

The Effects of Reality

Anne Fisher

THE STORY is told of a man who viewed from his shabby dwelling on a mountain another house on a more distant peak. He viewed this house with awe and curiosity, for it appeared to have windows of glistening gold. For many days and nights he traveled toward the magnificently adorned structure. Although his trip brought many hardships, he never faltered; for he knew the end of his journey would bring the fulfillment of his desire for a closer inspection of that faraway wonder. At last he reached the base of the peak on which stood the house with the gilded windows. Preparing himself for the revelation of splendor, he clawed his way toward his objective. As he elevated himself to a position promoting a clear view of what he sought, he laughed in eager anticipation. Then he stopped; the smile left his face. Before him was a hut more dilapidated than his own, and its windows were nothing more than common glass. He was confused and disheartened. He had traveled so very far only to be confronted with barren ugliness. He turned to view the vast expanse of territory he had trekked to receive so inadequate a reward, and in doing so he noticed that his own home on the mountain from which he had ventured appeared to have windows of gold. The sun shone brilliantly; now he knew. His image of grandeur was created not by the existence of a gilded cottage but by his own misinterpretation of the sun's rays falling on the glossy window panes of a crumbling shack.

As this man sought the truth about an inexplicable but highly provocative image, so seek many of us the truth about unfamiliar situations or things. We hear of an interesting book and want to read it. Pictures of a lovely resort area beckon to us to come to the area and enjoy the view. College life is portrayed in a storybook manner on a television program and in the movies, and we hunger for the opportunity to live it ourselves. Upon closer examination of the object of our desire, however it quite often brings the reaction of disillusionment or unhappiness. The book employs, for example, sensationalism and escapism, and we are disappointed. The resort area is in actuality small and cluttered. The life of the college student involves mostly hard work and study, and our image is shattered. Unhappiness did result; yet, we received what we wanted.

Is unhappiness the only result of confrontation with an unforeseen truth? To answer this question I feel it is necessary to define "happiness." If used in a superficial sense, happiness could be that which results from the fulfillment of one's desires. In this example pursuit of the unknown could certainly result in disillusionment, a type of unhappiness that I have previously illustrated. I do believe, however, that we cannot consider exclusively the superficial connotations of the word. Happiness in any context would refer to a state

of well-being or contentment, but this state itself is almost undefinable. Because this definition is so unspecified, I feel that there must be also a broader effect of the revelation of reality—an effect which goes beyond the primary state of disillusionment. An initial confusion and sorrow were felt by the man on the mountain as a result of his encounter with reality, but this was complemented by or perhaps replaced by a later recognition of the trickery of a simple phenomenon. It is reasonable to assume that relief of a sort must have been felt as a result of this revelation. A certain degree of contentment must have been experienced upon viewing a situation which was no longer baffling; indeed, we might call it happiness. This would be the deeper effect of pursuing truth.

We can safely conclude that what one desires does not always bring contentment, but coupled with the assimilation of new information an *unhappiness* can become a *happiness* of greater worth. Because the result is broadened knowledge, the initial unhappiness is justified. Did the man on the mountain experience unhappiness? Yes, he did. Did the pursuit of truth and the eventual discovery of it cause him anguish? Yes, it did. Anguish can, however, result in the evolution of a more profound pleasure. As the man scanned the territory he had traveled and began his journey back to the home he had forsaken for the purpose of pursuing a dirty hovel, *he* was the master of himself. His *gnawing ignorance* was not.

He's a Rough Character, Ladies

Brenda Stump

AFTER HE'S backed you into the corner, rolled an avalanche of kisses over you and whispered cleverly contrived phrases into your ear, he suddenly breaks away, covers his face with his hands, and murmurs, "I don't want to hurt you." Until I find a better reply to this statement, I usually say, "Don't flatter yourself, Buster!" The typical American male is an excellent actor, especially when the lights are low. He's on stage alone with the leading lady of the evening. Until this point it has been a lovely evening and you've laughed and talked about numerous subjects, such as his opinion of the Chicago Bears and how to improve them, his opinion of the armed forces and how he plans to dodge them, and, of course, his opinion of his last date and how charming she was. As the lights go down, his ego comes up. He's everything you didn't think he was. He's suave, considerate, and soft-spoken. Once you've hit the corner and he's finally backed off enough for you to retrieve your senses, he's begun his speech. He proceeds to warn you against the dangers of his charm. He has many things to do before he becomes serious or gets