

FROM THE EDITOR

SPECTACULAR!

A deadly disease, hitherto unknown, has struck the West. It may travel East any day. So far, it has no cure. It is significant, for it originates from an unnatural conduct of man.

Thanks to our wit and intelligence, we can justify all our acts through arguments. The irony is-creation had not been launched on the basis of our logic, though logic, when applied honestly, can help us understand the higher faculties inherent in ourselves and higher truths in the phenomenon of life.

The sense of what is natural and what is unnatural is a supra-rational sense in man. He knows *it* intuitively. But he can gag the murmurs of his natural sense or intuition with his force of logic. He has succeeded in doing so to a great degree, concerning so many things. His success in this direction, however, does not alter the laws of nature; he is made to pay the price for his self-deception, in some form or other. AIDS is one such form.

A vital question that arises is, like a new physical disease, can man develop new psychological syndromes? I do not know. But there are frightening pointers in that direction.

People of Finland, of Helsinki in particular, had a harrowing experience on the eve of the New Year's Day. Announcers of the Finnish Broadcasting Company informed the listeners in grim tones that one of the super powers had detonated a nuclear device over Saudi Arabia and that Paris had already been destroyed and Hamburg was sinking.

You can imagine the shock and panic among the listeners because the voices were those of their news broadcasters! Offices of the broadcasting company, police stations and information centres were besieged with calls for more information and instructions for what the citizens should do. Many had to be treated for shocks.

But what caused the shock-wave turned out to be the beginning of the radio play, presented through the technique of realism—or should we say super-realism!

Aristotle's theory of catharsis taught us that the emotions aroused by drama purifies the emotions inherent in the spectator. Modern drama does to our emotions what has to be purified by the psychiatrist and the physician.

Some time back a tourist bus plying at night from one town in the West to another was stopped by a gang of bandits who boarded it and totting guns at the tourists demanded their valuables. After a few minutes the tourists were told that this was part of an imaginative plan to give them a taste of adventure during their travel. The information was given a bit too late. One of the travellers had died of heart attack.

Is sadism becoming a wider trait? A little abnormality is said to be 'normal', but are we developing the trait to a degree when more and more people relish fear and panic and come to believe that everybody else does the same?

In our daily reporting of news too there is a subtle trend of appreciation of the cruel and the wicked. (Sight of a bus set fire to by hooligans was "spectacular"—reports one of our major newspapers on its front page.)

Elements poised for perpetrating violence, cruelty and horror thrive in an atmosphere that is marked by a yearning for sensation. It is time we grew conscious of our direct or indirect contribution to such an atmosphere.

It may be beyond us to undo the destructive forces, but it is within our capacity to stop pampering them. Let us do so.

CRYING WOLF- THE NEXT TIME

A radio play describing the outbreak of the nuclear war over the Finish Broadcasting Company was relayed in such a realistic way (using the familiar voices of the regular news announcers) that the listeners became panicky.

That is all right. Only problem is, we are reminded of the famous fable of Aesop. Should the radio cry wolf again—God forbid but for true reason—won't the listeners take it as a joke