

NEW DIMENSIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

Part I

O. R. BONTRAGER*

It is not for thee to enter the fray or to leave it.

— ANCIENT WISDOM

VOICES out of the ancient past entreated those who would listen to do “good” and eschew “evil.” The curses of angry gods were invoked on all those who would not hear. The prophets overdid it. The promptings of more modern prophets have brought us to a point in history where responsibility has become a dirty word.

The road we have traveled since those early voices of the spokesmen for the gods exhorted their hard-necked fellows has been a long and exceedingly tortuous one. The ancient Yahweh held us strictly responsible for staying away from “evil” and clinging fast to the “good,” if we are to believe his earthly regents. Indeed, the faithful were summoned regularly before his earthly representatives to give an account of any devilry in which they may have engaged and of any good deeds they may have performed.

* School of Education, California State College at Long Beach.

This is the first of a two-part article that was originally published in *V.O.C. Journal of Education* (7 [1 and 2], August 1967), Teachers College, Tuticorin-3, India, and is reprinted by permission. Copyright © 1967 by O. R. Bontrager. Part II will appear in the September issue of *etc.*

It is not always easy even for a Boy Scout to find the opportunity for the good deed. The earthly representatives, however, found a way out of this dilemma by organizing one of the earlier forms of what we now call mutual funds. For a price, the easily frightened faithful could purchase indulgences. The proceeds of such purchases could be used to buy a remission of punishment still coming for evil that had been committed and also to buy good deeds that could be performed by the earthly representatives. Such deeds were practically as good as deeds actually performed on a do-it-yourself basis. They had the added advantage of saving time and of avoiding involvement with one's fellow men, some of whom, after all, were quite unpleasant to deal with.

The system of buying out of evil and into good, however, became greatly suspect after several hundred years, apparently because of corruption that began to manifest itself among the board of directors. The directors were taken sternly to task by one Martin Luther, who nailed some theses on a door, and by another prophet named Calvin. These eminent gentlemen announced it as a firm declaration of God that we are able to discern evil and are capable of staying away from it, and that we will be held strictly responsible if we do not. Moreover, they averred, God was not easily impressed by our good deeds. If He were in a proper mood when they are summed up, our good deeds *might* win His favor; they might not.

Shortly after the middle of the nineteenth century, there appeared another prophet who said in effect, "Look fellows, this 'good' and 'bad' stuff is all bunk. It is merely a trick played on you by a cruel society, represented by your own father and mother, that wants to deny you the most natural of all expressions, namely the expressions of your Id. A cruel society forces you to repress your natural, instinctive tendencies, especially your sex feelings, and

push them way down into a deep dark cave within you, called the 'unconscious.' But sex will out, along with hostile feelings that arise because you are denied the expression of what are, after all, only natural feelings. But more, because you cannot avoid such feelings, you will be seized and shaken by horrible feelings of guilt that are very, very bad. All these repressed feelings of sex and hostility and guilt become so compounded that they become the rudder of your ship. Indeed, these feelings will cause your ship to spin like a top; they will drive you relentlessly and make you do things you would not otherwise do. They act like dynamos, and because they do, you cannot behave responsibly. However, one of my dynamic practitioners who knows about such dynamos can, for a fee, brainwash you sufficiently, if you stay with him long enough, to enable you to come to terms, albeit unhappily, with your sexy feelings and a cruel society."

The practitioners of this nineteenth-century religion have recently detected signs that they have painted themselves into a corner. This consequence stems from current legal practices that permit a finding that under certain circumstances a killer may not have known "right" from "wrong"; therefore he was not "responsible." So frequent have such instances become that the partisans of Dr. Thomas S. Szasz have discovered, to their great horror, that a person who does not know right from wrong is frequently incarcerated in a mental hospital for a term longer than he would have served had he been convicted of the same offense under ordinary criminal law. A mental hospital is not exactly the equivalent of a resort hotel. Szasz and his partisans have become tremendously distressed, and they now take the position, if we understand them correctly, of holding everyone responsible, regardless of whether or not they plead irresponsibility at the time of the offense. The clock has now made a full circle.

THE TERM *responsibility* has come to have narrow connotations for many people, especially those who may translate responsibility into morality and morality into "sex." As we have tried to show elsewhere Webster's unabridged dictionary lists nine uses of the word *moral* as an adjective, none of which specifically mentions "sex."¹ Historically, the word *moral* came to us from the Latin *mos, mores*, which signified nothing more than "way of life." Let those who may be fearful that a cruel society is about to repress all that is good in life, and thus disturb the even tenor of their sexy ways, relax. We have no such ends in view.

What will be said, however, will be relevant, we hope, to a way of life — a *human* way of life. While a human way of life certainly is not without sex expression, there certainly are other considerations pertinent to human existence that also merit honest appraisal, especially in an age of exploding populations. One need mention only increasing crime rates, rising mental hospital populations, a yearly crop of one-half million illegitimate babies, the critical state of our water supplies, the upsetting of ecological balances by indiscriminate application of biological poisons, and the proliferation of atomic weaponry as cases in point. For the first time in history, we are capable of killing each other off — all of us. This is a "first"; no other organisms have ever accomplished so much.

It should be unnecessary to remind anyone that sex would quickly come to a halt if we were all dead. We have to stay alive even if sex is the guiding star in our lives. The paintings of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci depict the heavenly population as sexless, thus giving us little assurance of sex in some "hereafter." Our proposals, very simply, will have to do mainly with staying alive as the first order of business. By "staying alive" we suggest much more than a diseased, borderline-starvation existence.

What we will say here has nothing whatever to do with punishments meted out by wrathful gods, judges, fathers and mothers, or neighbors. From time immemorial, men have devised ways of appeasing the wrath of angry gods. This could be accomplished by supplication, fasting, by sacrificing goats, or by various other formulas devised by man. A punishing judge, or a "just" one, will remit part of the sentence he has imposed as a result of good behavior. The heart of a wrathful father or neighbor melts when the prodigal son returns, or under other appropriate circumstances.

In contrast, the consequences of the various forms of irresponsibility of which we shall speak are not to be avoided by supplication, fasting, or the observance of special days set aside for such purposes. The microorganisms that will kill us if we choose to pollute our water supplies can not be soothed like an angry god, judge, or neighbor. No microorganism has ever been found whose power to kill could be diminished one iota by sacrificing a goat.

The punishments of which we will speak are not inflicted by gods or men. The point of view that we will undertake to develop holds simply that our actions — what we as individuals choose to do — have consequences that return to us as feedback, consequences that in extreme cases can destroy us. We (and by "we" is meant every human being) have a hand in manufacturing our own poisons. The choices we make lead where they lead, and they are *our* choices.

The word responsibility is a noun. Nouns by definition name things. In view of the widespread tendency, particularly in psychology and related fields, to reify (thing-ify) nouns, we shall use verbs and speak instead of "behaving responsibly." Behaving implies movement or action and cannot be appropriately represented with nouns. When we speak of behaving responsibly, we also imply that we

can behave irresponsibly. Thus when we suggest that human individuals behave responsibly, we suggest that they make choices. It would be useless to importune anyone to make choices if it could be demonstrated that acts of choice are impossible. We shall consider the possibility of choosing, and of not choosing, later.

By behaving responsibly, we mean behaving with awareness that ultimately we must face the feedback, or consequences, of our own acts. It is possible to act without awareness. Every act we perform flows from premises or assumptions that we take for granted and of which we often are not even aware. Whether we are aware of our premises or not, consequences follow our every action. Ultimately we or our neighbors or our descendants have to deal with the feedback. From this there is no escape. I must repeat again that when I say we are answerable, I do *not* say answerable to any of numerous gods or to a judge or any other human being. The words *responsible*, *responsibly*, *responsibility*, etc., have a common origin in the Latin *respondere*, which means, "to answer." When we can say that we are answerable for our actions, we are only repeating what Paul B. Sears expressed so eloquently many years ago:

Nature is not to be conquered except on her own terms. She is not conciliated by cleverness of industry in devising means to defeat the operation of one of her laws through the workings of another. She is a very business-like old lady who plays no favorites. Man is welcome to outnumber and dominate the other forms of life, provided he can maintain order among the relentless forces whose balanced operation he has disturbed. But this hard condition is one which, to date, he has scarcely met. His own past is full of clear and somber warnings — vanished civilizations like dead flies in lacquer, buried beneath their own dust and mud.

For man, who fancies himself the conqueror of it, is at once the maker and the victim of the wilderness.¹²

Behaving responsibly suggests courses that can be counted on to minimize hurtful feedback. We do not suggest that all hurtful feedback can be eliminated completely. On the contrary, we see no possibility of actions over the course of a human life without some hurtful feedback. The payment of taxes can, in some cases, be experienced as hurtful. In such instances, however, we are often willing to accept some hurt in preference to the greater hurt that would certainly follow if we would have to give up highways that are built with tax receipts or open all the penitentiaries and mental hospitals that are also maintained through tax support.

In a sense, every human act expresses a prediction — a prediction that this action will enhance the actor's ultimate well-being. We do not deliberately engage in actions from which we predict hurtful consequences. Behaving responsibly, then, can be characterized as behaving predictably; that is to say, behaving in a way that increases the probability that we are moving in minimally hurtful and, ultimately, survival directions. In the final analysis, the question is simply: What moves must we make that will increase the probability that we will stay alive? In effect, responsible behavior consists in our deliberate choices, from the available environmental alternatives, of those courses of action that will lead to increased correspondence between our internal states and the surrounding external states. These are the courses of action that will maintain life processes with a minimum of hurt to the chooser and to his fellow human beings. It is necessary to insist on consideration for others, since no human being can maintain himself without the benefits of the operations of others. No human being can claim privileges for himself that he would deny to others. To disregard the well-being of others invites feedbacks, in countless forms, damaging to one's self. By *deliberate choices* we mean

that we must continuously bring into sharp awareness the premises or unconscious assumptions on which every act is based, and we must consider probable consequences of the act.

TO BEHAVE responsibly implies that human organisms are able to perform certain functions. It would be senseless to demand responsible behavior from animals, because they cannot perform such functions except to a very limited degree. The fact that we can perform the functions that are listed below does not automatically insure that human beings will behave responsibly. Indeed, certain of the functions that humans can and do perform produce conditions that make it necessary to view responsible behavior in a new light. Among the functions that organisms must be able to perform before we can expect them to behave responsibly, as we have defined it, are the following:

1. A degree of sensitivity and perceptiveness is necessary for continuous awareness of environmental heterogeneities and similarities on the basis of which choices can be made. Organisms that could become aware only of environmental homogeneity (if any exists) would have no basis for choice.

We have the assurance of C. Judson Herrick that on neurological grounds human organisms fulfill this essential precondition. He characterizes human organisms as demonstrating:

Increase in the range, variety and efficiency of adjustment of the organism to its environment and of the environment to the use of the organisms. This involves increase in the complexity of bodily structure, which insures sensitivity to a greater variety of environing energies and more refined sensory analyses, elaboration

of more varied organs of response, and more complicated apparatus of central control — nervous, vascular, glandular, etc.⁷

It should be noted that every human being meets this condition. No one can count himself out. This increase in sensitivity, the result of ongoing evolution, has led to the biological basis for continual awareness of successions of environmental alternatives, which automatically renders choice and action inescapable. I must repeat: *automatically* and *inescapable*. Choice cannot be escaped by playing verbal games, i.e., by saying, for example, "I will not choose." Such a statement constitutes a choice that has already been made. To say that we can choose implies that it is possible *not* to choose, a supposed possibility that demonstrably does not exist.

We are the choosers. Choice is inescapable. From moment to moment, each of us reenacts Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken":

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

We can take the road to the right. This follows a choice we have made. We can take the road to the left. This, too, follows a choice. We may take neither road. A choice has been made. We can return. This act follows a choice. Only choice itself cannot be eliminated.

2. Choice itself, the second function necessary for behaving responsibly, rests ultimately on biological structures that make possible the detection of differences and similarities. It should be mentioned also that responsible behavior does not automatically follow as a consequence of detecting differences and similarities. We must repeat that organisms with biological structures that bring differences and similarities to awareness cannot avoid choice.

A decision not to choose is still a choice from which consequences follow.

3. Organisms must have structures enabling them to carry out effector functions before responsible (or irresponsible, for that matter) behavior is possible. Herrick assures us that every healthy human being has structures enabling him to perform actions consistent with his environmental surround. Other organisms do not have comparable structures. No man would permit a monkey to shave him. No monkey can act in correspondence with death-dealing bacteria in his drinking water, not even if he could see them, which he cannot. Moreover, the possibilities for human actions are immeasurably extended by humanly created extensions to human effector systems. Among them we need mention only mechanical diggers, the largest of which multiply the muscle power of one man thousands of times. The airplane, automobile, plows, language, telephone, telegraph, radar, computers, and numerous forms of automation provide additional examples. No animal can facilitate its moves through such extensions to animal effector systems. No animal has ever been found that has constructed an airplane or a computer.

4. Behaving responsibly presupposes an organism that can perform representational functions that enable it to recall (represent to itself) past choices, past actions, and consequences that followed such choices and actions. Human organisms, and only human organisms, can demonstrably and predictably perform such actions — talking crows, porpoises, and counting horses to the contrary notwithstanding.

5. We must assume also the possibility of representational functions that permit the making of generalizations based on (a) similarities in past choices and actions that have led to damaging consequences, (b) similarities in past choices and actions that have led to beneficial conse-

quences, and (c) the knowledge based on experience that we never know with certainty what consequences will follow whatever choice is made.

6. The possibility for behaving responsibly depends also on representational functions that permit the representation of possible consequences at some future time of choices and actions on the basis of comparison with representations of the consequences of similar choices and actions in the past.

7. The equipment (structures) necessary for responsible behavior would require perceptual, integrating, and representational apparatus that would function in continuous correspondence with relationships between complexes of environmental factors and organisms (e.g., between microorganisms and disease.) Only organisms with such structures can create appropriate generalizations as guides for choices and actions in the complicated dynamics that constitute human environments. All healthy human organisms have such structures.

8. Appropriate choices and actions depend on the combined operations of sensory-perceptual-integrating-representing functions that make possible awareness of asymmetrical, dynamic, ever-changing relationships that continually give rise to new enviroing circumstances and the necessity for new generalizations. Atmospheric pollution provides an appropriate example.

9. Appropriate choices and actions are facilitated by structures (brain tissues) that are impressionable and modifiable in response to successions of environmental impacts, making learning possible. By learning, we mean making changed behavior in response to changed environmental circumstances possible. The significance of the prolongation of infancy in human organisms was correctly evaluated by John Fiske⁵ nearly one hundred years ago and confirmed only recently by Loren Eiseley.⁴ A

greatly extended infancy in humans provides the neurological basis that enables human organisms to begin where the old generation stopped and to move from there. The prolongation of infancy also places the human infant in a situation that provides the opportunity for the exercise of reciprocal relations. The earliest lesson every human being learns is the fact of his utter dependency upon the choices and actions of others. Through false doctrines the human infant can be taught by his elders to ignore the necessity of choosing and acting in accordance with the survival necessities of reciprocal, interdependent relationships. Hurtful consequences have followed and will continue to follow such non-life-enhancing-for-humans actions of the elders, even when those choices and actions are made in ignorance. Feedbacks that follow as certain as night follows day — feedbacks in the form of disturbed environmental relationships, including relationships with other human beings (the most important of all environmental relationships) — are not minimized by pleas of ignorance. The prolongation of infancy means that *both survival and nonsurvival* directives to choice and action can be impressed on children who are helpless to resist the very prescriptions the consequences of which may ultimately redound to destroy them. For this reason, Brock Chisholm wisely recognizes that the most important task for parents and teachers among all people today is the bringing up of children to the end that they may behave responsibly.²

10. Survival choices and actions necessitate creative functions that make changes possible — not only changes that will give rise to new patterns of behavior, but changes in the control of the environment itself. All environmental change is not automatically beneficial; indeed, some changes may give us harmful and, in extreme cases, possibly nonsurvival feedback.

11. Survival choices and actions cannot be performed without representational functions that enable one human being to represent himself as in his neighbor's shoes. This requirement arises from reciprocal necessities arising from the fact that there are three billion members in our family.

12. Life-enhancing choices and actions depend on representational functions that make it possible to combine the generalizations of other individuals with our own, thus greatly increasing the total knowledge available to any of us. When, for example, white men appropriated some Indian generalizations about corn, tremendous consequences followed, including increased food supplies in a hungry world.

13. Throughout the entire history of the human race, man's representational functions have made possible the generation of successions of new, alternative generalizations that, when followed as guides to choice and action, have brought higher degrees of predictability. As long as men believed the earth was flat, they did not move out of sight of land. Their choices were thus limited by their generalizations. New, alternative generalizations greatly extended the world of men. This has happened and is happening in every field of human activity. The binary system of mathematical representation is making available today a computer no farther away than the nearest telephone.

14. Man's own creations have accelerated the changing dynamics and complexities that surround him. Survival choices and actions are no longer possible on the basis of data mediated directly through man's sensor equipment. No man can detect a virus or a microbe or an atom with his naked eye. The naked eye does not capture the reaches of outer space. Our sensors do not detect radioactive strontium or other deadly residues that are borne on the winds over the land after every H-bomb is

detonated. We have no native equipment that will correctly assess the nature of life-destroying pollutants in the atmosphere or in the water we drink or the deadly residues of poisons that contaminate our foods.

It is only through man-made extensions of his sensors that men have slowly been able to improve their assessments of the environmental surround. This has led to some of the following consequences:

- We have learned to view our environment as dynamic rather than static. We now know there is no final protection from viral and bacterial forms. In the dynamics of that dimension of life, new forms constantly evolve.

- We have come to a realization that all representational functions invariably rest on certain assumptions, limited sampling, and incomplete data. Representations that held the earth to be flat and the euclidean postulate of parallels illustrate what happens representationally when we assume what we assume. We now know that the form of a language itself inescapably limits what we perceive and, therefore, what we will investigate and talk about. As long as we assumed representationally some relationships in the environment that could be accounted for in terms of "bad air" (malaria), our actions in this connection were pathetically hopeless.

Continuous successions of illustrations demonstrate that representation is always based on limited samples or incomplete data. Leeuwenhoek and his little animals illustrate it. Hardly a week passes that some new manifestations are not discovered in outer space. In the study of the atom, every solved mystery leaves other mysteries unsolved and often creates even more. Thus our representations depend on what we notice. Indeed, *we see in part and we prophesy in part.*

- The fact of seeing in part (which has been established chiefly through man-created extensions to his native

equipment) has slowly led us in the direction of abolishing representations that postulate certainty. Thus a whole new family of representations has been created by man, giving rise to techniques for dealing with probabilities and degrees of probabilities. Awareness that probability is the most we can expect from any choice has had profound effects in many of the sciences, for example, quantum physics of all kinds.

- Recognition that we see in part forces us to operate continually in terms of inference. The *useful* use of inference has been one of the most powerful representational tools ever devised by man. Without inference there can be no atomic or electromagnetic theory, or any other theory for that matter. It should not be overlooked that inference can be used harmfully. It turns out to be a double-edged sword. Used usefully, that is with constant awareness that we can operate *only* on inferential levels, inference can affect choice and action profoundly. Such awareness discourages finalistic, absolutistic, dogmatic representations and stimulates continual research for new factors and overlooked factors in the dynamic surround.

15. Rapid changes in man-created dynamics and complexities together with man-made extraneurological extensions of his sensor equipment make survival choices and actions impossible without parallel extraneurological extensions to his integrating and representing equipment. Rapid developments in this direction are now taking place mainly in the form of computers that make possible the integration of wide varieties of environing factors quickly enough to enhance the possibility for survival under circumstances befitting the dignity of the human class of life.

16. The possibility for survival choices and actions are greatly enhanced by extraneurological, man-created feedback devices that report back the consequences of already performed actions. The automatic elevator that

stops at Floor 3 after the button for the third floor has been pushed is an example of one of many forms of feedback devices. In principle, a feedback device reports back to the initiator of an action the fact that the desired consequences of the action have or have not been achieved. The tremendous advantages of such devices lie in the fact that they make possible changed choices and actions quickly enough to avoid the damaging consequences of original choices. The future development of such devices, once they are deliberately used to enhance the well-being of all men, is almost beyond imagination.

17. The capacity to represent, which we have presented as a necessary precondition for responsible choices and actions, does not automatically insure survival choices and actions. On the contrary, representational functions give rise to the possibility of misrepresentations, half-truths, distortions through ignorance, false teachings, all of which can be used for purposes of self-aggrandizement at the expense of others. In short, the representational functions themselves involve choices and actions. Misrepresentations must be regarded as unethical, immoral, and leading to nonsurvival consequences.

WE MAY possibly have overlooked other functions necessary to behaving responsibly. Can anyone deny that healthy human organisms can and, in the case of most of the functions enumerated above, unavoidably do perform them? Indeed most of us can recall many individuals who have performed most of these functions even after they have met with accidents or were disabled by diseases that imposed severe handicaps on them. A well-known example of one such person — a tremendously responsible person — was Helen Keller. There are, of course, many others.

No one in recent times has presented as clearly and cogently the case for behaving responsibly as George Gaylord Simpson. His arguments for "The Ethics of Knowledge and Responsibility" are convincingly set forth in Chapter II of *The Meaning of Evolution*.¹⁴

If I understand Simpson correctly, however, he expresses some doubt that an evolutionary ethic for man automatically arises from the principles of evolution in general. He does feel "that an evolutionary ethic *for man* [which is of course the one we, as men, see, if not the only possible kind] should be based on man's nature, on his evolutionary position and significance."

If we agree on the usual connotations of *ethical* as assent to "right" principles, and of *moral* as "right" practice, then if our conclusions thus far are correct, a *human* ethic is the only possible kind. We have shown how in human organisms biological structures have evolved that give rise to awareness of alternatives. Choice without awareness would appear to be impossible. We have shown how human organisms not only give assent to "right" principles, but through their performance of acts of representation, they actually formulate the principles. Indeed, they formulate the principles that in every culture are regarded as right. Children in any culture give assent to these right principles. If this were not so, the children in a culture would never become acculturated. That is to say, an Eskimo child would not grow up behaving in accordance with generalizations in vogue in his Eskimo culture, but he would grow up behaving, for example, like a Samoan.

For these reasons, then, we feel that we have every assurance that an evolutionary ethic for man arises automatically from the principles of evolution in general. At the head of the long line that led to him stands man. Many other lines died out. Man's line did not. His equipment has demonstrated survival worth. We further assert that

ethical and moral systems would make no sense for any other class of organisms. No monkey has ever come down from a mountain top bearing a tablet of stone having engraved thereon generalizations governing the behavior of monkeys. *Ethicizing and moralizing, or behaving responsibly*, presupposes organisms with biological structures capable of choice as opposed to automatic, reflex response. Herbert Spencer realized over one hundred years ago that "mental evolution, both intellectual and emotional, may be measured by the degree of remoteness from primitive reflex action."¹⁵ Herrick reinforces this point of view by saying, "Reflexes as partial patterns are used instrumentally in learning, but they do not initiate or direct it. Learning and thinking are not analytic; they are synthetic processes; and the apparatus employed is to be sought in the integrative tissues of the brain, not in the reflex areas."⁷

Herrick comments further on "the current and erroneous dogma, 'You can't change human nature.'" He continues:

Of course, human nature is changed in every individual according to the experiences he has and what he does about them. That is what education is for, to change human nature, and it does so more or less efficiently. If you can't change human nature, then our entire educational program is an unconscionable fraud, all wasted effort.

Neurological demonstrations to the contrary, powerful forces in strategic places are keeping alive a hoary, nineteenth-century system of Freudian mythology that denies that we humans have any choice. Savage, sexy ids that lurk in supposed neurologically nonexistent caves of the Unconscious deny us choice, even rationality. O. Hobart Mowrer,⁹ William Glasser,⁶ William Sargant,¹¹ Richard LaPiere,⁸ and others are a few of the voices we hear

raised in attempts to let some light into the Freudian jungle of irresponsibility. The forces that speak for irresponsibility are powerful. The voices of fiction, television, radio, magazines, and the "mental healers" depict humanity as incapable of choice. Any protest that is raised is inevitably met by a glassy stare and the question, "Have you been psychoanalyzed?" — an idiotic *non sequitur* that, according to Sargant, asks in effect, "Have you been brain-washed?"¹⁰

THERE is no science that could possibly operate today exclusively in terms of nineteenth-century generalizations. The Freudian folklore predates the automobile, radio, television, the airplane, and satellites. While Freud verbally professed to disavow the Judeo-Christian teachings of Original Sin, in effect he actually changed only the name of Original Sin, calling it now the Id. He paved the way for an ubiquitous cult of sorcerers and exorcisers all proclaiming man's basic irresponsibility and asserting that man is nothing but a phallus and a fist. In two sentences Theodosius Dobzhansky strips the masks from twentieth-century necromancers who are still bound by the old dead mythologies that go back to ancient Greece:

With Freud the depreciation of the human condition reached the lowest level. Freud mocked man's pretensions to spirituality by denying him not only spirituality but rationality as well.³

If the necromancers deny us rationality, this constitutes *their* choice from which serious consequences have followed. Such a position, however, raises a question. If we accept their premise of irrationality, by what curious twisting of logic do we believe the necromancers? The widespread acceptance of such irresponsible doctrine, which according to Sargant is nowhere as widespread as

in America,¹¹ may be the most important index of irrationality.

Herrick emphatically denies on structural grounds that we are automatons circumscribed by fixed modes of action. On the contrary, he states emphatically, "The threatened collapse of the imposing social structure which is the framework of modern civilization is not due to any physical or mental deterioration of the human race." He goes on to say, "A stable human structure cannot be made according to the social standards of the ant hill or the wolf pack."⁷

The late distinguished biologist, Sir Charles Sherrington, in his only reference to Freud in *Man on His Nature*, correctly places Freud in the ancient days of Aristotle:

With both of them (Freud and Aristotle) their study of mind is wholly divorced from anatomical features of the brain. Even as a background to the metaphors and parables, and classical myths, by means of which psychoanalysis proceeds to tell its story, the anatomy of the brain has no more part there than in the narration of, say, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.¹²

Animals cannot perform the functions we have stipulated as necessary prerequisites for behaving responsibly. The key functions have to do with representation and feedback. These must be regarded as survival functions. The human class of life has survived up to now. This happens to be a fact. In this class, there are no healthy individuals who do not perform acts of representation and who do not have built-in, biological feedback mechanisms that form the basis for awareness of the consequences of performed acts.

Yet, the Freudian ethic says, in effect, "You have no choice. A cruel society has forced you to repress what is natural and human about you — in short, sex expression

and hostility. Angry sex rages in your unconscious and becomes the dynamo that runs you. Angry sex makes your choices."

OF PARTICULAR relevance to the problem of feedback is the Freudian position with respect to guilt. No student of human affairs would maintain that societies could even exist without rules of conduct. The young learn these rules. If they could not learn such rules, there could be no form of social order. In the course of development, each one of us internalizes rules of conduct that take into account reciprocal necessities of behavior. The selective processes of evolution have equipped each of us with the biological structures that make possible the internalization of such rules. We also happen to inherit biological structures that make it possible to feel "guilt," "shame," "remorse," etc., when we break one of the rules of the culture that nurtured us in infancy. In short, guilt feelings become a form of feedback that often says, in effect, "Look, your actions have injured someone. How would you like to be in the other fellow's place?"

Guilt feelings have had survival value, or we could not possibly experience them. This does not deny that a culture may teach conflicting rules of conduct or teach children to feel guilty about matters of little consequence. This is quite another matter and does not invalidate the survival value as feedback of all our feelings. Yet the Freudian cult regards guilt feelings, without any qualification whatsoever, as a neurotic manifestation. In short, we are invited to ignore survival feedback functions, an astonishing proposal to say the least. This is the equivalent of saying that the feelings we experience when we encounter a red-hot object are neurotic, which makes no sense neurologically.

The elimination of guilt feelings would make as little sense as the elimination of headache or toothache. As Mowrer has shown, the impact of the Freudian ethic has been such as to render many individuals incapable of feelings of consideration for the other fellow at all.⁹ When thirty-seven people stood and watched a hoodlum stab a young woman to death, as they recently did, and no one even raised a voice in her behalf, a lot of folks should hang their heads in shame. How safe is any one of us if we tolerate such animality? We need to feel guilty about the crime of man's inhumanity to man. We need to feel deeply ashamed instead of repressing such feelings or hiding behind an alibi that such feelings are neurotic.

What monstrous misrepresentations we accept in the name of psychiatry! Yet we are told by William Sargant that it is virtually impossible to become trained in social work or psychiatry in this country without submitting to such beliefs.¹¹ Our newsstands, our bookstores, television, and radio depict the human class of life in such mythological terms through many of the representational media they dispense — books, magazines, plays, literary and art criticism, and so on. Anyone in search of reading material that would give him some insight into his problem of guilt, anxiety, or whatnot will find Freudian, mythological explanations and dream books in almost any corner drug-store, but nothing else.

The consequences of such actions return to us as feedback. If we believe we are animals, we will behave like animals and generally condone animalistic behavior. We are all familiar with an old trick that we still see enacted on occasions. We meet a friend and say, "Bill, you aren't looking very well." Bill will insist that he feels all right, but if several other people remark to him during the day that he does not look well, he will in fact begin to feel very badly.

FREUDIAN assertions that choice is impossible except in terms of sex and hostility, and ultimately irrationality, are demonstrably false, no matter what culture we investigate. No culture has ever been known without ethical and moral systems, that is, systems that give assent to certain principles that are regarded as "right" in the culture. Indeed, any description of a culture that does not include an account of the choices and practices in the culture cannot possibly describe the culture. There are certainly many choices and practices in any culture that have nothing to do with sex or aggression, directly or indirectly.

Only in organisms we call human have biological structures evolved that make it possible to behave responsibly. Consequently an evolutionary ethic must, indeed, be human, and can be only human. It rises automatically from the principles of human, and only human, evolution. It derives from the functioning of biological structures that must be regarded as survival mechanisms — structures that permit representational operations and feedback. The representational functions make possible misrepresentations, by design or ignorance, that in turn encourage choices and actions that will certainly reverse the direction in which humanity has slowly moved over the millennia and plunge us all into animality and chaos and ultimately destruction. As we shall show, we cannot survive as animals.

(Part II of this article will appear in the September issue of *etc.*)



REFERENCES

1. Bontrager, O. R. Moral and spiritual values in the schools. In Michael Belok et al., *Approaches to Values in Education*. Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1967. Chap. 9.
2. Chisholm, Brock. The reestablishment of peacetime society. *Psychiatry*, February 1946, 9(1).
3. Dobzhansky, Theodosius. *Mankind Evolving*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962.
4. Eiseley, Loren. *The Immense Journey*. New York: Vintage Books, 1957.
5. Fiske, John. *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1874.
6. Glasser, William. *Reality Therapy*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
7. Herrick, C. Judson. *The Evolution of Human Nature*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961.
8. LaPiere, Richard. *The Freudian Ethic*. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1959.
9. Mowrer, O. Hobart. *The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion*. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1961.
10. Sargant, William. *Battle for the Mind*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961.
11. Sargant, William. Psychiatric treatment here and in England. *The Atlantic*, July 1964.
12. Sears, Paul B. *Deserts on the March*. (Rev. ed.) Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959.
13. Sherrington, Sir Charles. *Man on His Nature*. (Rev. ed.) New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1951.
14. Simpson, George Gaylord. *The Meaning of Evolution*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949.
15. Spencer, Herbert. *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1855. (Quotations taken from 3rd ed., 1890.)

