immediately. Details from the General Secretary, SPES, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Theatre Party

A visit has been arranged to the Mermaid Theatre, Puddle Dock, near Blackfriars station, for the 5.30 p.m. performance of J. B. Priestley's "The Inspector Calls". The date is Saturday, November 17. The party will meet at the theatre at 5.15 p.m. or earlier, for an optional one mile walk along the embankment after tea, at the Victoria Embankment Gardens (Temple station) kiosk. Full details from Connie Davis (tel. 722 6139). Theatre tickets are 50p, and bookable with Miss Davis by s.a.e. to 19 Crossfield Road, London NW3.

Conway Memorial Lecture and the E.R.

As usual, this issue of the *Ethical Record* is for two months, to make way in December for publication of the Conway Memorial Lecture. This will take place on November 20, at 7.30 p.m., when Dr. Jonathan Miller will talk on "The Uses of Pain".

Xmas Eve Party

The much-discussed Xmas Eve party will be held in Conway Hall, on December 24, at 7 p.m. Those attending are requested to bring a contribution to the food or drink, and a present, not costing more than 25p, marked M or F to show its suitability for either sex or both.

Kindred Organisations

The next *British Humanist Association's* dinner takes place on December 15, at the Kenilworth Hotel, London, near the British Museum, Bloomsbury. Tickets cost £2.80 from the General Secretary, B.H.A., 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8. **Humanist Holidays** is still hoping to run an Xmas centre in Brighton. Mrs. Marjorie Mepham will inform of any vacancies. (Tel. 642 8796).

55TH CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

DR JONATHAN MILLER

THE USES OF PAIN

CHAIRMAN: PETER CADOGAN

TUESDAY, 20th NOVEMBER, 1973 — 7.30 p.m.

LARGE HALL

Admission 10p

(*Continued from page* 2)

Tuesday, November 13
7.00 p.m.—**Discussion** introduced by **MIKE ARBEL. Kibbutzim**
Thursday, November 15
6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Drive**
Sunday, November 18
11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: T. F. EVANS** on **Community Values and Local Democracy.** Piano and Flute: Edward Mandel and Andrew Solomon
3.00 p.m.—**Sunday Social**
6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**
6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** London Oboe Quartet. Britten Phantasy, Lutyens "Driving out the Death", Mozart F K370, Mozart Adagio K580A Cor anglais and strings. Purcell Two Fantasias String Trio. Mozart Bfl K424 violin and viola duo.
Tuesday, November 20
7.30 p.m.—**Conway Memorial Lecture**
Sunday, November 25
11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: PETER CRONIN** on **Francis Bacon and "The Relief of Man's Estate".** Tenor solos: David Waters
3.00 p.m.—**Forum: Bacon and Shakespeare** with **Peter Cronin**
6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**
6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** Delme String Quartet. Haydn Dmi Op 42, Mozart CK465, Beethoven C Op 59 No 3
Tuesday, November 27
7.00 p.m.—**Discussion: Community Politics**
Sunday, December 2
11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: H. J. BLACKHAM** on **The Achievement and Failure of the Ethical Movement.**
6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**
6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** New London Wind Ensemble, John Streets. Mozart Efl K452, Beethoven Efl Op 16 piano and wind, Stamitz Milhaud Suite d'apres Corrette wind quartets.
Tuesday, December 4
7.00 p.m.—**Discussion** introduced by **MARK MOSKOWICZ** on **Co-counselling**
Sunday, December 9
11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: LORD BROCKWAY** on **Did the Empire End Too Soon?**
3.00 p.m.—**Forum: Who Should Own Industry, and for What Purpose?** with **W. H. S. Freeman**
6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**
6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** Fitzwilliam String Quartet. Mozart Efl K428, Janacek No 1, Wolf Italian Serenade, Beethoven Fmi Op 95. Clifford Benson Bloch No 1 Piano Quintet.
Tuesday, December 11
7.00 p.m.—**Discussion** introduced by **FRANCIS CLARK-LOWES, Mind the New Religion**
Sunday, December 16
11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: PETER CADOGAN** on **Cromwell, Our Chief of Men**
Tuesday, December 18
7.00 p.m.—**Discussion** to be arranged
Monday, December 24
7.00 p.m.—**Xmas Party**

South Place Ethical Society

FOUNDED in 1793, the Society is a progressive movement which today advocates an ethical humanism, the study and dissemination of ethical principles based on humanism, and the cultivation of a rational religious sentiment free from all theological dogma.

We invite to membership all those who reject supernatural creeds and find themselves in sympathy with our views.

At Conway Hall there are **opportunities for participation** in many kinds of cultural activities, including discussions, lectures, concerts, dances, rambles and socials. A comprehensive reference and lending library is available, and all Members and Associates receive the Society's journal, *The Ethical Record*, free. The Sunday Evening Chamber Music Concerts founded in 1887 have achieved international renown.

Services available to members include Naming Ceremony of Welcome to Children, the Solemnisation of Marriage, and Memorial and Funeral Services.

The Story of South Place, by S. K. Ratcliffe, is a history of the Society and its interesting development within liberal thought.

Minimum subscriptions are: Members, 75p p.a.; Life Members, £15.75p (Life membership is available only to members of at least one year's standing). It is of help to the Society's officers if members pay their subscriptions by Bankers' Order, and it is of further financial benefit to the Society if Deeds of Covenant are entered into. Members are urged to pay more than the minimum subscription whenever possible, as the present amount is not sufficient to cover the cost of this journal.

A suitable form of bequest for those wishing to benefit the Society by their wills is to be found in the Annual Report.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

TO THE HON. REGISTRAR, SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY,
CONWAY HALL HUMANIST CENTRE, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, WC1R 4RL

Being in sympathy with the aims of South Place Ethical Society, I desire to become a Member and I enclose as my annual subscription the sum of £..... (minimum 75p) entitling me (according to the Rules of the Society), to membership for one year from the date of enrolement.

NAME .....
(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

ADDRESS .....

.....

OCCUPATION (disclosure optional) .....

HOW DID YOU HEAR OF THE SOCIETY? .....

DATE ..... SIGNATURE .....

The Ethical Record is posted free to members. The annual charge to subscribers is 75p. Matter for publication should reach the Editor, Eric Willoughby, 46 Springfield Road, London E17 8DD, by the 5th of the preceding month.

David Nell & Company, Dorking, Surrey