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SURVEY OF SURVEYS

FROM time to time, the editors of MANAS get the idea that it might be a good plan to discuss with readers the general thinking behind the choice of subjects for articles, which guides the treatments provided in the departments of Frontiers and Review. Space for the lead article being limited this week, such a brief "survey of surveys" seems in order.

The basic editorial policy of MANAS is founded on the assumption that human thinking about ultimate questions is far more important than generally allowed. For this reason we have devoted what may seem to be an inordinate amount of space to the God-idea—what it does to people and what people do to it. In other ages, the importance of metaphysics has been much more widely recognized. However, with the rise of modern science and the naturalistic philosophy associated with it, there has been a strong tendency to disregard all philosophical as well as theological issues, on the ground that (1) they are personal matters, and (2) do not matter very much, anyway.

MANAS looks upon this indifference toward philosophical and religious issues as a serious mistake. It is a mistake, for instance, in the case of the God-idea for the reason that this conception covers a vital range of causation in human behavior, and if there is no reflection about the roots of action within this range, uncritical attitudes and, eventually, incalculable moral confusion are bound to result. We emphatically agree with Dr. Einstein when he remarks, in connection with the idea of a *personal* God, that it is "a doctrine which is able to maintain itself, not in clear light, but only in the dark, . . . with incredible harm to human progress."

More specifically, we propose that the God-idea tends to limit and to determine the ideas human beings have about themselves. The classical instance of this is found in the thought of St. Augustine, who was so intent upon glorifying God that he reduced man almost to a nonentity. The Augustinian doctrine which assigned all the power of free will to God, left man without any freedom at all, and from this excess of religious enthusiasm came the psychological horrors of divine predestination and the brutal Calvinist theories of damnation without a chance. It is not too much to say that such doctrines have driven innumerable people mad.

Such doctrines are, of course, extremes, but they show, if nothing else, the far-reaching power of thinking about the God-idea. And if current verification is needed, the case books of modern psychiatry provide ample evidence that religious ideas which deprecate human nature, creating morbid preoccupation with feelings of guilt and sinfulness, are responsible for much of the emotional tension in the present age.

Socially and politically, praise of God which leads to deprecation of man produces defeatism and impotence and fear. It leads to reliance upon prayer to a being who may not even exist at all—to say nothing of the psychological disaster of asking someone else to get us out of our difficulties.

Finally, we are innately suspicious of a religious teaching which the religious authorities urge you to "feel" about, but discourage *thinking* about. The more you think about the personal-God-idea, the more incredible it gets. *But this is not true of every metaphysical topic*—not true, for instance, of the concept of immortality.

Historically, there has been close association between the God-idea and the idea of immortality. Most of the professional "studies" of religion seem to assume that belief in God and belief in immortality are interdependent and inseparable. We can think of no good ground for this association, except when Deity is thought of as Pantheistic. The question of immortality, however, unlike the God-idea, is capable of being examined in terms of particular evidences. Perhaps no one can "prove" immortality to anyone else, but there are at least facts to be considered, phenomena to be evaluated, and conclusions to be drawn. Beings who may be immortal, it seems to us, are likely to exhibit certain attributes and qualities. There is a nobility occasionally manifested by men which speaks in the accents of eternity. There is certainly a core of timelessness potential in the self-consciousness of man. Human beings sometimes behave *as if* they were

immortal, and this without adherence to any particular religious creed affirming a life after death.

There is weakness, of course, in some ways of considering immortality. The pie-in-the-sky psychology charged by radicals against conventional religion expresses the major weakness exactly. Immortality is important, it seems to us, not for what it may promise in the future, but for what it may reveal concerning the kind of beings we are right now. If humans really are self-existent roots in an eternal life, then they have within them a vision which would naturally be lacking in beings who live only an hour, a day, or a lifetime. A reasonable hypothesis seems to be that men are made up of both mortal and immortal aspects, this accounting for the complexities of human action and the confusion of motives that is so easily observable.

Then there is psychic research. We don't know what psychic research can ever "prove," finally, about the nature of man, but we are sure that the facts being gathered in this field may become vastly suggestive for all those who honestly wonder about the nature of man. It seems pretty well proved, already, that several remarkable powers sleep in the human being—powers which become demonstrable under special conditions and in cases of unusual individuals. The psychological tradition of the Orient proposes that such powers do exist and are capable of development. The "development" of powers, however, seems not half so important as the fact that they exist. The odd thing about *psychic* powers is that they seem to require a psychic universe for their exercise and display. Conceivably, what we call psychic research is a kind of vestibule activity which goes on at the portals of an inner, psychic universe. It seems plain that psychic powers such as thought-transference, clairvoyance, and pre-vision operate under special laws which cannot be understood through the methods of investigation practiced by physical science. Really to understand psychic powers, it seems necessary to possess them, and this is indeed a revolutionary proposal, even for modern psychic research. There is something unhealthy about seeking out especially "sensitive" people and then "experimenting" on them. This sort of "research" about a century ago led to little more than the founding of a few score "Spiritualist Churches," which are no improvement over the other kinds of churches which already existed. And the psychic drunkenness involved in mediumship and seances can hardly be a road to genuine knowledge.

Nevertheless, psychic research, however undertaken, does support the view that there are hidden potentialities to be discovered in human beings. The philosopher who ignores them is proceeding with great gaps in the factual data which are available concerning human nature and possibility.

Turning to the social scene, in the problems of politics and international conflict we are provided with a continual revelation of what men think of themselves and other men, whether singly or in groups. Racial tensions, for example, are unmistakably related to religious assumptions—especially if religious assumptions be regarded as including an explanation of the origin of man and the relationships which ought to prevail among all men. The exaggerated interest in possessions, in the accumulation of wealth, and the obvious hypocrisy in what many men say they believe about the object of their lives—all this is connected with the problem of the nature of man and the question of what, really, is the good life.

War, in the last analysis, is evidence of what men believe in when they are not encouraged to become philosophers. When we contemplate modern war, a negative logic compels the admission that mankind, in the present epoch, cherishes aims which are inevitably destructive. It is childish, surely, after two wars involving many of the nations of the world, with some of the Powers changing sides, to go on claiming that wars are fought between the Good People and the Bad People. We know better than this.

These, generally, are the themes of inquiry pursued in MANAS articles, and some of the reasons for pursuing them. Naturally, suggestions from readers will be welcome.

Letter from NORWAY

LILLEHAMMER.—Visitors to Scandinavian countries from highly industrialized and densely populated countries very often envy us our less complicated social and cultural problems. To some extent they have reason to do so. In many respects our work is made simple by the fact that the total number of inhabitants in none of the three Scandinavian countries amounts to that of Berlin, London, or New York.

Nevertheless, it has been assumed that all Norwegians know each other or have some friends in common. Such views are oversimplified, as it will be an oversimplification to think that cultural development is secure simply because there are few people. Norwegians are not easily brought into cultural activity. This fact is not so much determined by quantity as by a universal crisis in the conception of quality. And the sooner we realise the universality of challenges the better will we be able to respond to them.

On the other hand, we have noticed in later years a marked interest from the American, British and German side in those adult education centers which here are called Folk High Schools *(Folkehogskole).*

To give the history or background of this particular kind of adult schools is impossible in a short letter. Being originally a product of liberal mass movements in Scandinavia in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the folk high schools mainly function as residential schools where young people (18-30 years being the desired age interval) take courses of six months' duration. The schools are non-vocational with the intention to develop the personality of the individual through a curriculum mainly concerned with history, literature, social knowledge and oral music.

The ideological foundation of these schools has varied from the one country to the other, and also according to what kind of mass movement has backed them. In Denmark and Norway—through the influence of the poet and religious leader, N. S. F. Grundtvig—the stress was laid upon love of mother country and Christianity. Those two ideological elements were interwoven in a special way. In Sweden the Folk High Schools have been more neutral, and they are therefore sought by a more differentiated public.

Common to all Folk High Schools has been the rich community feeling nourished through the inspiring group life within their walls. The recruitment of leaders—social, cultural and political from the Folk High Schools—has been considerable in the Scandinavian countries. Even poets of high rank are indebted to them for helping with their maturing process.

Today there is much talk about a crisis in the Folk High Schools. Especially those schools which abstain from introducing examinations and vocational subjects feel the lack of a sufficient number of applicants. Extended military training for men, the craze for efficiency and profit-making jobs, the rapidly diminishing interest in "useless" education and the tendency found by employers to classify young people in accordance with marks and tests must be partly responsible for this development.

On the other hand, one may accuse some of the Folk High School leaders for not understanding their time. When they—some of them—have lost contact with the young, one of the reasons may be found in the cultural lag dominating in the schools. Confronted with the adolescent of 1952, some of them make a mistake in believing that the challenges and ideals of the prewar period are still felt as such by their students. Patriotism, orthodox religion, and socialism with their concrete pre-war manifestations are not experienced as the main challenges by the younger generation. At least they have another approach, and they need a new educational introduction to their problems.

Modern youth are every day reminded of the interdependence of human destiny. Their world and obligations are not confined to Norway or Scandinavia. The war in Korea, the thinking of Einstein, the attitude of Gandhi or the race discrimination of Dr. Malan—those are some of the stuff their thoughts are woven of. Young people may also be interested to see democracy realised—of course in legislation and in the parliamentary system—but perhaps with even greater impatience in everyday interhuman relations in home and school, in industry and professions, in religious practice and cultural work. So much is still undone to make democracy a living force, that the Folk High Schools must find new methods in teaching.

International and interhuman aspects must be introduced, both in the spiritual motivation and in the changing of educational methods. Only by taking the consequences of global interdependence and by using the efficient educational tools of modern social psychology, anthropology and sociology, can the Folk High Schools go on attracting the interest of students from other countries. And only then will they continue to attract students from their own countries.

—NORWEGIAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
THE RECORD OF SOCIALIZATION

HERE we go again—devising a "review" which is likely to displease at least a few of our friends and readers, for we are constrained to take up the subject of "socialism" in terms somewhat different from the familiar blast of criticism and popular condemnation. This interest, perhaps, grows out of a recent decision of the people of the city of Los Angeles to support the City Council in trying to wriggle out of an agreement with the Federal Government in respect to a joint public housing enterprise. Los Angeles and the Public Housing Administration had undertaken together a housing project that was to cost a total of some $100,000,000, As a result, however, of assiduous campaigning by special interests, the issue was placed on the ballot in a recent election, and the people voted against it, leaving the Mayor and other officials, already committed to the project through agreement with the Federal Government, in a somewhat embarrassing position. How the situation will work out, no one can tell at this point. Of immediate interest, however, are the methods used by opponents of the project.

Before the election, the voters were informed by large billboard advertisements that public housing is "socialistic." This feature of the campaign doubtless had much to do with the strength of the opposition to the project, for many people have been led to believe that "socialism" is a one-way road to submission to Soviet totalitarianism. It is possible to deplore this belief without saying a single kind word for public housing.

We have a book—apparently a little known book—on the subject of socialization in the United States, and from this book we learn that socialization is a process that has been going on in the United States for a long, long time, mostly with the express willingness and decision of the people, and with hardly a breath of insidious "ideology" to persuade them to inaugurate the far-reaching changes that have been accomplished in this direction. The book is *Development of Collective Enterprise, Dynamics of an Emergent Economy*, by Seba Eldridge and Associates, published in 1943 by the University of Kansas Press.

The first thing of interest about this book is that it was a labor of love. No "foundation" subsidized this project. The thirty contributing scholars and research workers practically gave their time because they thought the project was important. It was—and is. The second thing of interest is the way in which the idea for this research first originated; and the third thing is the not undramatic way in which the conclusions of the program confirmed the original idea.

Mostly in the hope of stimulating readers to look up this book, we quote at length from the beginning of the first chapter, which is by Prof. Eldridge:

> When the writer of these lines was very young and idealistic he was quite sympathetically disposed toward "socialism," which was commonly defined as social ownership and democratic control of the means of production, together with production for use and not for profit, but understood to take in many other good things as well, such as a peaceful, harmonious family of nations, maybe even a world state. Like almost everybody else interested in the matter, he was sure that a socialist regime would be brought about by the wage-earners, who in due season would become class conscious, effect the necessary organization, and some fine day overthrow their oppressors, the wicked capitalists. The *dramatic personae* would then live happily together ever afterwards. He had subscribed quite naturally to the theory of socialism current at the time and still occupying a dominant position.
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> Later, after attaining the dignity of a university professorship, he welcomed an opportunity of giving a college course in the subject. For some years it scarcely occurred to him that any except the Marxian doctrines merited serious consideration. To him as to so many others it seemed axiomatic that the laboring class was exploited under private capitalism, that it was bound to become conscious of this, and eventually, considering its great numerical superiority, establish a system better suited to its interests.
>
> Gradually, doubts arose, owing in part to a growing appreciation of ably constructed non-Marxian theories on the subject; and partly to the recognition of essentially socialistic developments not conforming to the Marxian conceptions. These doubts grew as the history of the public services and other collective enterprises was studied, especially in so-called democratic countries such as the United States. It was found that many fields of enterprise in

> this country were on a predominantly collectivistic basis; that many other fields were undergoing collectivization; and, more significant still, that the proportion of collective enterprise in our economy as a whole was steadily increasing.

The process of collectivization in some twenty fields of enterprise is examined in this book—ten fields where the transformation is practically complete, and ten in which it is in progress. For example, protection of person and property is mostly a public function; so also transport of the mails, and construction and maintenance of roads, and of harbors and waterways. Land reclamation and flood control are almost exclusively government-sponsored, and education largely so. In process of socialization are such activities as forestry, electric power, low-rent housing, banking and credit.

The detailed history of these developments, encompassed in a total of 570 pages of small print, enables Prof. Eldridge to declare, in his summing up, that "the great bulk of the far-reaching collectivist developments in this country has been sanctioned by one or both of the two major parties," although individuals have also played a part, as well as the indirect influence of "radical" propaganda. The general picture, according to Prof. Eldridge, is this:

> Developments have been designated by such terms as public undertakings, public services, mutual companies, or, more simply still, as extensions of public health, educational, recreational, or welfare services, as the case may be. Such terms as socialism or the cooperative commonwealth have been eschewed, perhaps because they took in too much territory. Leaders have usually been innocent of anything that could be called an "ideology," save for such hand-to-mouth doctrines as served to justify their several programs. Doubtless most of them would be dreadfully shocked had they been informed they were undermining the existing social order, and far more effectively than avowed "radicals."

Justice to Prof. Eldridge's book requires that his central thesis be noted. It is that, contrary to Marxian theory, which holds that socialization takes place as a result of an uprising by the working class, the actual socialization already accomplished in democratic countries has been in practical response to the people as a whole, as "consumers," who decide, more or less consciously, and with the relative freedom of a self-governing society, to adopt changes and reforms in their socio-economic order.

On the whole, Prof. Eldridge finds socialized enterprise often as efficient as private enterprise, sometimes more so. There is no rule. In general, there are three types of public enterprises: (1) fiscal enterprises, designed to produce revenue for the government; (2) the subsidized undertaking; and (3) the self-supporting enterprises. All three are fairly common. Eldridge writes:

> Fiscal enterprises are relatively unimportant in the United States, although a growing number of cities cover the ordinary expenses of the municipal government, or a considerable part of them, by profits from publicly owned utilities, mostly waterworks and power plants. Of the ten major socialized fields in the United States, the postal services, water and sewerage works, land reclamation, social clubs and fraternal societies are in the main self-supporting; the other six fields come largely in the subsidized class.

To bring the matter closer to home, it is of interest to learn that some public housing projects are at least in part self-liquidating. The Rose Hill project in Los Angeles, for example, has operated on a self-liquidating basis for four of the past ten years. Usually, however, such projects are not conceived as economically self-sufficient; if they could be made so, private developers would undertake them. Nevertheless, staunch conservatives are known to support public housing on the ground that the saving in taxes, accomplished through slum clearance, is greater than the subsidies required to maintain the housing projects.

A diverse collection of odd and interesting facts is found in *Development of Collective Enterprise*, such as the curious note that in Chicago, in 1930, the number of private police exceeded public peace officers. Then there is this comparison of patent medicine sales with the cost of public health service:

> An estimate some years ago by the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care put the annual sales of patent medicines in the United States at $360,000,000, "most of which money is wasted"; while the public health services of the country were and still are being starved for want of appropriations needed in their work. The amount spent on patent medicines would provide standard health services

> throughout the country, and do away with enormous amounts of disease and economic waste.

Prof. Eldridge is of course sympathetic to the idea of public services. He does not marshal arguments against them, or give too much attention to their weaknesses, actual or potential—such as, for instance, the probability that any large-scale medical or health service would come under the control of the trade association of orthodox medicine—the AMA. The facts assembled in this volume, however, are of great interest, and one is bound to respect its editor's review of the difference—

> between a public considering specific socialization proposals on their merits, and those groups of persons who are emotionally committed to the *states quo* or to its revolutionary overthrow, and disposed to consider the question at issue as an all-or-none proposition. Such persons do not constitute true publics, for they do not engage in a real discussion of the issues, albeit opposed camps do much noisy shouting at each other. And they interfere in the realistic treatment of specific questions, standpatters opposing "on principle" all extensions of public enterprise, no matter how great the need; and the revolutionists damning them, too, by representing them as concessions to sidetrack the revolutionary drive of the workers. But the dogmatists at both extremes make up a small, if vociferous, minority of the population. Various evidences show that the great majority come between these extremes, have a more inquiring, pragmatic outlook, tend to favor moderate reforms, and are reasonably open-minded on specific socialization questions, when dissociated from emotionalized party labels and catchwords. It is this large section of the community that, with the assistance of leadership groups, settles such questions one by one through the democratic processes of public opinion.

In conclusion, we should like to add what may seem a slightly bewildering note—a quotation from the Foreword to Henning Friis' recent volume (Cornell University Press, 1950), *Scandinavia between East and West.* American visitors to Scandinavia, whatever their politics, usually return home radiant with admiration for the achievements of these northern European countries. A basic common sense in the solution of problems seems to belong to all Scandinavians. Yet see what Lithgow Osborne, president of the American-Scandinavian Foundation, writes in his Foreword:

> In all Scandinavian countries the dominant political parties are composed of Social Democrats, whose political philosophy is based on the doctrines of Karl Marx at least as much as is that of the Kremlin Communists. And so far as one can see, these Social Democrats will retain political control in Scandinavia for at least several years to come.

Before you write to the FBI to ask that all copies of this dreadful book be confiscated and consigned to oblivion, consider Mr. Osborne's elaboration of this statement, which is based upon historical experience in Scandinavia, and not upon the fears of propagandists. He is concerned with the basic question: In a managed economy, what liberty remains for the individual? He answers:

> In Nazi Germany, in Fascist Italy, and in Soviet Russia, the answer has simply been: To hell with the individual; he exists solely for the state, and as an individual he has no rights whatsoever.
>
> . . . the Scandinavian followers of Marx give no such answer. The socialism in which they believe is a socialism of conviction or consent on the part of the majority, which, under democratic forms of government, can reverse itself and undo its socialization at any time it changes its mind and so records itself by freely spoken and written word and by votes freely cast at the polls.

Mr. Friis's book is about the democratic freedoms which are enjoyed by the Scandinavians along with their socialization programs. Mr. Osborne, at any rate, feels that their achievement in "political stability, economic prosperity, and cultural development," and in freedom as well, has been impressive.

Our conclusion from both these volumes is not necessarily that socialization is a fine thing. They show, rather, that the man who is afraid of an honest curiosity or interest in socialization is not really afraid of socialization, but is afraid of the processes of democracy, which have been operating to produce socialization, where it seems to be needed, for lo these many years.

COMMENTARY
BLESSED UNCERTAINTY

AT least three articles in this issue of MANAS are devoted to the high cost of too much certainty. In "Children," for example, it is found that the transmission of *predigested* conclusions about right and wrong defeats the very purpose of moral education.

Then, in "Frontiers," there is an appreciation of books which avoid the punishment of sinners according to some external rule of morality. Not the legal penalty which "society" exacts from offenders, but the inner, psychological price men pay for breaking nature's laws—this is the content of books which deepen the understanding.

The issue of socialization considered under "Review" receives much the same treatment. The net of this discussion seems to be that the use of any kind of formula in making up our minds on social questions is likely to be grossly misleading.

Are we, then, in the position of not being able to take *anything* for granted? How much "uncertainty" can we afford?

The right way, possibly, to get at the answer to this question is to regard the process of forming opinions in another light. What is our *general psychological tendency?* It is the habit of some minds to feel that the pressure of any kind of uncertainty is almost unbearable. Having to think for ourselves, in this case, becomes a painful ordeal from which we try to escape at any cost. Codes and Decalogues are popular with such minds. For such, the world is full of "dangerous" thoughts—ideas which challenge the settled way of doing things, the customary habit of classifying problems. Another type of mind mightily resists the delegation of authority, the loss of responsibility in decision. Minds of this class are innately suspicious of slogans, and distrustful of popular opinions. In general, these two classes of minds do not get along very well together.

Of course, there is no such clear-cut division between human beings. Instead, every man has both these tendencies in himself, and all of us have to take the word of others in some things, and all of us need to form our own opinions about other things. The problem is to find the right balance. We are probably on the right track if we can admit to ourselves that too easy an acceptance of the opinions of others is a symptom of moral laziness, and that a refusal to *listen* to others is the same symptom emerging from the opposite direction.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

MORE and more, apparently, it is being recognized by those who discourse on Education that this subject cannot be separated from Religion; that is, not if we take Religion to mean a scale of ethical or moral values. Religion, it is true, means many other things, and education can indeed be separated from indoctrination in any particular creed, but even those who fervently hold that this sort of separation must be maintained are themselves championing a scale of ethical values. They are claiming that freedom from indoctrination makes men more ethical, that only free-thinking men can have the sort of integrity upon which true ethical living depends.

Many educational controversies have involved matters of religion, and still do, because educators themselves, like the rest of us, not only have scales of ethical values, but are also bound to consider it a part of their function to transmit these values to their pupils. Actually, when we attempt a simple definition of religion—any and all religion—we have to take into account not only the fact that each religion involves a scale of values, but also the fact that every religion is concerned with the *transmission* of values. And this is why the educator can't get away from religion, at least religion so defined. Even the Supreme Court rulings on the constitutionality of released-time programs of religious instruction for schoolchildren derive, in a sense, from quarrels between differing religions rather than from conflicts between "pro-religion" and "anti-religion" people. Those who oppose released-time have in mind a set of values *they* wish to see transmitted to future generations—the values of "free-thought." In other words, nearly all educators have concepts of value which cannot fail to intrude themselves upon habits and methods of instruction. Perhaps "intrude" is hardly the word—an educator has no reason for educating unless he feels capable of transmitting values, and whatever ultimate philosophy he possesses will inevitably reflect itself in whatever he thinks good for his students. The textbooks he favors, the viewpoint he can hardly fail to reveal in discussing contemporary developments in his chosen field—all these tell us that the teacher has some sort of religion, and disclose something of what it is. Moreover, present preoccupation with the opposed values in world affairs naturally leads to an examination of philosophies and ultimate principles. Thus such books as *The Teaching of Religion in Higher Education*, edited by Christian Gauss, have been read with considerable attention, we believe, throughout the country, and this interest will undoubtedly continue.

Parents are just as inevitably involved as teachers with matters of religion—perhaps more so. Every parent wants to transmit to his child or children the fruit of whatever experience he has had—in other words, the values he holds to be true. Hence, whether he wants to or not, he becomes the apostle of a religion, and whether or not he is aware of this proclivity.

At this point, it seems to us, an examination of religion from the viewpoint of an educator becomes extremely valuable. The natural urge to transmit values may lead in either one of two directions—directions involving the best and the worst elements which have made up religious history. Disregarding for the moment the sort of religion we are so often obliged to protest—religion which deprecates man's nature through doctrines of original sin—we can perhaps see that a typical weakness in even the most humanitarian and optimistic of religions is that their very substance consists of *predigested* values. When a man tries to sum up all he knows about life's problems and how they should be solved, he uses various oversimplifications, formulas or commandments. It is, after all, exceedingly difficult for him to do anything else, for he cannot take his child or his pupil back through the many years during which experiences and ideas were creating for *him* his present orientation. So religion, even the best of religion, in an attempt to give someone else the results of our experience, is always doomed to partial failure. We really can't do anyone else's living for him, not even our child's living.

Psychologists have pointed out how easily the natural urge of man to protect the young from the apparently unnecessary bruises of life can create bruises far more dangerous—when the pupil or child

finds himself tom between a counsel of perfection he cannot seem to follow, and natural inclinations which run in an entirely different direction. Religion does not offer much flexibility, if you take it seriously. It really does not explain or reason about values; it merely asserts them, although a certain amount of rationalization may accompany. But if a young person is not helped to reason about values—quite a different thing from being "shown" the invariable logic which makes some things right and other things wrong—he cannot possibly understand those values. All he actually understands is that someone whom he trusts, fears, or admires *wants* him to understand the values and wants him to accept them as his own. The psychologists will tell us, again, at this point, that we may expect schizophrenic symptoms to result, since any standard not thoroughly one's own can never command more than a part of our allegiance, and allegiances which clash emotionally tend to produce psychic splits.

A man who has been a great champion of the oppressed and dispossessed of the world once gave an unusual reason for disliking the whole Christian approach. He said that, to him, the greatest danger of Christianity lay in the fact that it so unequivocally commanded "the dedicated life." Now our friend had nothing, certainly, against "the dedicated life," having done more than a fair job of living one himself. What he was against was putting too tough a proposition before men before they had a chance to develop the sort of resources which would enable them to succeed. The average man has had enough travail already with his own sense of inadequacy. If, in addition, he is ceaselessly informed from the pulpit that his life *should* contain perfect discipline and perfect consecration, his sense of inadequacy grows even stronger—which may possibly explain why the legend of Jesus, the "perfect man," has so often accompanied preoccupation with sin. Although nothing in the historical record indicates that Jesus thrust his perfections in the faces of his followers, many of those who have presumptuously spoken in his name have done just that, and when a man who knows that he is far from perfect is required to become perfect at once, overnight, he has either to renounce religion, renounce hope in himself, or become a hypocrite. That is, unless, in addition to the religious advocacy of perfect ethics, he is also given the philosophical tools of ethical development.

Philosophy, and not religion, we think, is man's "salvation," for philosophy does not tell man what values to select, nor when he should select them—does not invite schizophrenia—but, more modestly, seeks to help in the clarification of values. This is not the same thing as religion, at all, but it is much better. Philosophy proposes to help man to learn to ask the important questions of himself, gives him time to find the answers, and helps him to see that all of his "answers," too, will actually need revision and improvement in the future.

Now a religion, if we mean by a religion a scale of values which we wish to transmit to others, and especially the young, can avoid making things too difficult, emotionally, by making them intellectually more puzzling—more of an invitation to thought. One of the best religions, best in the sense that its method was the method of philosophy, was Buddhism. The Buddha not only refused to package "values" neatly for distribution to his pupils; he also tried to convince them that no such packages were worth buying. When Buddha taught, he often taught in paradoxes, leaving his listeners mentally puzzled, perhaps, but not emotionally frustrated. Seldom would Buddha say "Yea" or "Nay," but always he would say, "Ponder this," or "Meditate upon that."

Parents and teachers have to transmit values, and because they transmit values they are votaries of religion. But unless they transmit also the spirit of Buddha's teaching and of the teaching of Socrates, they will encourage their listeners to become discouraged with themselves, or merely rebellious, neither of which reactions does anyone any good, so far as we can tell.

FRONTIERS

Vagrant Virtues of Non-Conformity

No one likes to defend, in principle, the taking of a man's life, unless the man cut down is a "dangerous criminal," and, fortunately, many demur even here. Yet there are times—we confess, many times—when, watching the miracles of the modern cinema unfold, we harbor a secret wish that the man who killed someone in the first reel would be left to tell the tale in the end. Especially does this secret wish flourish when, as recently has often been the case, the villain is made considerably more complex than he used to be. He may even be repentant, but the poor fellow has to die anyway, according to censorship requirements. And the thief has to be caught and handcuffed, even when he is a mild unthief-like sort of fellow such as was recently portrayed by Alec Guinness in the British produced *Lavender Hill Mob.* Dear readers who saw this at least halfway-amusing picture—didn't you rather hope that the handcuffs would *not* clap on in the last scene? Although the British treasury may be short on gold, Mr. Guinness only managed one suitcase of ingots, and he seemed to be making so many people happy while he was free!

The point, here, whatever the right or wrong of such matters, is that we are, as a society, tremendously addicted to patterns, while, as individuals, we are much less so. This is undoubtedly because most of our social institutions had their inception during ages dominated by categorical and moralistic criteria, and, paradoxically, because the individual instinctively rebels at the very patterns he often quite willingly imposes upon others. Most of us, today, would probably staunchly support the general scheme of Johnson office censorship if called upon, as "leading citizens," to consider the grave problems of upholding "morality," yet we *also* tire of the stereotypes when we see them: endlessly repeated before us on the screen.

Comparisons of this nature, the psychologists will tell us, are quite worth while, for such paradoxes illustrate the cultural sources of many individual forms of schizophrenia. And there are many occasions for such reflection—as, for instance, in the fact that when young police officers shoot unarmed offenders against minor regulations, and resultant killings, however much regretted, are considered a sort of necessary price to pay for the upholding of authority. Two such cases recently receiving wide publicity in Los Angeles County resulted in the hospitalization of one man and the instant death of another. In neither case was there any reasonable suspicion that the law-violator was himself about to kill anyone, but the officers claimed their "right" to shoot, since they felt they were being approached hostilely. Quite evidently, "society" is not *really* concerned with the taking of human lives. Even though the Johnson office can never allow a killer to survive the last reel, the Los Angeles police officer who, a few weeks ago, killed a traffic violator will have no difficulty in surviving, unless he quarrels with another trigger-happy minion of the law. What society is really concerned about is obviously *authority itself*—the training of the public to conform to established patterns of behavior which seem to guarantee continuance of a convenient status quo, assure "order" with a minimum of trouble to administrators. And the very woodenness which movie censorship demonstrates is, perhaps, the same which allows killings by police and in war to pass virtually unchallenged.

Miracle of miracles, there are two books currently on sale which disregard the usual requirement of punishment for immoral doings. One is entitled *The Shining Mountains* (Messner and Bantam). The first half of this long story (the total is 406 pages) is a quite ordinary collection of clichés in respect to frontier adventure. Then, suddenly, as if the author, Dale Van Every, had suddenly lost his mind—or found it, depending upon our perspective—the plot becomes most unconventional indeed. The brave, sure-footed, dead-shot hero flounders helplessly and hopelessly in a psychological confusion stemming from his own rigidities of mind. When he deserts the girl he loves in her hour of need because of some of his unbending principles, his best friend, a man of greater warmth and compassion, takes up with her. This is the last straw for our story-book superman;

he wanders out into the wilderness, feeling betrayed by those he held most dear because they had violated *his* code. Finally, after skirting the brink of death and madness, he comes to see that some of the causes of the "betrayal" were locked up in his own actions and attitudes toward those he had made pretense of loving. He returns, chastened, to offer marriage and a stronger and deeper love to the girl and the son she bore to his friend.

The Shining Mountains can hardly be represented as a great book, nor is it even our purpose to recommend it especially, yet the plot has a freshness simply because of the unprecedented nature of the complications discussed. One may get the feeling, after reading such an adventure story, that its approach brings the author much closer to the real problems of frontier life than more orthodox tales. After all, how can we imagine that psychological and interpersonal problems of great complexity are unique to our own time? The real "frontiers" are always those of the mind and feelings, and it is doubtful if we should allow ourselves the luxury of daydreaming about a time gone by when all of the basic challenges were wonderfully simple contests with nature. Mr. Van Every's hero himself thought, for a long time, that all he needed to do to be a hero was to have boundless physical courage and agility, yet he became disillusioned of this view, having to learn to re-think all of his values simply to preserve his sanity.

A novel by H. L. Davis, *Honey in the Horn*, recently reprinted, shows that this gifted writer, who gained Book of the Month fame with *The Winds of Morning*, definitely belongs among the leaders of the revolt against stereotypes. As we noted in reviewing *Winds of Morning*, there is something more than a little remarkable about an author who writes a "western story" completely destitute of fist and gun fights, wild pursuits, and hostile Indians. It is this quality, perhaps, which makes Mr. Davis a philosopher—so much a philosopher that he apparently cares nothing for the fact that *Honey in the Horn* could never be adapted to film use. (The original Harper's edition won a Pulitzer Prize, indicating that the Pulitzer judges have subtler standards than the Johnson office.)

Mr. Davis's unpardonable immorality consists in letting his heroine slay two men from ambush, for reasons none too praiseworthy, and yet live on into happiness after she had grown to be a wiser and better woman. She received punishment enough, but it was the punishment her own mind and conscience caused her, and while Mr. Davis may seem to be perverse in allowing her to escape the tragic death which would balance the scales of justice in the "eye-for-an-eye" manner, we doubt if any of the stereotyped retributions of other novels cause any more serious reflection upon the wrong of taking human life.

Perhaps Davis dislikes religious or moralistic oversimplifications, his plot structures deriving more than a little benefit from this bent. He speaks, for example, of the way in which a religious superstition, even when disproved, still impels the true believer to attack the authors of the expose rather than the accuracy of the belief. Davis says that one would expect the believer, betrayed by the falsity of his belief, to "pitch his spite" against the belief itself, "but religion doesn't work that way."

Here may be the crux of what we are talking about when we rise to defend unorthodoxy and nonconformity in literature. Few psychologists will deny that certain aspects of conventional religion always contribute to blind and destructive reaction obscuring the real issues. Many of the rules of "morality" which the Johnson office is pledged to support may have a similar psychological origin. While perhaps not directly derived from a particular religious belief, the unthinking and oversimplified quality is clearly the same, and we suspect that human beings really become concerned about ethical and moral questions on the basis of principle precisely when they transcend a mechanical basis of judgment. Unconventional authors, on this view, may often perform a necessary function by forcing us to re-think our values, bringing us a little closer to realization of those deeper values which can never be adequately represented by any code or convention.