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NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGION

DURING the past ten years or so, a somewhat relaxed attitude toward religion has been creeping into the liberal press. While magazines such as the *Nation* conduct no independent investigation of the "validity" of religious ideas, there is less and less of the tendency, in their pages, to imply that religious belief is somehow evidence of lack of a sound intelligence. The hard shell of the rationalist outlook has softened in many quarters, and while the atheists and outspoken unbelievers of a generation ago have not, on the whole, recanted, their place is being taken by people for whom the matter-of-course rejection of "religion" is no longer an intellectual necessity.

The causes of this change in attitude—perhaps "atmosphere" would be a better word—are doubtless many. For one thing, being "scientific" does not seem to be half so important as it was thirty years ago. "Scientific" is not the prestige-bearing adjective it was in those days. Further, the war between Science and Religion is not even a cold war, any more. Spokesmen for both camps have been exchanging prisoners and even leaders for a generation or so, and for the past ten years have been getting together in various kinds of "conferences" and symposia. Then there have been crises in human affairs so frightening that polemics for and against religion have seemed hardly important. Added to this is the not inconsiderable menace of the dark linkage between atheism and communism. A time of national hysteria and anxiety easily becomes the heyday of orthodoxy in religion, at least for window-dressing purposes.

But despite the superficial and less admirable aspects of this change, some positive values connected with it are emerging. Serious writers no longer feel inhibitions about expressing occasional thoughts concerning matters which used to be the monopoly of the irrationalists of religion. Religion is for the time being a subject which can often be discussed without prejudice. It probably won't stay that way—no subject of any importance ever does—but in an interlude like the present, when religion can be considered with a degree of isolation from religious tradition, thoughts of enduring value are likely to appear.

It will be questioned, of course, whether religion can have any existence or meaning apart from religious tradition. For the great body of religious believers, religion is tradition— that is, it is the participation of individuals in a body of mental habits and somewhat loosely labelled feelings that has the name of a particular religion. The role of religion in social life is so deeply involved in custom that to speak of non-traditional religion is almost a contradiction in terms. If a man says he is religious, he is expected to identify himself as a communicant of one of the known and well-established religious denominations.

At the same time, any sensible person will admit in conversation that the religious spirit can be maintained apart from religious organization. It is a matter, perhaps, of admitting the logic of inward religion, while not really expecting to take it seriously in practice. Then there is the entire weight of history to suggest that religion is something you encounter through the agency of powerful and impressive institutions. Of course, there are people who, in their basic determinations, remain unaffected by the weight of history. They do not feel the compulsion of mass behavior or mass opinion. Others, on the other hand, are frightened by the prospect of being "different," or are too humble in their feelings to suppose that they can do without the guidance or help of established authorities.

Here, a comparison with literature or the arts may not be out of place. Literature and the arts

also carry on a tradition, but it is not a "sacred" tradition—not in our time, at any rate. The standards in the arts are humanist principles rather than the truths of revealed religion. Originality in the arts may be unappreciated, but it is not condemned as "heresy." Novelty and innovation in art may suffer neglect and be a long time in gaining recognition, but the artist has, at least in theory, the opportunity to prove that he is the equal of any of his predecessors. This is hardly possible in religion.

It is a vital principle of religion to honor the past above the future. The suggestion that anyone of the present could equal the past in religion would be arrogant and blasphemous. So far as we know, only the Buddhists permit an assumption of this sort, for they allow that Buddha was a man transfigured by inner experience--called the Enlightenment—and urge as a cardinal teaching of their religion that every man has within him the same potentialities, the potentialities of a Buddha. The other religions—or perhaps we should say Christianity, since we are most familiar with the mental attitudes of this religion—find the supreme reality in the past. The person of Jesus Christ is regarded by the Christians as embodying the unique and unduplicatable reality of their faith.

So it follows that the search for truth becomes very largely an endeavor to recover the past. Nor is this idea absent from Buddhism, since the body of doctrine studied and put into practice by Buddhists is almost entirely an inheritance from the distant past.

But there is a question which should be examined before proceeding to other arguments: Is this backward-looking of religion a purely reactionary phenomenon? Does it represent merely a lack of self-confidence, an inability to honor present discovery, or is there some deep instinct or intuition involved in this reverence for the past?

These are questions which probably should be left somewhat open, for the reason that, either way, the answers would involve large and not easily verifiable assumptions. Yet it must be admitted that in religion, unlike the arts, there is an almost universal tradition of there having been teachers of an unearthly wisdom. And here is involved still another issue—the question of whether these extraordinary beings should be called natural or supernatural. Were they gods or men? The Buddhist tradition affirms that they were men—or a man, as in the case of Buddha; while the Christian tradition declares the essential uniqueness of its great figure, Jesus Christ, who is said to be in fact the "Son of God."

Passing by this internal controversy of religious thought, there remains the question: What sort of attention should be paid to the deep respect felt by men for figures, whether natural or supernatural, who represent the legendary wisdom of the past?

Manifestly, the idea of evolution is a part of this issue. If the development of the human species came about according to the general pattern of the Darwinian view—upward, from some humanoid species of the higher mammals, then the turning to the past is a delusion which has no basis in actual human history. But if, on the other hand, as many of the more mystical religions maintain, humanity had its origin in the *involution* in material existence of some class of spiritual intelligence, then there would be a foundation of archaic fact in the intuitive reverence men feel for the wisdom of antiquity. The stories of the Golden Age, in this case, would be something more than myth—or, if myth, then the myth itself bears the imprint of a reality felt but not rationally understood.

There is an almost universal feeling among men who are not wholly the captives of worldly sophistication that some sort of higher parentage had a part in the appearance of the human species. The simple, dogmatic version of this feeling is that they are "sons of God." It has been put differently in more philosophical traditions—in the Gnostic doctrine of emanations, for example, or in the conception of a solar origin for beings of mind.

Prometheus and Lucifer are both symbols of man as bearer of an inward light, of angelic heritage and potentialities.

Too easy a disposition is made of these feelings, perhaps, by modern rationalism. Rationalism's sturdy and on occasion presumptuous rejection of such apparently intuitive perceptions has, of course, a natural explanation in the bald and insistent claims of supernaturalist religion. The delicate nostalgias of the soul—if such these feelings be—can hardly be represented by the crude materialism of the creeds, imposed upon the masses with a finality which is itself the best evidence against all dogmatic utterance. The rationalist is a man who places first things first, and who, as an independent thinker, prefers no beliefs to bad ones, the bad ones being always the deliverances of authoritarian religion. The mistake of the rationalist is in supposing that, because he has experience only of dogmatic religion, no other kind of religion is possible or worthy of attention.

Actually, the case for dogmatic materialism is no better than the case for dogmatic supernaturalism. One declares the incompetence of the human mind to make any sense of religion, obliging men to accept irrational dogmas or to suffer penalties of heresy and unbelief; the other limits the possible to a narrow area of material existence, showing another kind of contempt for human possibility. Between the two, there can be little choice, except, perhaps, a preference for honest agnosticism, which still retains the right of independent decision, while tending toward a materialistic view as against the claims of supernaturalism.

But the inclination of men of religious mood to cleave to the past and to look to misty antiquity for spiritual light is complicated by a characteristic quality of human nature —the dependence upon the known and the familiar as the source of security. Independence is a fearful thing for men lacking in self-reliance, so that the idea of a spiritual past for the human race is too often made into an apologetic for a pliant and unimaginative conformity in the present. One might go on and say that a lack of the spiritual element in man's reflective consciousness produces a virtual terror in the presence of the unknown. On the other hand, the man who has gained by some mysterious means a feeling of rapport with nature—who senses the universal kinship of life —will find even in the darkness which lies before us all a beckoning presence of the hidden forms of universal being. Such a man wants no dogmatic certainties, no man-made rules laid out for his "salvation." It is rather the mystery that most attracts his hungering mind. Salvation, in his case, lies rather in the augmenting sense of continual discovery, which is, for him, the very meaning of life.

Human beings differ in their endowments of these qualities. The composition of a large population seems to fall into a wide range of categories. There is that portion— usually the largest—which prefers the well-marked paths of orthodoxy. It is not "the truth" that they love, but the faith that is embraced by the crowd. To be alike with others, to find others giving assent to the same assertions, the same rules and declarations of reliability, is for them a prime support in times of personal uncertainty.

It is as though such men are not quite "individuals," in the sense that they carefully avoid the kind of intellectual and moral responsibility to which the authentic individual is devoted. These men are the raw material of the Machiavellians, the plastic clay of the managerial class, and the omnipresent "consumers" of the marketing analysts and merchandising experts. Unfortunately, the counsels and modes of traditional religion accomplish nothing and less than nothing for the help of such people to grow into a richer individuality. Instead, religious orthodoxy reinforces the patterns of conformity and frowns upon that independence of the spirit which would make men school themselves in self-reliant habits of mind.

So, we come back to the contemporary possibility of nontraditional religion, being now in a better position to speak of the implications of this term. Non-traditional religion would not, for example, be contemptuous of intuitions about the past. It would seek in myth and in sacred tradition for the thread of what is possibly a spiritual memory concerning the origins of mankind. It would ask of even supernaturalist legends the seed of psychological verity which may lie concealed beneath the overlay of fanciful embellishments. From terms like "divinity" and the equivocal but indispensable word "spiritual," it would try to extract a meaning which does not deprive the inquiring mind of canons of independent thought and criticism. It would not deny the possibility of the existence of a truth which penetrates the shadowy extremes of birth and death; yet, on the other hand, it would carefully avoid the eager enthusiasm which pretends to a knowledge not actually possessed, which stretches an "intimation" of immortality into a clamorous certainty.

Then, finally, there is the basic consideration that truth, should it exist at all, must surely be of a timeless character. What is really known by any man must be known *now*, and intimately, in and of himself. The man for whom truth has only a past reality, whose knowers belong only to an epoch lost from view, is a man suspended on strings manipulated by powers outside himself; he is not a man at all, but some kind of metaphysical puppet, an echoing shell without a being of his own. The timeless reality is also the reality of the present moment. The religions which are worthy of man's attention are religions which find their ultimate focus in this declaration. The apparatus of religions—their rites, ceremonies and formularies—are never anything more than concessions to the immaturity of their believers, and in honest religions are always labelled as such.

Recognitions of this sort seem to be on the way, these days. It is for this reason that it seems appropriate to speak of non-traditional religion, not as a brand of advanced "humanism," nor as some kind of expanded "naturalistic ethics," but as the beginning of an informed appreciation of that inward search of the heart which may be variously symbolized by external institutions, but never replaced by them.

Letter from **FINLAND**

HELSINKI.—A number of representative Helsinki newspapers have recently belabored the point that cultural development in Finland is a slow and cumbersome process. I shall here paraphrase, and quote from, some of the relevant articles on the subject, adding only a few comments.

The *Ylioppilaslehti,* conservative organ of Finnish-speaking university students (as contrasted to Swedish-speaking students whose journal, the *Studentbladet, is* one of only three or four liberal publications in Finland), describes the present situation, which it deplores, as a "cultural blight," intimating that cultural activities certainly yield no returns.

The *Helsingin Sanomat,* again, the Finnish paper with the largest circulation, in reviewing a book published in Sweden under the title, *Will the Human Race Survive?,* writes in somewhat nostalgic tone that current affairs are discussed much more avidly and to a far greater extent in Sweden than in Finland, but that this can hardly be attributed solely to the greater prosperity of Sweden—as though everything in the world depended somehow on affluency or its absence! The phenomenon, according to the *Helsingin Sanomat,* must rather be ascribed to the keener public interest displayed in Sweden toward social, political, and moral issues. With obvious surprise, the paper states that such topics are discussed in Sweden, not only in the columns of newspapers and periodicals, but "even in books." The writer in the *Helsingin Sanomat* is fully justified in his surprise, since nothing comparable is published, or even thought of, in Finland. Even letters-to-editors of newspapers invariably have reference to trivialities—never to vital problems confronting mankind.

The Swedish-language *Nya Pressen,* which by a stretch of charity may perhaps be classified among the liberal publications, on Oct. 11 introduced a feature known as "Saturday's Debate" (or "Controversy"), to be devoted to current topics of interest and importance, asking its readers to participate. In connection therewith, the paper interviewed two well-known journalists, Mr. Ole Torvalds, representing Swedish-speaking people, and Mr. Matti Kurjensaari, editor of the dissident Social Democratic paper, the *Päivän Sanomat,* representing the Finnish-speaking population.

Both these journalists emphasize that there is no cultural controversy in Finland and that the intellectual climate of the country is singularly inauspicious if not downright hostile to any kind of free discussion of important issues. Mr. Torvalds says that whatever proposal may be launched, or challenge flung, there is never any response, but only a faint echo which quickly fades away.

The writer in the *Ylioppilaslehti* thinks he has discovered the causes of the blight but, using Mark Twain's terms, he seems to be throwing his "stones and sermons" at the wrong things—the motion pictures, the radio, the weeklies, and the daily press, which he finds culpable to some extent; and, finally, public dance halls with their dreadful cacophony and wild acrobatics. Of course nobody would dream of maintaining that these institutions are founts of erudition and wisdom or of any of the virtues, but surely they are not what stunts the growth of the Finnish tree of culture.

In his statements in the *Nya Pressen* interview, Mr. Kurjensaari comes much closer to the real causes of the lack of intellectual development in Finland. He says that the educated young of the country are to a very great extent dominated by the old, authoritative, patriarchal spirits. They have been taught to bow humbly, and in a Christian spirit, to the constituted authorities. The educated young are not sufficiently individualists, and not sufficiently bold and independent in their thinking. And they do not willingly jeopardize or sacrifice their hard-won

economic or social positions by airing nonconformist views.

"Discussions of vital problems," says Mr. Kurjensaari, "have come to be regarded as something subversive, as something endangering not only certain cherished national values, but the very independence of the state." And so we have the spectacle of the educated youth prostrating themselves before the specter of intolerance.

Mr. Kurjensaari recalls that the levity with which certain critics of the younger set sometime ago, at winks from above, reversed their positive views of *Finlandia i moll* (Finlandia in Minor), a book by Olavi Paavolainen, made deep and lasting impression on him. "Something of this sort," he says, "must have been in the mind of ex-President Paasikivi when he said that the Finns, although possessing physical courage, were mental cowards."

> Finland has a powerful rightist press, [continues Mr. Kurjensaari] which moulds and controls the opinions of the middle class and via the middle class the public opinion of the whole country. Political complexes of the Right thus frequently turn out to be the psychological (one wishes to say "pathological") complexes of the middle class.
>
> The newspapers of the Right actually call the tune in Finnish political discussions and often it depends on those organs whether or not there shall be any public discussion of vital issues. The rightist press has arrogated to itself the duty of maneuvering the educated middle class into the obscurantist positions which are so characteristic of it.

There is still another theory to account for the freezing of the Finnish pools of culture. It is a theory which is not, and cannot be, very widely held, for obvious reasons.

According to this theory, the introduction of Christianity into Finland is at the bottom of it all. The Christian Faith, it is contended, was crammed down the throats of the once pagan Finns at the point of the sword, which the alien missionaries and conquerors were able to do because of their superior armed force. These conquerors, with the willing help of the missionaries, substituted new values for the old ones, confounded the morals and ethics of the pagan Finns, which are said to have been of a high degree of excellence, and in general subverted the existing order.

Those who accept this theory say that at the time of their conversion the Finns betrayed an essential part of their human nature though not without struggle—for the conversion into the spirit of Christ was not entirely bloodless: they gave up their intellectual freedom and submitted to thralldom; and they go even further and maintain that the majority of Finns are today, and will remain, a sorry lot of peons as long as they permit such shibboleths as the church, faith, morals and traditions, now declared sacrosanct and tabu, to smother the wisdom which might otherwise flow from a free exercise of the intellect.

FINNISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
THE YEARS OF RECKONING

FOR some weeks now—dating back to the time when Admiral Strauss was head of the AEC—we have been holding a letter of satirical comment on the Government's nuclear weapons testing program. Somehow, it seemed pretty "strong" when it came in. Then, the other day, while clearing up the desk of this department, we came across a page from the Sept. 1 issue of the Los Angeles *Times* which had obviously been saved because of the Reuters story from Tokyo on the continuing Japanese casualties from the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That did it. The letter from our reader no longer seemed "strong," at all.

Accordingly, we present first the essential facts reported by Reuters.

The headline says that fifty-eight deaths in 1958 have been attributed to the after-effects of the 1945 atomic bombing of Japanese cities, and that thousands still live in fear of wasting disease. Potential victims, it seems, have the status of pariahs:

> Many survivors claim that they are overlooked when applying for jobs, ostracized by their fellow employees when lucky enough to find work, and rarely able to marry anyone other than another victim.

While the Japanese Ministry of Welfare gives aid to the survivors of the two atomic blasts, and a medical treatment law assures care to sufferers, "their chances of leading a normal life," the Reuters report states, "are remote." At any moment, their white blood corpuscle count may begin to fall, and so far the only known treatment is a long series of blood transfusions.

The figures on Japan's great wartime disaster are given as follows:

> According to available statistics, 78,150 persons were killed and 36,425 others seriously injured when the world's first nuclear weapon dropped on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945. The official total of missing persons is 13,983.
>
> The casualties at Nagasaki after the second bomb fell on Aug. 9, 1945, were 73,884 persons killed and 76,796 persons injured. The number of persons unaccounted for in Nagasaki never has been reliably estimated, but is in the region of at least 8,000.

The persons who have been treated for one or another kind of atomic radiation sickness total 206,070. The typical form of this affliction is the loss of white corpuscles. The worst cases involve ugly keloids (dense, fibrous tumors) resulting from burns. As of Aug. 31, according to Japanese Ministry of Welfare officials, 6,572 persons were confined in two atom-bomb casualty clearance hospitals at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "Few of these patients," says the report, "are expected ever to live in the outside world again."

At the beginning of June of this year, a total of 45,835 survivors of the bombing were making regular visits to outpatient clinics. These were in addition to the hospitalized victims.

Of the children born to mothers who were survivors of the blast, seven out of ten are mentally retarded, according to Dr. Taku Komai of Hiroshima. These babies were born with extremely small heads and many of them died before reaching puberty.

A final item of tragic after-effects is supplied by the statement of Kiyoshi Saito, director of the Hiroshima City Public Health Bureau. Children, he said, who lived through the bombing—who were affected by it but survived—and who later married, have found themselves unable to have children of their own.

It may be that this statistical recital will bring nothing new to some readers. The figures, at any rate, are three months old, and while we started out on the subject of weapons *testing*, this report is concerned, not with the results of "testing," but with the victims, past and present, of actual bombing. But perhaps some of our readers react to these matters somewhat as we do—testing,

bombing— bombing, testing—the emotional significance of the two activities seems to run together. People who keep on testing nuclear bombs are likely to find a way to use the bombs for the purpose for which they are ultimately intended. In either case, the reason for restraint is practically the same, or so it seems to us. Sooner or later, testing bombs is going to produce a casual attitude toward using them, so that the inhumanity of getting ready to use them is hardly less than the moral insensibility which permits them to be dropped on cities of human beings.

We turn, then, to the letter from our reader:

> The son of a friend of my family recently died of leukemia, and the odds are somewhere between one in twenty or one in a hundred that it was due to the increase in penetrating radiation. Since I have eleven grand-children, and the half-life of some of the radiant elements being liberated into the atmosphere is, at least, hundreds of years, the likelihood that some descendant of mine, and perhaps more than one, will have inherent defects due to mutation, or will die of disease produced by radiation, is very good, indeed.
>
> Regarding the death of myself, or Admiral Strauss, or Dr. Libby, or even our President, the odds are much against radiation being a causative agent. We have too few years left. The "calculated risk" is very slight with respect to ourselves, even though, as applied to the world population, "calculated risk" is a misleading misnomer. Many will be maimed or die, but we can't say which.
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> Since the Russians channel a high proportion of their good minds into science (not only physics, but medical sciences, chemistry, etc.) and only a few of our best are so directed, it is evident that in the long run Russia is sure to pull well ahead of us, barring such improbable events as, say, a shower of huge meteorites which destroys Russia, or a sudden reversion to an insane Stalinism, and the shooting of its top scientists. We shoot them by keeping them out of science, but ineffectively, since a few competent men slip by the economic and psychological nets. No doubt Russia accomplishes some of this by improper teaching methods, as we do, but in a different manner. (See a recent *Harper's* on Florida).
>
> However, to return to the primary thesis, it is true that parents in Phoenician times, frenzied by a Billy Graham fundamentalism, gladly tossed their children into the fiery mouth of Moloch. Compared to leukemia, the suffering was more intense, but mercifully brief. I think this sets an admirable precedent for American parents who praise Admiral Strauss. If some couple's child today dies of leukemia, or, tomorrow is malformed, or suffers from hemophilia, they should be proud. They may have been favored by the gods, and Admiral Strauss.

One reader, with some reason, has objected to our discussions of nuclear testing on the ground that "fear" is no basis for constructive change. We agree. Fear is the motive which binds men to acceptance of such things as the preparation for nuclear war, and the acts of nuclear war, should they ever seem "necessary." But what shall be said or done, then, about the implications of these activities? Shall we regard them with the tolerant amusement with which parents often react to the war games of children? The judgment of consequence about these matters, it seems to us, does not concern the threat of either sudden or wasting death from nuclear explosion, or the lesser menace of an atmosphere polluted by radioactive materials. The important disclosure in these recitals is the readiness of large numbers of human beings to use these weapons against one another for any reason at all. "Gentlemen," said Lewis Mumford some thirteen years ago, "You are mad!" No other comment seems as pertinent, or as necessary.

COMMENTARY
THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

SOMETIME or other, we shall have to make it crystal clear that we do not mean to proselytize for all the things we write about with approval, appreciation, or enthusiasm. That is, when we find insights that seem worth repeating in books about, say, Zen Buddhism, we have not become all-out Zenners, ourselves. The definable or clearly identifiable aspect of an idea or group of ideas is never the really valuable part of what is being considered. When we write with enthusiasm, it is because what is discussed seems to hold some promise as one of many and various means of getting at the subtleties in which the truth always hides.

This, we suppose, is what is meant in this week's lead article by the expression, "Non-Traditional Religion." The non-traditional side of any point of view or approach to meaning is the side which the individual contributes for himself, more or less without assistance. The assistance, whatever it is—and such assistance has its own indispensable role--can never do more than direct the attention to a means o£ discovery.

It was with mingled feelings that, a few months ago, we read a letter from a reader who first heard about Zen in the pages of MANAS, and who now announced that through Zen he had outgrown the superficial explorations pursued in these pages! Well, maybe he did. We, too, do what we can to outgrow whatever seems to need outgrowing, and share with Lao Tze (and Zen) the suspicion that the nameable truth is not the final truth, that the easily labelled way is not the path to follow. No one, after all, has said it any better:

> The Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao; the name which can be uttered is not its eternal name. . . .Tao is itself vague, impalpable—how impalpable, how vague! Yet within it there is Form. How vague, how impalpable! Yet within it there is Substance. . . .

The substance we have found in writing about Zen includes the pleasant realization that no man who seems able to convey something of what Zen is about ever explains that *he* knows much of anything about the sublime truths or mysteries. He doesn't seem interested in proving anything about himself. He is concerned with more important matters. If Zen involves people with such matters, it is worth looking into.

Then, there is our apparent preoccupation with psychology and even psychoanalysis—see Frontiers—which some readers do not entirely admire. Well, there is a lot about psychoanalysis that we are unable to entirely admire. But this is not the point. Some of these people are making discoveries that are obviously worth reporting, and this is the point.

Probably we should say, categorically, that MANAS is concerned with recognizing and promoting good ideas, not institutions or group attitudes or group beliefs. What we praise is precisely what we praise, and not a lot of things that are commonly supposed to "go with" what is under discussion

It is our candid opinion that most people should run like sixty from the thought of having an "analysis." Therapy is for people who are *sick*, who can't help themselves and need the service of a specialist. But thinking this does not prevent us from finding in the work of practitioners of psychotherapy some of the most fruitful insights of our time. It would be sectarian to ignore these discoveries because of the less attractive, institutional or "traditional" side of Freudian psychology. The fact of the matter is that the nontraditional side of any approach to the truth does not "belong" to anybody in particular. Its value is what you make of it, yourself.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

QUOTATION AND COMMENT

GEORGE WILLIAMS' *Some of My Best Friends Are Professors* is identified by Abelard-Schuman, its publishers, as "a critical commentary on higher education." Dr. Williams, a Texas scholar and novelist, has had a distinguished professorial career, and in this book finds himself at odds with everything wrong with American higher learning. He has no particular quarrel with any school of thought in regard to educational theory, but focusses, instead, on the undeniable fact that only a small proportion of college students come to regard their education as "the finest entertainment in the world." Mr. Williams means, of course, that of all forms of enjoyment, learning is "the most absorbing, the most enduring, the most intoxicating, the most irresistible, the most completely satisfying." He points out: "The Athenians were, for a while, able to see learning as entertainment, and during that time accomplished what has echoed through twenty-five centuries. Some Italians, Frenchmen, and Englishmen accomplished it during the Renaissance." Now for the criticism:

> It sometimes looks as if the universities and the university professors were trying to cultivate just the opposite attitude among their students. In almost any educational journal one picks up, in speeches by commencement orators, in pronouncements by university presidents, we hear that these are "grim times" (by the way, can anyone remember when we were not living in "grim times"?); we hear that studies are "weapons for survival"; we hear that "habits of hard and cheerful work are basic to success in all human endeavors" (which should be good news to the Negro laborers of the South and the Irish laborers of Boston); we hear that the student "should not be permitted to waste time"; and we hear that a university should not be "a place of mere entertainment."

The problem, here, lies in the difficulty, in twentieth-century America, of teaching that discipline itself can be enjoyable. It is in relation to this problem that we feel that critics of collegiate athletics often miss a major consideration. Although the wholesale recruiting of high school athletes is indeed dubious practice, making "professionalism" reach into amateur athletics far beyond the good of the public or of college students, it remains true that the good athlete has learned to enjoy the disciplines which make his performance possible. The athletic departments and the coaches are "tough" by comparison with the professors and administrators, but they are secretly admired all the same.

When Dr. Williams suggests that the good American university is very much like a cafeteria—you can wander around and sample anything you like, in the best "democratic" tradition—it should also be noted that cafeteria-goers are seldom interested in evaluating the menu. Our students, today—save for a possible ten or fifteen per cent —are primarily interested in the utility value of their courses. Utility may mean simply social preferment on the basis of a degree, or it may mean training in a specialized field that will lead to high-salaried employment. But unless that aspect of "liberal arts" learning which emphasizes the power and value of critical thinking is conveyed to the student, he has not received any real education.

The tradition of democracy has, quite naturally, been set off from the tradition of authority, but it seems to us that the modern university reveals many of the failings of both points of view. Unless pre-eminence is given to those who understand the processes of critical and creative thought, authority derives simply from the degree of a professor's specialization. The modern student may not respect any of his professors as fountainheads of wisdom—and the loss of this sort of respect is perhaps a greater loss than we realize—but he is still far more dependent upon authority than he realizes.

College students, like all other human beings, badly need faith, and are impoverished to the

degree that it is lacking in their lives. The faith that the universities should encourage, however, is not of the religious variety, nor should it relate to any particular belief or doctrine. The only indispensable faith is faith in the worthwhileness of the adventure of living, faith that there is a measure of true knowledge which may be gained by each individual every day of his life. And faith in the worthwhileness of human existence never comes our way by courtesy of the specialists. Through the arts and through literature, through some of the great ethical affirmations of the past, and from a few philosophically inclined psychologists, however, we still have access to the ingredients of the sort of faith that counts. And it is in this context that the intellectual disciplines, like the athletic ones, become a matter of natural pride and stimulation.

Returning to Dr. Williams: There have been many attempts to counteract the unfortunate "factory" psychology introduced by the huge college enrollments of our time. Professors, in endeavoring to interest classes of three hundred or more, have often resorted to the techniques of showmanship—one reason why student ratings of professors, which Williams recommends, may be of dubious value. If you can't reach through to the mind of the individual student, you will at least wish to keep him interested and hope that, along with the interest in the techniques of presentation chosen, some stimulus to thought will result. But this is, quite literally, a catch-as-catch-can approach. A worthier effort is the attempt to design university campuses with small classrooms. With additional instructors, this plan assures opportunity for daily discussion. On this program, Dr. Williams comments:

> Another invention meant to improve the universities has aimed at increasing the faculty-student ratio. Insofar as this represents an effort to treat the student as an individual instead of an element in a system, it is commendable. But too often this reform stops short of the real solution of the problem. If a professor is a poor teacher, or a personality warped in ways that have been discussed in this book, it is an excellent thing to have the fewest possible students exposed to him. On the other hand, if he is a good teacher, it is unfortunate that he touches the lives of so few students. Thus, unless the university strives to procure good teachers, its expensive policy of bestowing benefits with one hand ends in its removing the benefits with the other hand.

Dr. Williams concedes that some schools have tried to create the proper atmosphere for critical thinking:

> President Hutchins' experiment with the University of Chicago was another of the many inventions designed to make the American university less of a failure. Though, as a whole, the experiment did not meet the approval of American educators, it did have an influence in making professors everywhere think, for a change, about education. Moreover, Chicago's emphasis on the more liberal, classical, and basic aspects of learning, instead of mere technical skill or practical knowledge, has influenced the curricula of most American universities. The pragmatic drift toward vocationalism and early professionalism was halted; and most educators came to believe that, in the words of the President's Commission on Higher Education (1947), "The first goal in education for democracy is the full, rounded, and continuing development of the person. . . . To liberate and perfect the intrinsic powers of every citizen is the central purpose of democracy, and its furtherance of individual self-realization is its greatest glory."

But, as Dr. Williams points out, ninety per cent of American college professors are timid men, inclined to research and quiet by natural directives of temperament. You can't easily "teach" prospective college instructors to acquire the daring of a Hutchins, nor does the usual faculty group particularly wish the presence of explosive personalities. The student is often caught in the middle, facing on the one hand a good researcher and a good scholar who lacks the capacity to fire young minds, and, on the other hand, the dramatic lecturer who resembles a highly paid TV performer. In neither instance is there much encouragement for the intellectual disciplines, the eventual significance of which is disclosed in the individual's final definition of himself.

We should say, then, that the greatest need in American higher learning and in high schools, too, is for an increase of respect for those qualities of mind which were honored by the ancient philosophers. The work of Hutchins, Meiklejohn and Barr, the Great Books Adult Education programs, and other stimuli to adult learning are on the right track. Meantime, a discussion of the numerous and complicated issues enumerated in *Some of My Best Friends Are Professors* will work toward the self-education of educators. Dr. Williams' own philosophy is expressed in his three concluding paragraphs, defining the attitude of the ideal teacher:

> He will look askance at those puzzle-texts which pretend to valuate human nature, with all its manifold complexities, in terms of arithmetic. As a matter of fact he will realize that except in uncommon cases of abnormality, evaluation of human nature is usually unsafe and unsound. If he gives tests at all, they will be attempts to discover young people who have imagination, creativeness, sensitivity, insight, a sense of social and human responsibility, courage, originality, and a dozen other such qualities, and no tests at all for so-called "intelligence" and no attempt at arithmetical evaluation (any more than one can evaluate arithmetically the results of a Rorschach test), but only at description.
>
> Once the student is in the university, the professor will be less interested in making him *want* to learn. The student who *wants* to learn is the only one who can be successfully taught. Knowing this, the professor will not try to frighten or shame his students into learning, holding over them the club of grades and a sense of duty; he will try to show them how delightful it is to learn. He will be able to show them this if he too delights in learning, and also delights in stimulating others to delight.
>
> Nor will the professor be so lost in rules and regulations that he will forget that any human being is worth more than all the rules and regulations. Perhaps right here is the sum and substance of what makes a good teacher. It is a constant and overpowering awareness, during every moment that he gives to teaching, that he is dealing with human beings, and that they automatically deserve his help, his respect, and his affection.

FRONTIERS

"The Religion of the Ancients"

Two clear examples of "transference" of the problems of ethical religion to the field of modern psychology are provided in the August issue of *Psychiatry* (William Alanson White Foundation quarterly). Writing under the complicated title of "Preanalytic Preparation for the Therapeutic Process in Schizophrenia," Edward D. Hoedemaker concerns himself with the need which his patients have often displayed for a way to reawaken faith in their own capacity to conduct themselves in an ethical manner. Dr. Hoedemaker had long felt that analyses should be preceded by simple experiments which gauge the patient's willingness to respond to the challenge of self-discipline, and he relates one dramatic instance in which pre-analytic discussion provided the key to the future success of the analysis itself!

A thirty-two-year-old schizophrenic with a long history of hospitalization, interspersed with an almost suicidal use of alcohol and sedatives, was experimentally cut off from sedation, and told, quite casually, that she would find that she could sleep after all. She was not deprived of alcohol —the reverse of earlier procedures—but was told that even after a bad drinking bout she would be able to sleep enough to preserve her health without sedatives. This patient thought she needed more artificial help than she actually did, and was oppressed by the belief that she *herself* could not cope with her excesses—which, of course, served to double the excesses. Once she learned that she could do without one of the crutches she had "depended" upon, she breathed a tiny gasp of self-respect.

During analytical sessions she was told that she could drink and take sedatives all she wanted to, but that if she did, she would have to give up the analysis. In other words, *she* began to make decisions. Dr. Hoedemaker summarizes:

> Let me postulate what I believe happened, metapsychologically. To begin with, she appeared to be confronted by the threat of loss of ego control in the form of her previous symptoms. Further, she felt she could not tolerate fear of these eventualities. It was obvious that she regarded herself as unable to live through these experiences without injury to herself, including a sleepless night. She seemed to regard herself as incomplete, and as temporarily complete only if something—a sedative—were added to her, and to feel that a sleepless night would in itself have a destructive effect on her. My attitude in prohibiting the use of sedatives was at first perceived by her as a rejection, but this attitude appears to have been introjected and utilized as an expression of respect— that is, as an indication that I regarded her ego as capable of encountering her own instincts provoked by the impacts of the real world, and also of surviving this encounter. As part of this, my attitude meant to her that I considered her capable of developing defenses through experience and that I saw her as a potentially complete person who could tolerate feelings and encounter the real world alone. She introjected my attitude and it became part of her own character structure, appearing to be a partial identification with me. This element, introjected and apparently subsequently incorporated, has served as a modifying influence on the pleasure ego, producing a self-regarding function which allows for delay between impact of perception and response, and for judgment to take place when she is threatened from within by explosive expression or instinctual drives.

From this we might turn to any one of numerous passages in Buddha's *Dhammapada* that indicate the need of genuine self-control for all human beings. For example:

> All that we are is the result of what we have thought: all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts.
>
> Whoso lives pursuing pleasures, his senses unrestrained, immoderate in eating, indolent, devitalized—him verily doth Mara uproot as a gale a weak tree.
>
> Whoso lives disciplining himself, his senses restrained, him verily Mara doth not overturn, as a gale doth not overturn a rocky mountain.

Another article in the same issue of *Psychiatry*, by Edith Weigert, Director of the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute, touches on the same theme while discussing "Problems of Communication Between Doctor and Patient in

Psychotherapy." Dr. Weigert first notes that "both the child patient and the adult patient are reluctant to leave the level of 'immediate symbolic gratification,' as Marie Sechehaye has called it, and to accept abstraction as the basis of satisfactory communication." But it becomes obvious to Dr. Weigert that the need for replacing the pleasure-pain responses with significant abstractions is deeply felt by the maturing ego. This is her statement of the problem:

> In neurosis—and to a greater extent in psychosis—the ambivalent pleasure-pain aspect interferes with the formation of integrating abstractions and meaningful communications. The disturbed patient sees his partner in black or white; he addresses him as a gratifying god or a frustrating devil. He remains unstable, also, in his self-evaluation and self-expression, since he sees himself as demon or angel in alternating mood swings in which his self-image is either distant from or close to his ego ideal. Wishful and fearful tensions interrupt interpersonal communication by explosive needs for discharge, or they make self-expression guarded; by preventing a realistic appraisal of any emotionally important partner, they frequently jeopardize meaningful communication.

The point, here, is that the patient himself can come to understand something of the essential problem—and that help of this sort may be found in some of the wise "self-discipline" counsels of ancient devotional books. For instance, note these passages in the *Bhagavad-Gita,* in which Krishna addresses himself to his slightly "neurotic" pupil, Arjuna:

> Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, and not in the event. Do not be incited to actions by the hope of their reward. Make the event equal to thee, whether it be success or failure. Equal-mindedness is called Yoga.
>
> Seek an asylum in mental devotion, which is knowledge; for the miserable and unhappy are those whose impulse to action is found in its reward.