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RATIONALISIM—THEN AND NOW

HAVING on several occasions devoted attention to Humanism—noting its Renaissance origins in the philosophic credo of Pico della Mirandola, and questioning the apparent satisfaction of contemporary scientific Humanists with present-day assumptions about human nature—we thought that the somewhat similar attitude of "Rationalism" should be examined. This turned out to be a slippery subject. In these pages, "rational" usually appears as an adjective of approbation—the *rational* view of a matter being the sound view. But rationalism has plainly another feeling-tone. We found the best account of this distinction in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics:*

> Rationalism, says A. W. Benn, means the hostile criticism of theological dogma, "the mental habit of using reason for the destruction of religious belief." [Benn continues:] "Custom has ruled that the submission of belief to pure reason shall be called rationality in reference to every branch of natural knowledge, and rationalism only when it leads to the rejection of those supernaturalist beliefs with which religion has become identified." . . . The usage involves us in obvious difficulties. An argument will or will not be rationalistic, not according to its intrinsic contents alone, but according to the intention of the user or to its effects upon the hearer. . . .

It appears that Rationalism means the use of reason in some form of special pleading—or has usually meant this in the past. As the Hastings writer comments, quoting C. C. J. Webb:

> In rationalism in this sense "reason holds off, as it were, from trying to comprehend what is most characteristic in religious experience. Instead of allowing the paradoxical nature of religious doctrines to be provocative to it and to stimulate it to further effort, the rationalistic understanding makes it a ground for refusing to consider them further. . . .

Before we attempt to illustrate this kind of "rationalism" from the history of Western thought, it will be well to acknowledge some of its benefits. The anti-theological drive in the scientific speculations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was, after all, not a malicious hate of spiritual ideas, but a defensive maneuver on the part of men who were determined to maintain their intellectual freedom. As Bertrand Russell remarked in his introduction to Frederick Lange's *History of Materialism* (1925):

> Historically, we may regard materialism as a system of dogma set up to combat orthodox dogma. As a rule, the materialistic dogma has not been set up by men who loved dogma, but by men who felt that nothing less definite would enable them to fight the dogmas they disliked. They were in the position of men who raise armies to enforce peace.

So Rationalism, on this view, is a mixture of honest blows for freedom and polemical devices calculated to lay low a particular enemy of freedom—the traditional Christian theology. On the whole, the freedom has been worth the polemics. We could hardly do without the writings of Lamettrie and Baron d' Holbach in the eighteenth century, and of W. E. H. Lecky and Henry T. Buckle in the nineteenth. It is only when the polemical stance is itself taken as a place of beginning for a philosophy of life that we discover its lack of any foundation for affirmations concerning the good.

David Hume's use of "reason" is a pertinent example of the reductionism of rationalistic inquiry. Three of his arguments have had an extensive influence on modern thought. One of these, quoted in MANAS for July 10, is the contention, developed in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, that there is no integral subject or identity at the center of the human being. According to Hume, individuality does not exist, the self being "nothing but a bundle of perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and which are in a perpetual flux and movement."

The instability of the impressions he encountered when he sought to experience "himself" led him to assert that man is, in terms of consciousness, a "nonentity."

The second argument appears in the revised edition of the *Treatise,* titled *An Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding* (1748). Here we find both forms of Rationalism—the good kind, which attempts to judge every important human conception before the bar of reason; and the bad kind, which in the name of reason refuses to examine fairly ideas which threaten the security and comfort of the Rationalist position. This latter form of argument is analyzed in detail by Ralph Pomeroy in a recent paper, "Hume on the Testimony of Miracles" *(Speech Monographs,* March, 1962; XXIX, 1) .

In the tenth section of *Inquiry,* Hume turns his basic distrust of revealed religion into an attempt to discredit its foundations, which are, he explains, miraculous occurrences. A "miracle," in his view, is "a violation of the laws of nature," or any event "contrary to uniform experience," and finally, "a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent." Obviously, Hume is taking no chances. He is not satisfied with insisting upon the constancy of natural law, but adds the "unfamiliar" or not previously or widely experienced event to the category of miraculous happenings, and he tries to clinch his safeguards of the world of Naturalism by making not only the Deity, but any "invisible agent," the supposed author of Miracles. A free interpretation might suggest that Hume is here anticipating the claim of some hypothetical deity's capacity to enact new "laws of nature," and refuting it in advance. He is also saying, indirectly, that the laws of nature have already been well established by human experience, so that "miracles" can have no status as instances of the operation of some hitherto unknown law. It follows that if someone insists that he has "seen" an event which might be termed a miracle, this claim can have no weight against the much more numerous denials of those who have not seen it.

Hume's position is summarized by Mr. Pomeroy:

> 1. No "miracle" has ever been found attested to by a sufficient number of unimpeachable witnesses.
>
> 2. Widespread belief in "miracles" is adequately accounted for by an almost universal pleasure or "passion" of surprise and wonder.
>
> 3. A strong presumption against all "supernatural and miraculous relations" as that they are observed "chiefly to abound among ignorant and barbarous nations" (or among civilized people who originally received them from "ignorant and barbarous ancestors").
>
> 4. An "infinite number of witnesses" has opposed the testimony for every "miracle"—so that not only does "the miracle destroy the credit of the testimony, but the testimony destroys itself."

No theology, however inflexible, had ever a system more securely closed than this!

How did Hume get away with it? He did it invoking the *odium theologicum* shared by many if not most thinking men from that day to this

Well, then, what is wrong with Hume's position? Is not the rejection of "miracles" sound enough, on any basis? It is sound, one must admit, so long as it is a principled rejection which holds that any finite happening in a lawful universe can and must be examined in terms of cause and effect. But this logical objection, which all rational men are obliged to make, is stretched by Hume into a studied neglect of a wide variety of happenings—the entire range of psychical phenomena. Hume, in short, wanted so badly to establish what he thought to be the conditions of sensible, "rational," scientific progress, that he was willing to curtail the universe and set limiting definitions to the possible. By this means, he hoped to protect the natural world forever from invasion by any "supernatural agent." His was a strained work of naturalistic piety. He put a firm ceiling on what many of today's rationalists and humanists term "Reliable Knowledge," and helped

to create a sectarianism which keeps truly free-thinking individuals out of any camp of approved scientistic opinion.

There is of course a defense that may be made for the reluctance of the main body of scientific thinkers to accept innovation. Scientific facts, it is said, are established by long research and infinite care. They are the product of men who take their work very seriously and who bear responsibility to the common scientific ideal. Accordingly, acceptance of the claim of a new discovery cannot be bought cheaply. The claim must be *proved*, and proved in the terms of established criteria. The stability of the entire scientific project depends upon the rigor of the scientific method and the demand that it be applied.

This argument has obvious merits, but what is at issue, in relation to David Hume and to those for whom he became the champion of a sound and sober rationalism, is not so much a question of proper proofs as of a proper willingness to look at evidence in an impartial frame of mind. Eighty-seven years ago, when the data of psychical research were widely rejected by workers in scientific fields, Alfred Russel Wallace, who shared with Darwin the distinction of having discovered the law of evolution, wrote a book contesting the indifference of Hume, Lecky, and others to the psychical phenomena of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Early in this book (*Miracles and Modern Spirit*ualism, London: 1875), Lord Wallace wrote:

> Another objection which I have heard stated in public, and received with applause, is, that it requires immense scientific knowledge to decide on the reality of any uncommon or incredible facts, and that till scientific men investigate and prove them they are not worthy of credit. Now I venture to say that a greater fallacy than this was never put forth. The subject is very important, and the error is very common, but the fact is the exact opposite of what is stated; for I assert without fear of contradiction, that whenever the scientific men of any age have denied the facts of investigators on *a priori* grounds, *they have always been wrong.*
>
> It is not necessary to do more than refer to the world-known names of Galileo, Harvey, and Jenner. The great discoveries they made were, as we know, violently opposed by all their scientific contemporaries, to whom they appeared absurd and incredible; but we have equally striking examples much nearer to our own day. When Benjamin Franklin brought the subject of lightning conductors before the Royal Society, he was laughed at as a dreamer, and his paper was not admitted to the *Philosophical Transactions.* When Young put forth his wonderful proofs of the undulatory theory of light, he was equally hooted at as absurd by the popular scientific writers of the day. The *Edinburgh Review* called upon the public to put Thomas Gray into a strait jacket for maintaining the practicability of railroads. Sir Humphrey Davy laughed at the idea of London ever being lighted with gas. When Stephenson proposed to use locomotives on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, learned men gave evidence that it was impossible that they could go even twelve miles an hour. Another great scientific authority declared it to be equally impossible for ocean steamers ever to cross the Atlantic. The French Academy of Sciences ridiculed the great astronomer Arago, when he wanted even to discuss the subject of the electric telegraph. Medical men ridiculed the stethoscope when it was first discovered. Painless operations during the mesmeric coma were pronounced impossible, and therefore impostures. . .

It would seem that very little can be said in behalf of a conservatism which requires discoverers and innovators to run this sort of gauntlet before their findings receive serious attention. Yet the Humean foundation of modern Rationalism establishes just such a requirement.

An indisposition to inspect facts, or matters claimed to be facts, of a certain order, is thus one characteristic of modern Rationalism. Another trait which emerges in connection with the attempt of psychic researchers to obtain a hearing is a deep suspicion of any "facts" which are offered without the support of an explanatory theory. It is of some importance that not all the investigators of psychic events have been Spiritualists. From the days of William Crookes to the present researches of J. B. Rhine, the ranks of psychic researchers have been marked by the presence of men who made no pretense of

understanding the causes of psychic phenomena, but who assembled a plain record of what they found, leaving the question of theory or explanation to later workers. But this refusal to make hypotheses (despite the prior example of Isaac Newton), instead of being recognized as a proper empirical approach, was condemned as a weakness. In the *American Scholar* for the Winter of 1938-39, Joseph Jastrow, who was very nearly the "dean" of the then prevailing school of psychology, summed up the objections held by himself and most of his colleagues by saying that scientific disbelief in telepathy was based upon "a profound philosophical conviction." He administered the *coup de grace* to the parapsychologists working at Duke University by quoting approvingly the words of another psychologist:

> "ESP [extra sensory perception] is so contrary to the general scientific world picture, that to accept the former would compel the abandonment of the latter. I am unwilling to give up the body of scientific knowledge so painfully acquired in the Western world during the last 300 years, on the basis of a few anecdotes and a few badly reported experiments."

Some sixty-five years before, a more thoughtful and, certainly, a more self-conscious scientist, had made the following comment in a letter to William Crookes (concerning Crookes' reports on his own experiments in psychic phenomena):

> Any *intellectual* reply to your facts I cannot see. Yet it is a curious fact that even 1, with all my tendency and desire to believe spiritualistically, and with all my faith in your power of observing and your thorough truthfulness, feel as if I wanted to see for myself; and it is quite painful to me to think how much more proof I want. Painful, I say, because I see that it is not reason which convinces a man, unless a fact be repeated so frequently that the impression becomes like a habit of mind, an old acquaintance, a thing known so long that it cannot be doubted. This is a curious phase of man's mind, and it is remarkably strong in scientific men—stronger than in others, I think. For this reason we must not always call a man dishonest because he does not yield to evidence for a long time. The old wall of belief must be broken down by much battering.

We begin, now, to see the complexity of what may be called "group opinions," or the "mind-set" of an age.

What, in this perspective, are the elements of modern Rationalism? First, we may say, is the deep-lying motive of insistence upon freedom of mind. This is the first principle, the *sine qua non*, of rationalism of any sort. Second is an uncompromising antagonism to any form of supernaturalism—to, that is, any assumption which undercuts the independence of rational or scientific investigation. This corollary of the first principle has its meaning and impact summed up by the expression of Spinoza: "The will of God is the asylum of ignorance."

The third attribute of Rationalism is an uncritical adherence to the materialistic assumptions (and to the implied but unacknowledged metaphysic) of nineteenth-century science, as representing the sort of "Reality" which could be expected to outlaw supernaturalism in any of its forms. The familiar idea of "objective" truth—growing out of the "primary qualities" of physical bodies (Galileo), the strict separation of mind and body (Descartes), and the World Machine erected on the laws of motion (Newton)—became almost the sole criterion of valid scientific investigation, driving men like Freud to insist on mechanistic formulas (he was determined, of course, to show that psychoanalysis was "scientific"), and reaching a manifest *reductio ad absurdum* in the Behavioristic psychology of Pavlov and John B. Watson early in the twentieth century. An apt summary of the general consequences of these views for modern thought, and for mankind, is provided in an essay (*Nature and Life*) by Alfred North Whitehead:

> Newton's methodology for physics was an overwhelming success. But the forces which he introduced left Nature still without meaning or value. In the essence of a material body—in its mass, motion, and shape—there was no reason for a law of gravitation. . . . he left all the factors of the system—more particularly, mass and stress—in the position of

> detached facts devoid of any reason for their compresence. He thus illustrated a great philosophic truth, that a dead Nature can give no reasons. A dead Nature aims at nothing. It is the essence of life that it exists for its own sake, as the intrinsic reaping of value. . . . Combining Newton and Hume we obtain a barren concept, namely, a field of perception devoid of any data for its own interpretation, and a system of interpretation devoid of any reason for the concurrence of its factors. . . . The Hume-Newton situation is the primary presupposition for all modern philosophic thought. Any endeavor to go behind it is, in philosophic discussion, almost angrily rejected as unintelligible.
>
> My aim . . . is briefly to point out how both Newton's contribution and Hume's contribution [Prof. Whitehead here has reference to Hume's analysis of sense perception in relation to causality, rather than his discussion of miracles] are, each in their own way, gravely defective. They are right as far as they go. But they omit those aspects of the universe as experienced, and of our modes of experiencing, which jointly lead to the more penetrating ways of understanding. In the recent situations at Washington, D.C. [Whitehead wrote this in 1934], the Hume-Newton modes of thought can only discern a complex transition of sense, and an entangled locomotion of molecules. While the intuition of the whole world discerns the President of the United States inaugurating a new chapter in the history of mankind. In such ways the Hume-Newton interpretation omits our intuitive modes of understanding.

This is reasoning which all modern Rationalists should take to heart. Their illustrious ancestors in intellectual history did well by us all in eliminating a supernatural God as a factor in physical or historical causation, but, as their doctrines were developed, they also eliminated *Man*. A time is reached when the irrationality of this consequence becomes manifest. That time is now.

REVIEW
WHOSOEVER SHALL LOSE HIS LIFE

AND A TIME TO DIE, by Mark Pelgrin, edited by Dr. Sheila Moon and Dr. Elizabeth B. Howes (Contact Editions, 1962), is a personal chronology of dying. It is neither light nor comforting reading; it is neither great literature, nor is it about a great man. These facts all point to the importance of Mark Pelgrin's attempt to find meaning in his life and in his death: it is immediately relevant for most of us.

Mark Pelgrin lived and worked in Northern California; he was a husband and the father of four children; he taught in college and was instructed by his students; he played the jazz piano professionally and spent much of his leisure time in his garden or in the high Sierras; he was planning to write a book—a "biography" of the Central Valley; he painted well enough to impress his friends and amuse himself; he favored the poems of T. S. Eliot; he often drank and smoked too much and felt guilty about it when he did; he worried about his relationships with his children, particularly his sons; he died of cancer of the pancreas at the age of forty-seven.

There are at least two conflicting impressions in this book. This intelligent, verbally skillful man managed somehow in death what he had failed to achieve in life: meaning, *logos.* That he died well (not in the Hemingway tradition, but in terms of larger human goals) is undeniable. But his search, insofar as it is written down, contains few clues, no really arresting insights, and no new dimensions concerning a personal confrontation with death, nor any about the social, emotional, or psychological implications of death. Certainly he had not intended writing a tome, a definitive exploration. He agreed to have this material published only by nodding his head, so near the end was he when his analyst decided to ask him. Still, he was trying as hard as he knew how to communicate what was happening to him; and he was deeply involved with the phenomena. The search was a success, but the communication of it was not.

There is a certain irony here. Mark Pelgrin had the intellectual skills, the emotional control and depth, and the time to set down his search and his findings. He had the ability, the temperament, and the nerve to make a significant contribution to an understanding of death, but he largely failed. Why? Well, after all, he was dying. Perhaps language failed him. It is certain that experience transcends language on all fronts; paradox lives better than it writes.

His attempt was heroic, but traditional. He repeated himself over and over again (often enough to desensitize this reader to some of what he said), as will a person with an incomprehensible fact who hopes, by repeating the dilemma out loud, or by writing it down, to understand it. His search was conducted within a predictable and traditional context: Jungian analysis, seminars on the life and teachings of Jesus from the Synoptic Gospels, studies of the Tao, the *Upanishads,* and the *Bhagavad-Gita.* In spite of the wide ranging scope of his search, he maintained, until very near the end, a kind of Jobian self-pity (which he duly acknowledged): why me? This seemed out of place, if familiarly human. It may be a result, in part at least, of his traditional belief in a God. This faith was unconventional only to the degree that Mark Pelgrin had an unconventional imagination, intelligence, and energy with which to "fill out" his conception of God. But finally conceived, his God is familiar and would not be a stranger to a good Baptist, or a Catholic novice.

His efforts to synthesize his life experience in terms of these religious and psychological structures left this reader with the feeling that the experience of death was, for him, incommunicable; that Mark Pelgrin was, in the last year of his life, more anxious about his inability to communicate what was happening to him, than about death itself.

The last part of the book—the description by his analyst of his last few hours—is intensely moving and seems to indicate, to me at least, the existence of another level of awareness for both the dying man and those who waited with him. As I read the account, I felt a kind of frustration as I sensed that Mark Pelgrin (and his relatives and friends entranced by him) knew something of vital importance, but without knowing he knew it. Perhaps there are

patterns in us all (and they would be old and basic and probably unfamiliar in a world that idealizes in terms of a Forest Lawn) that "know" so thoroughly about death that all the trappings of Eastern Philosophy, all the intellectualizations of modern psychology, and all the interpretations of the life and sayings of Jesus, cannot disturb this "knowledge."

This "knowledge" does not seem to alleviate the pain of loss, but it does, perhaps, make loss bearable: not total. This may sound like an interpretation based on magic bred of optimism growing out of wishful thinking. For death is often (how often, it would be interesting to know) a terrifying experience. But is the terror something experienced by the dying, or only by the relatives and friends left behind? To what degree is the terror superficial to this primordial "knowledge"? In the same way that such "knowledge" makes loss bearable, may not it also be the primary reason one is able to sustain terror? We do know life in a way so intimately that it is a kind of personal assumption of being. We assume breaths, heartbeats, the drama of metabolism, the persistent life and death of all the cells we are, etc. The whole process imparts a "knowledge" of life, and perhaps we have a similar knowledge of death: movement and rest are inextricably dependent.

As I read this book, it seemed that Mark Pelgrin was, right up to the very last minutes of his life (when he could not talk, just moments before he died, he "asked" for pencil and paper and drew, with what must have been terrible effort, a circle and then a cross), trying to-intellectualize (for communication) that which is probably not intellectualizeable. His efforts gave him something to occupy his mind; the total process over a year or two undoubtedly opened him up to a fuller ability to feel and find meaning in his death. It was an heroic effort in the Promethean tradition.

But I wondered why he had bothered to write these experiences down in the first place. We are all the richer, but why the need to translate into language such crucial personal data? He said that it was to help him come to grips with the ideas and feelings represented by the words, but are not words inevitably removed from the experience in such a way as to limit the experience and to frame solutions (if the experience is in the form of a question) within needlessly narrow confines? And why in expository, discursive writing? This material would have indicated expression in more flexible, open-ended forms: perhaps fiction, or, more likely, allegorical poetry. Exposition was too small a tool for his job. True, he was dying, but why write anything at all if the experience written about can only be deflected, made into an analog, and abstracted by writing?

I would think that total engagement with such an experience would have precluded a diary. I am not doubting his sincerity, nor his ability, but I am amazed, frankly, at the persistence of the chronically intellectual factor to dominate and to conceptualize in the face of such an intense and non-intellectual experience as death, particularly given the fact that Mark Pelgrin was consciously trying not to do so. It was as though he knew no other way than to compulsively translate (and thereby in part lose) experience into words.

All through the book, as death approaches, the unsaid portions have more meaning than that which is said. Mark Pelgrin found meaning in his death because he "knew" about death, but I do not feel that he knew he did until the very last. This book fills a need, no matter how repetitive, frustrating, and compulsive. There is virtually no literature of death; there has been very little serious study of death by psychologists or others. And if St. Luke had it right (and Mark Pelgrin thought so), the connection between life and death is intimate and vital: "Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."

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COMMENTARY
THE ART OF THE PHILOSOPHER

IT was Plato, repeated by Montaigne, who said, "The art of the philosopher consists in learning how to die easily." For reasons which hardly need repeating, this has not been a popular saying in modern times. The tendency, until recently, has been in the opposite direction. The meaning of death has not been sought by modern thinkers, but has been almost totally ignored, since death, as the end of life, has seemed the very negation of meaning. Not Socrates, with his disdain of fear of death, his confidence that it can bring no evil, but Bertrand Russell, with his expectation of nothingness, of total erasure of the man that was, has been the guide of modern man.

Yet the past few years have seen a number of essays in the direction of understanding death. One wonders why. Something more is involved, here, than a longing for personal escape from extinction. There are plenty of "beliefs" in another life which can be bought cheaply enough—with only a little lowering of the bars raised by rationalistic skepticism. But these people—Mark Pelgrin is one of them—are after another kind of understanding.

Our reviewer, William Mathes, may have caught a glimpse of the kind of knowledge we long to make more explicit when he speaks of organic patterns in us (possibly "psycho-organic" patterns) which have as much familiarity with death as with life, and which "know" at least a part of its meaning in the way that a bird knows how to sing.

Elsewhere he seems to be saying, or hinting, that there is a part of us that does not fear death. Years ago, when doctors gave ether to children before taking out their tonsils or adenoids, the young patients would sometimes fight off the ether bag; to lose consciousness unwillingly is a fearsome thing. But you learn from experience that such sleeps are temporary. Perhaps there is an organic wisdom—more awake in some than in others—which rises in the dying with assurance that this sleep is also temporary—or that, in the great economy of life, no primal energy of being, no essence of intelligence which longs for a habitation, can be cast aside or permanently frustrated.

What is uniquely the case in modern times is that a man does not want to be *told* this; he wants somehow to know it, or perhaps simply to feel it, for himself.

So, instead of calling in religious specialists, he makes inquiries of himself. He may inspect distinguished dialogues other men have held with themselves, on death and other subjects, but for *knowledge* he tries to reach inside.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
WALDEN TWO REVISITED

B. F. SKINNER'S behavioral-engineering Utopia has been provocative of a great deal of discussion. First published in 1948, the book's picture of an ideal community reflects high confidence in the ability of the psychological scientist to *make* human beings in the image of healthful rationality. Here is the apotheosis of manipulation of the human psyche, a sort of benevolent dictatorship of method. While we have shared with Dr. Skinner's critics their distaste for his underlying philosophy, a rereading of *Walden Two* has made us aware of another dimension in the book.

At times, *Walden Two* furnishes encouragement to pioneers in educational communities founded on quite other views of the nature of man. For example:

> We can adopt the best educational methods and still avoid the administrative machinery which schools need in order to adjust to an unfavorable social structure. We don't have to worry about standardization in order to permit pupils to transfer from one school to another, or to appraise or control the work of particular schools. We don't need "grades." Everyone knows that talents and abilities don't develop at the same rate in different children. A fourth-grade reader may be a sixth-grade mathematician. The grade is an administrative device which does violence to the nature of the developmental process. Here the child advances as rapidly as he likes in any field.

"Dr. Frazier," Skinner's fictional expounder and founder of Walden Two, insists that there is no genuine distinction between education at the primary, secondary or collegiate levels, since there are no "natural breaks" in the child's development. The work of the university, on this view, is to provide a survey of the methods and techniques of thinking, "taken from logic, statistics, scientific method, psychology, and mathematics." Students who want to learn, then, proceed by way of the library and laboratory. Since Walden Two is comparatively small as an "educational institution," the question naturally arises as to the adequacy of such library or laboratory facilities. Dr. Frazier continues:

> As to a library, we pride ourselves on having the best books, if not the most. Have you ever spent much time in a large college library? What trash the librarian has saved up in order to report a million volumes in the college catalogue! Bound pamphlets, old journals, ancient junk that even the shoddiest secondhand bookstore-would clear from its shelves—all saved on the flimsy pretext that some day someone will want to study the "history of a field." Here we have the heart of a great library—not much to please the scholar or specialist, perhaps, but enough to interest the intelligent reader for life. Two or three thousand volumes will do it.
>
> The secret is this. We subtract from our shelves as often as we add to them. The result is a collection that never misses fire. We all get something vital every time we take a book from the shelves. If anyone wants to follow a special interest we arrange for loans. If anyone wants to browse, we have half a barnful of discarded volumes.

From such considerations, Dr. Frazier gets into the area of philosophy through the back door, his adversary in discussion being a rather pompous professional author of philosophical monographs. Philosopher Castle admits that the stylized routines of university matriculation are a kind of "dance of death," so far as the intellect is concerned. Then, seeking to trap Frazier, he probes further:

> "I confess with all the humility I can muster," said Castle, "that the kind of learning you've described is the better—if a comparison is possible. It's the ideal which every college teacher glimpses now and then. But I can't swallow the system you've described because I don't see what keeps the motors running. Why do your children learn anything at all? What are your substitutes for our standard motives?"
>
> "Your 'standard motives'—exactly," said Frazier. "And there's the rub. An educational institution spends most of its time, not in presenting facts or imparting techniques of learning, but in trying to make its students learn. It has to create spurious needs. Have you ever stopped to analyze them? What are the 'standard motives,' Mr. Castle?"

Castle. "I suppose they consist of fear of one's family in the event of low grades or expulsion, the award of the cash value of a diploma."

"Very good, Mr. Castle," said an honest man. And now to answer your question—our substitute is simply the absence of these devices. *uncover* the worthwhile and truly creative work in science and art outside the academies. No one asks how to motivate a baby. A unless restraining forces have already been at work. And this tendency doesn't lie out, it's out."

Some controversy is provided by the Two approach to "the problem of sex" in adolescence "solved" by child-bearing and onwards. Frazier undertakes to explain:

at fifteen or sixteen," he said. "We like to ridicule 'puppy love.' We say it won't last! A thousand forces nature, either, but of a badly organized society.

"Sex is no problem in itself. Here the adolescent natural impulses. It's a solution which is productive, honorable, and viewed by the community with secrecy and shame which most of us recall in connection with sex at some time or other! of unnecessary problems, unnecessary delays. It should be brief and painless and we make it so in

"All your schemes to keep the adolescent out of trouble—your 'wholesome' substitutes for sex! What substitute? What's wrong with love, or marriage, or parenthood? You don't solve anything by delay—you aberrations which follow are easily recognized, but there is a great deal more. A normal sexual element in sex is played up—every person of the opposite sex becomes a challenge to seduction. That's Promiscuous aggression is no more natural than quarrelsomeness, or an inclination to tease, or jovial game or hunt before you let it become serious, how can you expect a sane attitude later on?"

young, though?" said Barbara.

"Easier," said had several at a tender age. "We make sure, of course, that the girl is capable of normal

"How long does she go on having babies?"

"As long as she likes, but generally no longer be finished with childbearing by the time she's twenty-two or -three. That's not too fast, because she she will probably work in the nursery for her daily stint, and because she gets top medical attention. At and spirit as if she had spent the same years unmarried. Her adult life opens up to her with many on a par with men. She has made the special contribution which is either the duty or the privilege of sex. You may have noticed the complete equality of men and women among us. There are scarcely any

We have plenty of ideative difficulty with Dr. even though the foregoing criticisms of societal training of the young seem to us either valid or— Frazier's "materialism" is revealed by such passages as the differences in individual capacity harmonious with basic materialist propositions:

Frazier, "have all had the same environment since birth, but the range of large. This seems to be true of other abilities and skills as well."

Castle.

"Why do you say 'of course?' " said marked interest.

"Why, I suppose because physical differences

"All differences are physical, my dear Mr. Castle. We think with our bodies, too. You might have replied that differences in prowess have always been obvious and impossible to conceal, while other differences have customarily been disguised for the sake of prestige and family pride."

To "place" Dr. Skinner in terms of his total point of view, we should include the following:

"Now," Frazier continued earnestly, "if it's in our power to create any of the situations which a person likes or to remove any situation he doesn't like, we can control his behavior. When he behaves as we want him to behave, we simply create a situation he likes, or remove one he doesn't like. As a result, the probability that he will behave that way again goes up, which is what we want. Technically it's called 'positive reinforcement.'

"We shall eventually find out," Frazier said, "not only what makes a child mathematical, but how to make better mathematicians! If we can't solve a problem, we can create men who can! And better artists! And better craftsmen!" He laughed and added quietly, "And better behaviorists, I suppose!

"And all the while we shall be improving upon our social and cultural design. We know almost nothing about the special capacities of the *group.* We all recognize that there are problems which can't be solved by an individual—not only because of limitations of time and energy but because the individual, no matter how extraordinary, can't master all the aspects, can't think thoughts big enough. Communal science is already a reality, but who knows how far it can go? Communal authorship, communal art, communal music—these are already exploited for commercial purposes, but who knows what might happen under freer conditions?"

On this aspect of *Walden Two,* we can do no better than repeat a quotation from Joseph Wood Krutch:

Mr. Skinner's Utopia is distinctly modern in that it puts its faith in the conditioned reflex and proposes to perfect mankind by making individual men incapable of anything except habit and prejudice. At Walden Two men behave in a fashion we are accustomed to call "reasonable," not because they reason, but because they do not; because "right responses" are automatic.

The good life which most desire is a life warmed by passions. Who, even in his imagination, would like to live in a community where, instead of thinking part of the time, one never found it possible to think at all?

FRONTIERS

Synanon—the Continued Story

NEARLY a year has elapsed since our last article on the Synanon Foundation (Nov. 14, 1962)—subsequently reprinted along with other articles by Walker Winslow in a MANAS pamphlet. Persistent interest on the part of a number of readers, and the further growth and expansion of Synanon itself, would seem to call for some notes on recent trends and accomplishments.

First of all, it has been abundantly demonstrated that this evolving framework for "self-help" among drug addicts is not fast-blooming and soon-dying; that the essential philosophy and practical dynamic of Synanon's therapeutic community are applicable in areas beyond that of narcotics addiction—and that appreciation of this on the part of the general public cannot be easily turned to suspicion or hostility by adverse propaganda.

In Reno, Nevada, for example, a "get-rid-of-Synanon" campaign, spurred by the sort of reactionary sentiment which compulsively attacks every progressive educational effort, spluttered and died after achieving only a few minor harassments. The Reno anti- and pro-Synanon battle was a definite milestone, because the Synanon people did not have to fight for themselves; as soon as it became known that the directors of Synanon would pull out of Reno unless they could be allowed a functioning residence, an impressive cross-section of Nevada citizenry rushed to Synanon's defense. The Warden of the Nevada State Penitentiary and various prominent individuals did not *want* Synanon to leave, so now Reno's Synanon House stands vindicated and heartily endorsed, bigger and better than ever.

This triumph was hardly undeserved. Following a precedent established in the federal jail at Terminal Island in Southern California, a Synanon team was invited to set up a therapeutic program within the Nevada State prison. So encouraging were the results that a whole cell-block was converted into a within-the-walls Synanon colony, and the progress accomplished in the prison itself led to the incorporation of a synanon system in the nearby honor farm. Most important, it soon became clear that the "therapy" offered was not simply a specific for narcotics offenders; all varieties of repeater criminals began to take an interest, and at last computation it was found that some seventy per cent of the inmates benefiting from the Synanon dynamic had had nothing to do with narcotics—wholly justifying Lewis Yablonsky's title for his article in *Federal Probation*, "Synanon, the Anti-Criminal Society."

Synanon outposts in Westport, Conn., and San Diego, Calif., are flourishing in excellent locations, with another Synanon well on the way to formation in New York City. In San Diego the chief problem for several months has been one of convincing practicing addicts in the area that the House is not some new kind of "trap" devised by law enforcement agencies, since the San Diego Chief of Police, the District Attorney, etc., etc.—and that venerable statesman of sports, Archie Moore—all appear on the Synanon letterhead as community sponsors.

In Santa Monica, however, the Foundation's foundation and original home, a new effort has been launched to oust these unwelcome and supposedly dangerous inhabitants. A number of irrationally oriented Synanon-haters have long been seeking to prove that zoning ordinances are after all being violated, and if righteous city politicos are successful, Synanon will be out of business in Santa Monica, with several of its houses forced to close. While such an eventuality could hardly be regarded as less than serious, there is no doubt in the present writer's mind that the Synanon communities can survive losing any number of such battles and still win their war against prejudice. The Synanon people simply have too much going for them, now; they have proved so much with what was originally so little; they have asked nothing from the authorities

except the right to exist—and have furnished the authorities, free of charge, the first major turn-back of narcotics addiction which can claim continuity.

We are moved to ask, here, just what it is in a man or a community which leads to suspicion or fear of Synanon. This is a psychological question, and possibly a fruitful one. An oblique approach to the matter is suggested by some researches into alcoholism by Du Pont. This huge organization, which employs 90,000 people, started a program for the rehabilitation of problem drinkers within the company some nineteen years ago—on psychiatric advice that an addict to alcohol is often a potentially very valuable man. A story in the Atlanta *Constitution* for Aug. 11 quotes the statement of a Du Pont official who explains this view:

> Make no mistake about it. The alcoholic is anything but degenerate. He is overambitious, a perfectionist, an idealist a searcher for a better world. He is usually a very good craftsman, a good mechanic, a good professional man. . . .
>
> The degree of alcoholism in our selling group is very low which may be quite contrary to what most people would think. Most salesmen are extroverts to start with, and that probably accounts for it. You are much more likely to find problem drinkers among the chemists, the engineers, the draftsmen, the creative people. The problem drinker, fully recovered, may be your company's president some day.

This analysis of the psychology of addiction is borne out by the results in "rehabilitation" achieved at Synanon—where it is common knowledge that addiction is the same internal problem, whatever the chemical used. And it also is known, on the basis of experience and incontrovertible data, that the narcotic addict or alcoholic who gets well does not simply return to '!normalcy!'—the emotional state he was in before he became a problem drinker or started using heroin. He either acquires an emotional balance radically more mature than he ever had before, or he plunges into a worse compromise with stress. So, the recovered addict often knows something that the average person doesn't know. An inadequate "image of self" has had to die for a new orientation to be born. Most people, it seems, hang on—literally, like grim death, and uncomfortably—to the same image of themselves with which they were cursed since adolescence. Now the true Self, as Buddha pointed out so long ago, *has* no image, and those who insist that it does are fearful, ignorant and violent.

This, it happens, is a good description of most of those who oppose Synanon by reflex, and that is precisely how political and religious reactionaries usually behave. It is no coincidence, for instance, that the Birch Society folks get pretty rabid for just folks when they find that addicts, who have really been "way out," now have the effrontery to stick their noses back into our red-blooded society, just as if they were as good as anyone else! If you have never been a Communist, or have never been a dope addict (or have been secretly afraid of going "way out" any time, though wanting to), you are *certainly* superior, and that superiority must be pointed out on every available occasion—especially since the distinction does not seem to be recognized by psychiatry. (That dirty old man Freud must have been a Communist, maybe an addict, too!)

Well, if the Synanon people ever learn to keep proper files, MANAS will be able to print (for motivation analysis) quotations from some anti-Synanon broadsides, but since Synanon is now too busy to indulge in the luxury of listing its enemies, the files on such matters are in extremely poor shape. Meanwhile, we can borrow from a classic study of neuroticism, Karen Horney's *Neurotic Personality of Our Time,* to illustrate (or illuminate) the behavior of the compulsive fearers and haters. The following is submitted as adequate explanation of why Synanon will continue to have things tough from time to time (and, of course, the explanation also serves for those who—otherwise incredibly—become hostile to MANAS):

> Logically the person on whom the neurotic's own hostile impulses will be projected is the person

against whom they are directed. The result is that

his mind, partly because such a person becomes endowed with the same quality of ruthlessness that

any danger the degree of potency depends not only on the factual conditions but also on the attitude taken

With the capacity of hostility to generate anxiety the relation between the two is not exhausted. The

its turn, when based on a feeling of being menaced easily provokes a reactive hostility in defense. In this

may equally provoke aggression. The reactive hostility too, if repressed, may create anxiety, and

also the basic reason why severe-neuroses so often become worse without any apparent difficult