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BOOKS AND MORALS

SOME months ago, a MANAS subscriber questioned the value of drawing on works of fiction for the material of social or psychological analysis. Happening, within a week or two, to have come across three books that seem useful for this purpose, we shall attempt a discussion of the question. It is an old inquiry, of course—this matter of the relationship between "literature" and "life." We can hardly expect to add observations of any great profundity to what has already been said on the subject, although a certain freshness of viewpoint may be possible, for the reason that the two kaleidoscopes of literature and life are themselves in constant rotation, forever disclosing new permutations of the fundamental forms of human experience, which are, we may think, as old as life itself.

The books we have in mind are *The Mother*, by Yusuke Tsururni, *White Shadows*, by Guy Nunn, and *Chinatown Family* by Lin Yutang. *The Mother*, which first appeared in Japan twenty years ago (published in English in 1932), is first of all a mother-and-son story, but it is also a portrayal of the cultural idealism of the Japanese people as transmitted by family institutions. The period of the story is from about 1900 to 1917—a time of extraordinary transformation in Japanese life, during which the impact of Western civilization was felt as much from within as from without. The primary intent of the author, however, is to convey the sense of duty felt by a Japanese mother toward her husband and her children. This Mother lives out her life with her eyes on the horizon of what is possible for her to understand. Widowed while still a young woman, and having married above her own social station, she must support her three children and provide for their education, with only condescending indifference from the family of her deceased husband. She has a few real friends, and a deep love of her children, to help her. Asako, the Mother, strives single-mindedly to embody the traditional ideals of Japanese family life, with the result that the story moves heart-affectingly toward those ideals as though they were the fixed stars of the moral universe. Even if they are not, Asako thinks they are, and her feeling about what she must do with her life gives the tale its wholeness and moral consistency. She tries to impart the same sense of duty to her son. They are walking together in the country, and at the top of a hill she stops and says to him:

> "Listen, Susumu-san. Look at that huge oak tree. It stands there braving wind, rain and snow. You are a man. Will you grow up bravely like that great tree?
>
> "It was here that I met your father for the first time. It was all due to his affectionate kindness that I could rise from the home of a woodwork dealer to become the wife of a wealthy banker in Tokyo. Your father was a wonderful man. He was honest, straightforward and tender. His too-honest nature was taken advantage of by wicked people who mislead him. He lost his fortune and died a poor man. Mother believes, however, that a man who is cheated is greater than a man who cheats. There is a great law of compensation and I do not doubt that God will compensate the family of Okawa by bestowing good luck upon his children.
>
> "It remains for you, Susumu-san, to fight a battle of redemption for him. Will you lead a good life and set a noble example to the world, proving that a just man always wins in the end? If you do that, mother will not regret one moment of her life.
>
> "Susumu-san, remember this. To be good it not enough! Be courageous!" Her voice broke.
>
> Susumu felt as though cold water had been suddenly thrown over him. A sad and yet unspeakably sublime feeling seemed to rise and envelop the hills, the woods and the two of them. He felt under the control of a great, unknown force.

This mother has a work to do. She has to give her son the best possible educational

opportunities and to inspire him to personal greatness. In order to earn the necessary money to put Susumu through college, she decides to open a shop. The author observes:

> She had no way of realizing that Japan was standing at the threshold of a new era and that the industrial revolution of the past thirty years had been fast destroying the last remnants of feudalism. She did not know, along with many Japanese, that a new industrial age based on an acquisitive spirit was replacing the old agricultural era based on the negation of self-interest.

She is encouraged in her project by a relative who quotes Voltaire as calling the English a nation of shopkeepers, adding that those same shopkeepers destroyed Napoleon's "invincible" army—which was reason enough, was it not, for entering upon a shopkeeping career with enthusiasm?

So, in this story, the ancient virtues triumph; in a world of changing ways, the Mother lives her ideals to the limit of her capacities, all oblivious of the moral devaluation in the transfer of old feudal aspirations to the attainment of the position of a "wealthy banker." And while she is climbing the ladder to success as she conceives it, from country girl to successful business woman, there is no hypocrisy in her striving. She trustingly accepts the new goals from those above her in the social hierarchy, for is not the world she has known built upon trust in high authority? There is a sense, therefore, in which she is being betrayed by the rapid passage of events, yet the author spares her any sense of breakdown of the moral order. The betrayal is there, but the story is about her, and not about the moral contradictions implicit in a combination of feudal chivalry and acquisitive industrialism. And there is so much of goodness in the story—so much that is dying out of the modern world—that it is well to have it just as it is.

In *Chinatown Family,* Lin Yutang brings the same drama closer to home for the American reader. With his mastery of Confucian lore, Lin Yutang makes the family life of a Chinese laundryman assume the dignity of a saga. In the shadow of New York's Third Avenue El, this middle-aged Chinese irons by day and by night, and finally, with the help of a member of his family, brings his wife and two children from China to join him. For the newly-arrived boy and girl, life in America is one long unceasing marvel. What would be sordid poverty for many Americans is for them golden opportunity. In this story, too, the Mother becomes the sturdy, common sense organizer of the family's resources, the seat of its hopes and the pilot of its destinies. For contrast, there are "Americanized" Chinese who imitate the cheap externalities of urban pleasure-seeking in the United States, and whose disordered lives can regain a measure of balance and integrity only by a return to the principles of the family tradition. But what, it may be asked, will happen to such people when the roots of their faith in the family tradition finally wither and die? Such groups are like small oases of ethical stability, capable of coping with the type of moral problems that normally arise in isolated communities, and possessing sufficient resilience to deal for a time with the anarchic forces intruding from the outside world; but what will nourish the old ideals as the imported cultural environment wears thin?

Guy Nunn, who in *White Shadows* writes of a Mexican family that settles in southern California, tries to suggest a partial solution. He has Pablo Alfierro join the CIO and experience the racial equality which the labor movement, or this branch of it, affords. Pablo also becomes a citizen, which gives his children occasion for rejoicing. Bit by bit, the peon who steals across the border with Josefina, his wife, and Pepe, Miguel and Martita, his children, penetrates the mysteries of the Great Unknown—life in the United States. Together they struggle for enough to eat, for decency, for self-respect, and bit by bit they get all three. The unity of the family, the common devotion of all to one another, their quiet ride in the face of insult and indignity—these are things which help the reader to feel himself a blood-relation of the

Alfierros, and to wish mightily that America had some secret excellence to offer, some deep idealism in which this family might participate in time, as it grows into the typical patterns of American life. They try. Pepe dies on a European battlefield, proudly sharing the burden of native-born American boys, and Martita. goes to college and is betrothed to a man named Smith. The Alfierros make the grade, and it is no doubt an ascent of some significance, this "catching up" with the social milieu of other Americans, but for them, as for many others, it is only a place of beginning, and no peak of attainment at all, so far as the future is concerned.

It is a privilege to be allowed entry into the lives of these three families—the Japanese, the Chinese and the Mexican. The masks of racial difference are dissolved and their shy hopes—shy to strangers, but resolves of engrossing intensity to them—become something luminous to the reader. But one sees also that, instead of a mixture of races, the complex of modern civilization is rather a mixture of epochs, with the organic integrity of family tradition transplanted into the alien context of the larger, "contractual" society, where ethics is a matter of legal and economic relationships—where an impersonal "system" has taken the place of the face-to-face ties and obligations of the family and the feudal hierarchy, and all the virtues, have new but more or less unrealized meanings.

Here, perhaps, is a partial explanation for the recent revision to totalitarianism in so many parts of the modern world. As family ties and ideals lose their moral coherence, people come to hunger for some corresponding feeling of unity. The social contract—a form of political barter—postulates a kind of distrust as well as a mutual obligation. The contract is a mechanism, a means, and not an end. The contract generates no idealism, except as its terms are exceeded in mutual trust by all the contracting parties, and what reason have we to go beyond the letter of the law, in giving to and serving the social whole? To aim at becoming "a wealthy banker in Tokyo," or in New York or London, is not enough.

What help, then, may the novel be, with these considerations? The novel can set the problem, even though it may provide no solution. These books we have noticed briefly are devoted representations of human striving, in which the motive-force of achievement is within the characters themselves. They show how intrepidity of spirit, working through the ideals of cultural and family tradition, operates to bring about a measure of self-realization. They show, also, the difficulty with which the values of personal idealism are made to mesh with the cogs of an impersonal, industrial society, the one being a small arterial system of organic relationships, the other a mechanical system which works in fixed ratios, needing lubrication, but not arterial flow.

We are forever designing systems to solve this problem, when we should be fervently seeking ideals. We attempt to "rationalize" the organization of industry in terms of the subhuman objectives of commodity production and "national security," and instead of the Good Society, we create the spurious organism of the totalitarian State.

Is there an idealism which has both a personal and an impersonal radius, which can point to a true self-realization for both the individual and the community? This is the problem set by present-day literature—a literature now shrill with frustration, now angry with partisan claims, in which natural intuitive expressions are all but silenced by the creak and clatter of mechanical "progress. " The human struggle, which once proceeded in the individual heart, is now projected upon the social scene. A man's action and a man's salvation are no longer private, personal things. But neither are they lost or effaced by equations which count only the movements of great masses. There is a balance, somewhere, between society and the individual, the key of intelligent morality for our time.

What is the sphere or segment of relationship of man with society which still has plasticity for individual moral determination? Where begin with acts of conscious re-creation? The impassive, faceless machines which surround us cannot tell. Should we dot the rural landscape with small, intentional communities? Should we leaven the cities with groups for common study and reflection? Should we return to history and biography for hints and suggestions from the ethical pioneers whom the world has known?

We need to do these things, but most of all we need to ask ourselves the fundamental questions: What are we, really, and what are we about, in this life, or any other that the unknown future may afford? The answers may already exist, in the books of the great religions, or better still, in the Book of Nature, from which we have grown so far apart, but we shall never recognize the answers unless we have first learned how to question ourselves.

Letter from
CENTRAL EUROPE

VIENNA.—Not since Southeast Europe underwent conquest by the Roman Empire has this part of the world found repose. The ancient Persians regarded the Balkan peninsula as a highway to Europe, while the Romans were of the opinion that its domination was necessary to their sovereignty over the Mediterranean. Weakened by continual fighting with the outposts of the sinking Roman Empire, the Goths were followed by the Mongols who, storming forth from inner Asia, passed over Southeast Europe; while the Turks, hoping to plant the green flag of Mohammed in the center of the *Abendland*, used the same peninsular route.

These occurrences obliterated the remains of the ancient culture and stopped any further development; and they also altered decisively the composition of the population. To build up a human wall against possible attacks from the East, the Romans had settled many soldiers in that part of the Balkans which is still called Roumania. Goths intermixed with the original population, Mongols founded villages and towns in certain districts, and Turks—ruling some parts of Southeast Europe until the beginning of this century—made regions of the peninsula their home. As the conquests had taken place by force, and as the conquerors belonged to very different races, they not only clung to their nationalities, but used every means to perpetuate them. Eager to become more powerful than their neighbors, they fought each other endlessly. Many difficulties were caused by the fact that minorities lived on the territories of other states.

As the Great Powers in Europe and Asia became consolidated and stabilized, the differences among the Balkan states echoed more loudly around the globe. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy, covering certain parts of the peninsula and participating to a large extent in the Danubian traffic, had a considerable interest in influencing the events in the Balkans. Germany observed the development on the peninsula with keen attention, not only because of a German minority in Siebenburgen, between Hungarians and Roumanians, but in consequence of her interest in the "Near East." Russia has always desired to open the Black Sea for herself in western direction—aiming at the exercise of power over Southeast Europe. The French had interests to protect in Egypt and Asia Minor, while the British wanted no other Great Power in the Mediterranean.

World War I gave none of the Powers decisive advantage on the peninsula. The Balkans remained what they had been before: the neuralgic spot on the body of Europe. During World War II, there was little opportunity for the Western Powers to keep in economic contact with the Balkan states. Therefore, animated by the wish to furnish Britain as well as the United States with a scientific study of the area for post-war use, an Economic Research Group in England compiled a book called *Economic Development in South East Europe.* The study includes Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece. The Introduction is by Prof. David Mitrany, and the publisher is P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning), with distribution by the Oxford University Press.

This book shows why a League of Nations Committee could describe Southeast Europe as an area where "malnutrition prevails extensively and there is often a lack of staple foods as well." The principal need is for an increase in animal products—milk, eggs, meat and fats. For the minimum standard recommended by the U.S. National Research Council, the output of these products would have to be increased by 55 to 70% for the area as a whole. The typical Southeast European peasant grows food sufficient for one person and a half, whereas the proportion in Western Europe is one to four. The cereal yield

per hectare is about 37% of that obtained in Denmark.

Industrial development proves to be quite different in the various states. Nearly all industries, and certainly all consumer industries, had a large unused capacity during the period under consideration. Although the area as a whole is sufficiently endowed with mineral oil, water power and coal, these resources are unevenly distributed. Some 20 to 25% of the agricultural population was excessive, a fact indicative of serious economical maladjustment.

As to transport, while in Greece, the coastline and the configuration of the land gave sea traffic a dominant role, in the other countries, the railways form the backbone of the transport system. Many highways or railway lines were built for strategic or political ends rather than for the economic needs of the population (in Roumania, for instance, there were four different communication systems, three of which had been based on centers outside the Old Kingdom, with the result that some lines were overburdened, while others remained practically unused).

On the whole, the Research Group came to the conclusion that the economic means of the region are extremely meagre in relation to its needs; that the problem is not so much one of land distribution as of land utilization, and that if any substantial development is to be achieved, the area will require additional capital resources from the outside—with the condition that it is provided for the economic needs of the receiving country, and not for quick returns or for military purposes.

The book is truly scientific so far as it bases its observations on figures and facts. Political issues were set aside—a quality which deserves a special appreciation in a work written when the war-psychosis and war hatreds were at their peak. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the boundaries of the area, in view of the title of the book, are drawn in an unusual way. I should like to meet a Pole who would regard his country as Southeast European, instead of East-European. The Czechs are and feel partly as East-, partly as Central-Europeans, while Austria is Central European. Albania, however, definitely a Southeast European country, is hardly mentioned.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
HISTORICAL CRITICISM

IN *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made it,* Richard Hofstadter continues the acute analysis and criticism which were evident in his earlier volume, *Social Darwinism.* Both books are important for their carefully thought-out perspectives rather than for accumulations of facts, although facts are voluminously supplied. Social science is a much written-about field, so that the average reader is under the necessity of making careful selections. Mr. Hofstadter will not disappoint such a reader. He writes with a sense of the shaping forces of historical epochs.

In his Introduction to the *American Political Tradition,* for example, he notes that during the first half of the twentieth century, the polarity of American thought has reversed itself: instead of manifesting the forward-looking spirit that characterized the early days of the Republic, and which was continued after the Civil War with modifications of crass greediness and robust selfishness, America now displays an intense nostalgia for the political and other virtues of the past. "Beginning," Mr. Hofstadter writes, "with the time of Bryan, the dominant American ideal has been steadily fixed on bygone institutions and conditions." Along with Bryan, he names La Follette and Wilson as leaders who proclaimed that "they were trying to undo the mischief of the past forty years and re-create the old nation of limited and decentralized power, genuine competition, democratic opportunity, and enterprise."

Numerous avenues of thought open up from this perspective. One is the idea that the Civil War was a tragically debasing conflict which, although it released the Negroes from legal servitude, also gave free play to tendencies which found arrogant expression in the imperialism of the turn of the century—bringing the annexation of Hawaii and the Philippines. Another line of reflection suggests that, until the twentieth century, Americans felt that they were building something new and great on virgin lands, but that with the onset of two world wars and the emergence of "bigness" in industry and corporate monopoly, the American people have become "security-minded," instead of in building, their dominant interest is now in having and holding. Then, regarding social development as a kind of organic growth, there is the question of whether the basic institutions of the United States are capable of further development without drastic remodelling.

This last question is the one that seems to interest Mr. Hofstadter. In this book, he is concerned with showing what American political leaders, regardless of party platforms, have all believed—"the common climate," as he calls it, of American opinion. The thesis of his book, and the problem he sets, are simply stated:

> Above and beyond temporary and local conflicts there has been a common ground, a unity of cultural and political tradition, upon which American civilization has stood. That culture has been intensely nationalistic and for the most part isolationist; it has been fiercely individualistic and capitalistic. In a corporate and consolidated society demanding international responsibility, cohesion, centralization and planning, the traditional ground is shifting under our feet. It is imperative in a time of cultural crisis to gain fresh perspectives from the past.

Having announced these general objectives, the author proceeds to sketch ideological profiles of American political leaders, from the Founding Fathers to Franklin D. Roosevelt. The chapters are well if mercilessly written. In his introduction, Mr. Hofstadter denies any desire "to add to a literature of hero-worship and national self-congratulation," and no reader will suspect him of overindulgent sympathy for any of his subjects. It is here, in fact, in the sharply intellectual analysis of this book, that a sense of dissatisfaction may arise. One loses the feeling that actual human beings are being written about. While the author carefully explains that he is "analyzing men of action in their capacity as leaders of popular thought, which is not their most impressive function," it is still pertinent to question the basic assumptions of this method of writing history. It is not, of course, a question directed with critical intent solely at Mr. Hofstadter, but rather the expression of a general doubt regarding the ultimate usefulness of much of modern historical and political criticism.

A passage from Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism* will illustrate what we are trying to suggest. He is writing about Herbert Spencer. Having described the virtual adulation of Spencer by Americans during the last half of the nineteenth century, he summarizes Spencer's views on Evolution and comments:

> This imposing positivistic edifice might have been totally unacceptable in America, had it not also been bound up with an important concession to religion in the form of Spencer's doctrine of the Unknowable. The great question of the day was whether religion and science could be reconciled. Spencer not only gave the inevitable affirmative answer, but also an assurance for all future ages that whatever science might learn about the world, the true sphere of religion, worship of the Unknowable, is by its very nature inviolable.

Here is perhaps an accurate description of one aspect of Spencer's influence and popularity, but it seems to us to leave entirely out of consideration the appeal of Spencer's thought to men who could be genuinely inspired by the thought of the Unknowable. There is a deeper flow in human culture than that which avails itself of a "concession to religion." Fertile and original minds were profoundly enriched by Spencer's philosophy—Lafcadio Hearn, for one—and the release Spencer's metaphysics afforded to many struggling against the entanglements of religious orthodoxy made him an honorable place in the history of intellectual emancipation.

In this book, of course, Mr. Hofstadter is writing about Social Darwinism and Spencer's support of the idea of the survival of the fittest as applied to social development. The chapter concludes:

> If Spencer's abiding impact on American thought seems impalpable to later generations, it is perhaps only because it has been so thoroughly absorbed. His language has become a standard feature of the folklore of individualism. "You can't make the world all planned and soft," says the businessman of Middletown. "The strongest and best survive—that's the law of nature after all—always has been and always will be."

So, looking back on Mr. Spencer and blaming this cliché of "individualism" on him—a blame no doubt partly merited—it is easy to write about him in unsympathetic terms. Other writers are loftily contemptuous of Hegel because his dialectic led him to sanctify both the German constitutional monarchy and Lutheran Protestantism as the final synthesis of historical achievement. Similarly, Plato is condemned by some as an intellectual "fascist" for certain passages in the *Laws*.

This is no argument for ignoring the limitations of historical characters, but it is an argument against studying them in terms of their limitations alone. Writing and reading about "men of action" or "men of thought" with major emphasis on their weaknesses or inadequacies can too easily produce an armchair egotism which knows little of the realities of human achievement, in either action or thought. A particular charm of reading history, as E. M. Forster has suggested, is that it transfers us "from an office where one is afraid of a sergeant-major into an office where one can intimidate generals."

> The captains and the kings depart at our slightest censure, while, as for the "hosts of minor officials" who cumber court and camp, we heed them not, although in actual life they entirely block our social horizon.

With this warning, then, we recommend *The American Political Tradition* as an interesting and informing book. Mr. Hofstadter's central purpose is the clarification of the "social horizon," but he will realize this end most fully with those among his readers who are able to reserve the feeling that there is more—much more—to be understood about the makers of the American political tradition than this book contains or suggests.

COMMENTARY
THE CONTRACT THEORY

THE butcher made a bad mistake. He came to work fifteen minutes early on the day before Washington's day, to cut up some steaks for the holiday trade, and a man across the street reported him to the butcher's union. Apparently, a union butcher can be fined as $75 by the union for coming to work early, for failing to take a full hour for lunch, or for staying a little later in the evening.

There is a logic, of course, in the union rules—a logic intended to protect butchers from exploitation by their employers. But this incident illustrates the defects of a society which makes its definitions of good and evil according to contracts between organizations. Could there be a contract that would not frustrate the voluntary flow of individual cooperation for a common human interest—a contract which would not at the same time open the way to countless abuses? Not, we think, in a society which has greater faith in contracts than in the spirit of cooperation.

The contract theory has other limitations—self-defeating ones, in relation to the attainment of self-reliant security for workers. A man with knowledge of successful subsistence farming, to be carried out in connection with some other occupation, approached a prominent American labor leader with his idea. "What would you think, " he said, "of developing this program for the benefit of union labor? The men would gain at least partial independence by having work around their own places to fall back on in times of strike or layoff." The union leader was unresponsive. "Farmers are the hardest people in the world to organize," he said.

Then, here in southern California, is the case of the religious group which is attempting to build its own church with volunteer labor. The project soon became a focus for extreme antagonisms on the part of several unions. Encouraging self-help is not a part of the union program. The power of the organization is the highest good, which dictates all other values.

Unions, it is true, are the sole defense of the working masses against the injustices and inequities of a competitive, acquisitive society. But to deal with the forces of competition and acquisition, they have adopted much the same assumptions and operate at much the same moral level as the institutions of capitalist enterprise. Capitalist enterprise, however, acquires no distinctive virtue from this fact, which reveals only the far-reaching power of acquisitiveness to corrupt human relations.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

"TODAY a lot of kids turned around and looked at me funny when the teacher asked us what churches we belonged to, and I said I didn't belong to any; and then she said, 'I see *most* of the class has a religion.' Why don't we have a religion, father?"

"Do you know what the word religion means, son? Of course, it really has two meanings. It means something that draws men closer together, and sometimes it means, as the dictionary puts it, 'to bind fast.' Now I am sure that the first part of religion is good but I am not so sure about the second part. Can you imagine why I feel that way?"

"Well, if you're bound fast to something, doesn't it mean that you are sort of stuck in it? Some of the kids in school act as if nothing is any good unless their church says it is, and one time a Catholic boy and a Jewish boy got bloody noses fighting about something about their churches."

"That sort of thing has been happening all through history—when it gets big enough we call it a 'religious war'—and it is one reason why I've never suggested that you go to church as most parents think their children should. It seemed to me that there must be something wrong with religions and churches if they make some people feel that they are better than other people; I thought that possibly by *not* going to church, you might sometime discover a better religion than any church has.

"Do you think I need a religion, father?"

"Everyone needs religion, son, and yet everyone *has* some kind of religion. But I think that people have to discover religion for themselves, and can't just borrow it from someone else."

"I don't understand, father. Why do I need some kind of religion?"

"Well let's put it this way, son. Try to think about whether you are going to have any difficult problems in your life. What is the most difficult sort of problem you have now?"

"I don't have any problems, except maybe when sometimes I don't know whether to choose one thing or the other."

"There is only one problem, son, and that's it. Religion means having something in your mind that helps you to make decisions so you will know what you think to be right and what you think to be wrong."

"Father, why do I want two different kinds of things at the same time? Sometimes I want to make you happy, but I also don't want to stay in the yard long enough to do a good-looking job on mowing the lawn because I want to go to the show. And sometimes I know you won't like it if I fight with Tom, and yet I do anyway."

"Well, most people are really two persons. Part of the time they are more interested in doing something worth-while which will benefit others, and part of the time they don't care about others at all, but only for themselves. Some religions say that there is a 'devilish' or evil part of us, which we should try to get rid of, and there must be some truth in that idea. But I like to believe that when we act in an unpleasant way, it is not because we are full of 'evil,' but only because we are full of confusion. A man called Shakespeare said that nothing is really good or evil, only thinking makes it so. That would mean that if people could understand what it is in them that makes them selfish, and what it is in them that makes them want to be more than selfish, they would no longer have to consider part of themselves as 'evil.' Some people have thought that men were 'evil' when they danced and played games. but it seems to me that men can be evil even if they don't dance or play games, and that they can be very good when they do."

"I have heard you say the word 'philosophy' to mother once in a while. What has that got to do with religion?"

"Well, son, I suppose philosophy is the word for the kind of religion I am always trying to find. Philosophy means thinking in order to discover the truth about ourselves and the world in which we live. It always means asking yourself a lot of questions. . . . Yesterday you went in the kitchen and ate a big piece of chocolate pie just before dinner. How did it taste?"

"Well, father, it tasted even better than when I have pie after dinner because I was so hungry."

"Did you enjoy our dinner afterwards?"

"I wasn't very hungry, but that *pie* was the best I ever ate."

"Well, now, do you usually enjoy your dinner when you eat it at the usual time, without a piece of pie beforehand? I know you do, or you wouldn't ask for second helpings so often. And you admit that while you enjoyed the pie more than usual, you didn't really enjoy the dinner at *all*, yesterday. Do you want to have pie before dinner again?"

"I think I'd better not.

"Well, son, when people begin to think that it is very important *when* to choose to eat pie, they become philosophers. If they begin to fear pie, and talk about how much they are against eating it, they would have a new religion. When they become philosophers, they are probably happier than when they become religious, because they no longer have to pay for one kind of happiness with some kind of dissatisfaction, and can have a certain amount of all kinds of happiness. . . . When you get angry at your brother and push him or hit him, how do you feel?"

"Well, when I do it I feel as if I just have to. But afterward I don't really feel very happy."

"That is just like the pie, son. If you have to try to stop Tom from doing something, you need to find the right way and the right time to do it. If you feel that you dislike what he is doing, it may not be wrong or bad for you to feel that way, but you need to use that 'dislike' for something constructive in order to let the other part of yourself feel happy. There seems to be a sort of animal in man, but there is also Man in the animal. When we feel completely selfish, we only let part of ourselves be happy. But when the man controls the animal, both parts can be happy at the same time. . . . Now, son, if you *believe* everything I have been telling you, you will have a religion, but if you *think* about what I tell you and ask both me and other people questions—and most of all ask yourself questions—you will have a philosophy. And really there is no better religion—that is, nothing that makes men get along better together—than philosophy. The philosopher can appreciate good in all religions and yet not feel that he belongs to any single one of them. We can love Good without being always worried about Evil, and besides, it is not fear that will help us to escape evil, but only understanding."

FRONTIERS
Science and Society

THE idea of applying "science" to the problems of the modern world is being proposed with so much insistence and increasing frequency these days that some discussion of it seems in order. The proposals obviously reflect, among other things, the good will and growing sense of social responsibility felt by scientists as a group. One spokesman for the profession, Dr. E. U. Condon of the National Bureau of Standards, said recently:

> . . . the greatest contribution to real security that science can make is through the extension of the scientific method to the social sciences and a solution of the problem of complete avoidance of war.

The implication, here, is that physicists and perhaps biologists know how to use the scientific method, but that social scientists do not. This is probably true, in the sense that physical scientists have considerable practical knowledge of the materials and forces with which they must deal, while social scientists are only beginners at understanding the materials and forces in their field—the behavior of human beings. The physicist, for example, asked for facts concerning the properties of certain metals, will get samples of the metals, look up what is already known on the subject, run some tests, and make his report. In most cases, the metals behave the way the physicist says they will, under specified conditions. For the purpose of technology, the physicist knows what "matter" is. He has no philosophical definition of matter to offer, but technology is not interested in philosophical definitions. Iron, hydrogen, or uranium may be some sort of reflection on earth of Platonic archetypes, or they may be some kind of "frozen" patterns of energy—the technologist doesn't care. He has to make a bomb or a plowshare with them, and he knows what to do.

Such knowledge has been gained through science as Dr. Condon defines it, namely—"the process of studying and the results of study of the facts of experience derived from a conscious program of observing, while systematically varying the factors of a given situation in order to arrive at a rational understanding of the observational data so obtained."

The question arises, Is this the sort of scientific method that needs to be extended to the social sciences? Or, making the question personal, How would *you* like to be "systematically varied" so that the sum total of social science may be increased?

The fact is that while physicists have a practical, working definition of matter, social scientists have no practical, working definition of man, and Dr. Condon, it seems to us, wants the latter to use the methods of the physicists on man. He doesn't say this, of course, but it is possible, we think, to show that this is what he really means. In the article quoted, he is writing on "Science and Security" *(Science,* June 25**,** 1948), and early in his discussion he deplores the reluctance of even civilized" peoples to allow effective use of the scientific method in the political, economic and social areas. In other words, as another writer in *Science* subsequently pointed out, not enough people will voluntarily subject themselves to the "controls" necessary for scientific techniques in human relations, so that, in order to have practical social science, "legislative action establishing it would be required."

Quite evidently, many scientists have the habit of thinking in terms of "control" of their "material." Either by persuasion or by coercion, people will have to learn to behave in experimental patterns set up by hypothesis, so that the conclusions necessary to social science may be drawn. But what are the "properties" of human beings? Here, the scientist can no longer ignore possible philosophical definitions of his "material," as he does in physics and technology, for if human beings have properties which may be called *moral,* the problem of control is essentially altered. Morality has to do with self-control, not external manipulation. Instead of establishing the conditions for scientific certainty, external control of human beings might have the effect of masking the moral realities of life, which would actually prevent any discoveries concerning the moral qualities of man. Something of this sort seems to have happened under the rule of the

communist dictatorship in Russia, where external control of scientific inquiry (along with other forms of behavior) has suppressed almost completely an important branch of biological science—the field of formal genetics. (See *Science* for Jan. 28 for the reprint of an editorial from *Isvestia* in which Soviet biologists are commanded to renounce the reactionary "idealist" and "racist" theories of Mendel, Weissman and Morgan, or face the prospect of being purged from Soviet science and education.) It will be said, of course, that the external controls exercised over the people of Russia are not "scientific" at all, and this is doubtless true, but they nevertheless represent a *theory* of control by outside authority, scientific or not, and it should be remembered that the ideological authority claimed by the communists derives from what has been named "scientific socialism," so that the control is at least in the name of scientific knowledge.

What sort of controls would a scientist want to apply in a democratic society—or in a society which says it is democratic, and where some of the people are trying to be democratic? As Dr. Condon's article on "Science and Security" is handy, we quote it again. "I believe," he says, "that there is no way to deal with this greatest threat of modern war to our security than to face the facts, as calmly and courageously as we can, but also to face them squarely and honestly, trying to work out solutions to our problems in a rational way," That sounds like the scientific spirit. But a little later, he says: "We are committed to a policy in which we depend on military strength to reduce the likelihood of war." It seems fair to ask a scientist who deplores the reluctance of civilized people to accept scientific method whether or not this "policy" is soundly based on scientific fact. Further, is it "rational," "courageous" "and honest" to accept this policy without any question at all? Or are we to display these sterling qualities only *after* the national policy has been determined by supra-scientific minds whose judgments are above criticism or reproach?

Suppose, for a moment, that a research body—like that to be established at Harvard University to study the altruistic behavior of human beings—were to investigate the genesis of war "scientifically" and produced the conclusion that dependence upon military strength as a means of avoiding war is a blindly irrational policy based upon nationalist and militarist delusions instead of the facts of human experience. Dr. Sorokin, who will head the new research institute at Harvard, has already gone a step toward this conclusion in his statement, "Unless persons and groups become more unselfish, peace is impossible and new catastrophes are likely to be unavoidable." Dr. Sorokin, a sociologist of some repute, might also point out that extensive preparation for war, through armament building and military training programs, has always led to war in the past, and will doubtless do so in the future. At any rate, historical evidence gives more support to this analysis than to the expectation, repeated by Dr. Condon, that military strength will "reduce the likelihood of war." This being the case, a scientific approach to the elimination of war should begin by challenging the validity of this policy.

It should at once be said that a few scientists have already questioned the program of militarization, but, interestingly enough, they are not, so far as we know, among those who are campaigning for a world ruled by the social scientists. Such scientists do not conceive the problems of the modern world as calling for "controls" and the "management" of masses of human beings by trained "social scientists," however well-intentioned. They seem to understand that social science, to be worth anything at all, has also to be moral science, which means that it will take into account the fact that while an externally controlled physical system represents a kind of scientific perfection, an externally controlled social system would be a denial that any such thing as a human being exists at all.

But there is no reason to assume that a scientific approach to social problems is impossible. Rather, the postulates of social science need reformation. Once man is recognized as primarily a moral being, the facts and laws of human relations can be conceived in moral terms, and this, we think, would be the basis for constructive social science.