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THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS:  
CHANGING STYLES IN AMERICAN  
BEST-SELLING GUIDES TO THE  
GOOD LIFE: 1929-1965

BY  
ROBERT WILSON

A dissertation submitted to the  
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## INTRODUCTION

Everyone is interested in happiness. The subject has intrigued all the great philosophical, religious, political and psychological writers. But when a middle-class American feels anxious or confused or dissatisfied does he turn to a writer of the stature of Freud, Augustine or Thoreau? It's unlikely. More probably, he will choose a Dale Carnegie, a Norman Vincent Peale or a Helen Gurley Brown, authors whose guides to the good life sold in the millions.<sup>1</sup> The fact that a guide to happiness became a best-seller indicates that it met some contemporary need. These books discussed issues which interested large numbers of Americans, in an idiom they understood. Thus the thirty-one best-selling guides published between 1929 and 1965 tell a good deal about how middle-class America viewed life.

All the best-selling guides agreed that it was possible to achieve a happier life if the reader cultivated the correct attitude and life style. But of course no two authors agreed on the exact content of the correct life style. It is informative to examine each writer's values. What did he think a human being needed, physically and psychologically, to be happy? What was his view of God? Did life have a purpose? Was there an after-life? When debating a point what sort of evidence would he accept? Did he clearly state his position on these basic issues, or did they remain unstated assumptions? What was his view of man? What shaped personality? Could

it be changed? And if so, how? Did the writer believe in free will or determinism? And what were his views of love, friendship, marriage, sex, divorce, family, education, work, society, politics, emotions, death, suicide, drugs, exercise, and diet? Did he accept conventional standards? Did he offer alternatives? Were there contradictions in his work? And what was his special appeal to American readers? Why did they buy his book and not someone else's?

Of course not all the best-sellers were aimed at exactly the same audience. In fact a great variety of opinion was expressed. And this in itself is informative for it indicates the tremendous complexity of the American culture. Among the best-sellers, one could find both advocates and opponents of religion, agnosticism, depth psychology, behaviorism, laissez faire capitalism, socialism, Social Darwinism, brotherly love, white supremacy, egalitarianism, sexual freedom, puritanism, faith healing, euthanasia, bourgeois hedonism and women's liberation.<sup>2</sup> But not all was flux. Certain patterns did emerge. For instance, between 1929 and 1965 there was a decided shift from an absolute to a relativistic standard of morality, encouraged by the growing popularity of modern psychology, and culminating in the open, amoral hedonism of Helen Gurley Brown. And while there was little criticism of the American economic system during the depression-riddled thirties, the attacks

on capitalism increased steadily both in number and fury after the Second World War.

As we study and compare the ideas expressed in these best-selling guides we learn a good deal about how many Americans saw themselves. We discover the goals they considered worthwhile, the problems they wanted to read about, and just as significant, what issues and facets of their personalities they ignored, or were unaware of. This information will help explain why they accepted certain economic, social, and political ideas while rejecting others. And why, on occasion, they changed their minds on some issues. It may also help define the American culture, locate its boundaries, and pinpoint its tensions. With luck, it might even help some of us find a little more happiness for ourselves.

## NOTES

1. A book will be considered a guide to the good life if it was designed to help people find happiness, was fairly broad in scope, and not restricted to specialized areas such as physical health, infant care, camping or sports. A book will be considered a best-seller if it appeared on the lists published each year by Publisher's Weekly of the ten best-selling, nonfiction hardcover and paperback books. (The magazine only began publishing the paperback list in 1962.)
2. Donald Meyer in The Positive Thinkers (New York: Anchor Books, 1966) dealt with several of the authors covered in this study including Norman Vincent Peale, Henry Link and Harry Emerson Fosdick, but Meyer's approach was quite different. Meyer was mainly interested in what he called "mind cures." and positive thinking. He wanted to explore how these religious beliefs undermined self-reliance and the effectiveness of what the Freudians termed the human ego. Meyer had very limited interest in comparing the positive thinkers to rival schools of happiness, or in probing the broad political, social, and economic implications of their ideas.

**Part One 1929 - 1945**



## CHAPTER I

Walter Lippmann

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Walter Lippmann was an optimistic liberal with a firm faith in the future of democracy. As Irwin Edman, the philosopher, wrote in 1929:

To that idealistic generation in college in the years just preceding the war Lippmann's writings appeared as the symbols and the exemplar of their faith and the method by which its objects were to be attained....Lippmann became the spokesman of that young liberalism nourished on the social science of Graham Wallas, and the philosophy of James, Dewey and Santayana.

The liberals of that era had been confident that they would master the "drift" and chaos of the world and create a free and fair society through creative intelligence. Then came the war, the Versailles peace, fascism, bolshevism, Gestalt-psychology, the fame of Einstein's theory of Relativity, the Republican administrations of Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, the rejuvenation of the Ku Klux Klan, and the stock market boom. Lippmann and many of the liberals became discouraged. They had failed to change society. In fact "drift" and chaos now seemed more pronounced than ever.<sup>1</sup>

Lippmann was convinced that advanced industrial civilization was in serious trouble. And it was no temporary crisis. Nor was it primarily concerned with economics. It went much deeper and was more pervasive than any economic dislocation.

The old values and life styles were simply not working. More and more people felt lost and unhappy. Their lives lacked joy, direction, purpose, and neither popular religion nor secular philosophy seemed capable of helping them. In A Preface to Morals, written before the Depression and published in 1929, Lippmann offered a possible solution, a new approach which might help lead men back toward a more satisfying life. But it is important to note that the book, a subsequent best-seller, was not directed to a mass audience, for Lippmann doubted that the great mass of men were capable of the independent effort his approach demanded. What would be required was beyond them. They needed guides to lead them into the promised land, rulers and teachers who could inspire them with the proper symbols of hope and fear. But what goals should mankind be directed toward? And what were the proper symbols and techniques? Corrective change was impossible unless these questions were answered. Thus Lippmann directed his book to an elite whom he considered capable of solving these problems and re-educating mankind. He called them moralists. It was their task to create and propagate the insights, techniques and symbols needed to change man. His book was a preface to their mission, an attempt to establish the ground rules of mankind's march to the good life.<sup>2</sup>

Lippmann's elitism was not typical of best-selling authors. In fact, between 1929 and 1965 only two other authors, Ernest

Dimnet in 1929, and Alexis Carrel in 1936, were disdainful of the democratic spirit; and for whatever reason--the impact of World War II, the failure of Fascism, the post-war affluence--no book which openly favored elites became a best-seller in the post-war era.

Lippmann began his critique by dismissing popular religion. But he was not angry at or contemptuous of religion; and he took no joy in exposing its decline. In fact, one critic noted that he seemed a bit sad at the decay of this traditional pillar of society. But reality had to be faced; "modernity" had destroyed man's disposition to believe in God. The modern spirit was too critical to support this ancient myth; it pictured religion as "a grandiose fiction projected by human needs and desires." Of course, as yet, not everyone agreed with the moderns, but all would succumb eventually, for the authority of the churches had been thoroughly undermined by the ideas introduced by the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, the growth of secular philosophy, the study of church history and comparative religions, the development of mass communications and the improvement of contraceptives. Even the modern churches' attempt to become more tolerant had damaged their hold on the masses. The average man found it "difficult to remain warmly convinced that the authority of any one sect is divine, when as a matter of

daily experience all sects have to be treated alike."<sup>3</sup>

Having certified the death of popular religion, Lippmann carefully probed the nature of liberal Christianity. Harry Emerson Fosdick believed that Lippmann saw the liberals as potential allies and converts. Lippmann pictured the liberals as too "modern" to accept the God of their fathers uncritically, but too timid to abandon him completely. They vainly attempted to preserve selected parts of the traditional experience after the facts which inspired it had been rejected. God was re-defined. He became the sum of all ideal values, or the goodness found in all men, or another name for the evolutionary process, all vague and unsatisfying concepts. The bible was now to be interpreted allegorically or symbolically. And prayer was no longer a petition to an anthropomorphic God but an attempt to assimilate the spirit of God. The traditional concepts of heaven and hell were especially difficult for many liberals to accept. They felt uneasy with a vengeful God, and they did not believe in life after death. And yet if one did not accept these traditional concepts, how would goodness be rewarded and evil punished. Lippmann compared their solution to Kant's. True, the existence of God cannot be demonstrated, the liberals admitted, but without God, there is no valid justification for morality. Thus heaven must exist if goodness is to be rewarded and evil

punished. But of course the whole temper of modernity was "to deny that what ought to be true necessarily is true." Lippmann wished the liberals would face reality. In any case, he advised them to stop using the word God, for it confused the issue, since their concepts were far too remote from the God men had traditionally worshipped.<sup>4</sup>

In the past, when one popular religion lost its influence, men sought out and acknowledged a new source of authority because they preferred authority and assurances to freedom. But Lippmann doubted that a new popular religion would arise in the modern world. Nor would modern man be able to substitute one of the many isms--romanticism, patriotism, communism, etc.--for religion. Modern man was too aware and too critical. In a sense, he knew the end of the tale before he commenced to tell it; he was too aware of why and how he would be tempted to deceive himself. Lippmann's view of religion, like his attitude toward elitism, was untypical. No other best-selling author explicitly rejected religion until the 1960's, and even then no one was as dogmatic or gave such a detailed explanation of his position as Lippmann.<sup>5</sup>

According to Lippmann modern man paid dearly for his skepticism. Previously the old beliefs organized his life, "economized his efforts, consoled him, and gave him dignity in his own eyes because he was part of some greater whole."

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Thus our forefathers obtained happiness by obeying the rules set up by authority. It did not matter that they did not know why God preferred certain kinds of conduct; it was enough to accept his preferences. But this certainty was gone, and neither religious liberals nor the skeptics had succeeded in finding a substitute. Thus modern man's life lacked a center, had no real consolation or dignity, and he was unhappy.<sup>6</sup>

His sad plight was most clearly demonstrated by the unhappy lives of those who embraced secular liberalism. The secular liberals saw man as naturally innocent and good. They assumed "that the human passions, if thoroughly liberated from all tyrannies and distortions, would by their fulfillment achieve happiness." Thus the liberals saw no need to reform desire. Instead, they wanted to provide opportunities for its fulfillment. They believed "that if only external circumstances are favorable the internal life of man will adjust itself successfully." But Lippmann claimed that the natural impulses of man were actually "lecherous, greedy and cruel." Thus the promises of orthodox liberalism had not and would not be fulfilled. Modern emancipated men and women were free of conventions, inhibitions, tabus, gods, priests, princes, parents, and revelations, but they were not happy. Modern man had lost his appetite for pleasure. He was nervous and had "a dusty taste in his mouth." He was world weary and aimless,

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a splintered personality whose work, family, sex life, and politics, all seemed like isolated fragments. In the end, modern man grudgingly endured "a series of unsanctified compulsions." The most unfortunate men were absolutely miserable; the luckier ones, those with more placid temperaments, escaped the depths of despair but were joyless. They merely drifted along without convulsions, and with "only occasionally a rude awakening," but they too were somewhat nervous, anxious and discontented, "hoping for the best, and believing in nothing very much."<sup>7</sup>

But there was one breed of modern man who appeared to have escaped the malaise: the rebel. Men like Voltaire, Menck-  
cken, Marx and Nietzsche did not feel the same emptiness or uncertainty which afflicts most moderns. The rebel does not worry about what to do with his freedom, or how to build a satisfying new culture. His enemies

provide him with an objective which enables him to know exactly what he thinks he wants to do. His energies are focussed by his indignation.... In the heat of battle the rebel is exalted by a whole-hearted tension which is easily mistaken for a taste of the freedom that is to come. He is under the spell of an illusion. For what comes after the struggle is not the exaltation of freedom but a letting down of the tension that belongs solely to the struggle itself. The happiness of the rebel is as transient as the iconoclasm which produced it. When he has slain the dragon and rescued the beautiful maiden, there is usually nothing left for him to do but write his memoirs and dream of a time when the world was young.

Thus, ultimately, no modern escapes the trap. Sooner or

later they all come face to face with the emptiness of their existence.<sup>8</sup>

Was Lippmann's view of popular religion and modern man accurate and fair?

Of course, religious people rejected his assumption that religion was a myth. And Reinhold Niebuhr thought Lippmann overemphasized the novelty of the trying situation in which modern man found himself. Lippmann tended to idealize our ancestors. It is doubtful if our religious forefathers ever enjoyed as much psychological comfort and support as Lippmann claimed. Furthermore, Niebuhr believed that Lippmann placed "too much emphasis upon the relation of religion to morality as a sanction for specific moral ideas...God is not the sanction of the good but the good is the way to the discovery of God." And was modern man as incapable of developing new religions and new isms, as guides to the good life, as Lippmann believed? Or could he jettison reason and the critical attitude if his intuition told him that a new myth would give him greater psychological support than cold reason? The Times Literary Supplement thought he could because belief is "an act of will," and many educated moderns had already passed "from a condition of 'being unable to believe' into the condition of believing." It is interesting to note that not one critic denied that modern man was unhappy. They merely disagreed about the cause, intensity and novelty of



his suffering.<sup>9</sup>

What was Lippmann's solution to the plight of modern man? How could he heal himself, find peace, and be wholly alive? Lippmann recommended that he learn to

live by the premise that whatever is righteous is inherently desirable because experience will demonstrate its desirability. They must live, therefore, in the belief that the duty of man is not to make his will conform to the will of God but to the surest knowledge of the conditions of human happiness.

But how accomplish this? The solution to this puzzle was the task of the moralist. And he was "still very largely dependent...upon introspection, general observation, and intuition" to aid him in his study of "human nature." For, there had been no revolutionary advance in this area since the Hellenic philosophers. Lippmann does not deny that great progress has been made in scientific psychology, "but it would be idle to suppose that the science of psychology is in a stage where it can be used as a substitute for experience and penetrating imaginative insight." Scientific psychology was still primitive. "Anyone who has stumbled about amidst words like instinct, impulse, consciousness, the unconscious, will know how confusing it all is...and to make the confusion greater there is...the fierce dogmatism which has produced the psychological sects." But the moralist must do his best. And if his psychology turns out to be wrong he has only to discard a

man-made hypothesis "whereas our forefathers had to discard a revealed dogma."<sup>10</sup>

Having stated his ground rules, Lippmann constructed his formula for happiness around a deceptively simple axiom; man was unhappy because he frequently desired what he could not have, including eternal life. Lippmann believed that man was condemned to unnecessary suffering due to a faulty upbringing. Man never learned to accept his fate and his mortality. Most of us remain somewhat infantile all our lives. Lippmann used the child development theory of Sigmund Freud and Dr. S. Ferenczi, a colleague of Freud, to illustrate his thesis. In the womb the embryo lives as a parasite of the mother's body, where it feels omnipotent. After birth the mother cares for the infant, who believes his wishes can be realized magically. "The world of the child is a kind of enchanted island. The labor that went into procuring his food, his clothes, his toys, is wholly invisible at first. His earliest expectations are, therefore, that somehow the Lord will provide." But as time passes he experiences frustration, and the reality principle begins to take hold. But few men ever mature completely. Part of us longs for the lost paradise. And we tend to see life as a conspiracy to make us happy or miserable. The idea that the universe is indifferent to us "is as outrageous to one who is imperfectly matured as would be the conduct of a

mother who forgot to give a hungry child its lunch." We remain unrealistic, and are doomed to frustration and dissatisfaction.<sup>11</sup>

Earlier ages had sought to control man's unrealistic and childish greediness by prohibition and renunciation. Ethical codes were enforced by threats, and promises of heaven and hell. And asceticism was employed to curb and suppress the power and insistence of man's appetites. But modern man no longer believed in popular religion, and asceticism had certain disadvantages, since the "mere frustration of an impulse...produces either some new expression of that impulse or disorders due to its frustration." But Lippmann claimed it was possible for men to become truly mature without prohibitions and asceticism. They can learn to want only what they can have. But to do this man must cultivate certain basic attitudes about himself and the universe. First he must realize that the universe is indifferent to him; and second, he must accept the fact that there is no final good or evil in the Biblical sense. Everything is ultimately "as neutral as the forces that move the planets." Evil is merely a man-made label we attach to certain painful experiences.<sup>12</sup>

Once man accepts these hard truths, he is free to re-examine himself and the world. The new psychology can help him for it has discovered that powerful passions affecting our lives are out of reach of normal consciousness. Moreover,

Freud had developed a technique to help a patient thread his way back to them through a chain of associations. With the help of these insights man can detach himself from his fears, hates and lusts. He can "examine them, name them, understand their origin and finally...judge them." This is a momentous achievement in the inner life of man, for as we become truly conscious of our feelings

we in some fashion or other destroy their concentration and diffuse their energy into other channels. We cease to be possessed by our passion...Just what the psychological mechanism of all this is I do not pretend to say...But since Hellenic times the phenomenon...has been well known.<sup>13</sup>

Along with understanding his emotions man must acquire a real sense of birth, decay and death, or what Lippmann called a "sense of true time." He must realize that everything is transitory, including himself:

The incapacity to realize that the objects of desire will last only a little while makes us put an extravagant value upon them, and to care for them, not as they are and for what they can actually give us, but for what we foolishly insist they ought to be and ought always to give us.<sup>14</sup>

A man who understands his emotions and has a "sense of true time" can become mature. He will find it relatively easy to want only what he can have, and to hold "things not by grasping them, but by understanding them and by remembering them." Thus

He is wholly an adult...For he has ceased to expect anything of the world which it cannot

give, and he has learned to love it under the aspect in which it is eternal.

Lippmann designated this attitude as "disinterestedness," a key word in the system.<sup>15</sup>

A disinterested man adjusts his wishes to the world, and is thus harmonious with himself and nature. He is happy and has virtue. The ordinary man believes that virtue is the price he pays for future happiness. Thus, "while he is waiting for his reward,...virtue seems to him drab, arbitrary, and meaningless." But the disinterested man finds virtue pleasant. He has no moral problem as to whether or not he should indulge or check an impulse for a mature desire is innocent in the sense that both an infant and a sage are innocent since both can

follow what the heart desires without coming into collision with the stubborn facts of life ...the infant because the world ministers to his heart's desire and...the sage because he has learned what to desire.

True the disinterested man's delight and pain are not "so intense nor...so poignant as youth and the romantics would have," but his rewards are more sustained and more even, and he knows a serenity "in the presence of inescapable evil" unknown to most men. Lippmann's approach was unique. No subsequent best-selling author recommended building a philosophy of life around disinterestedness although a number of writers included stoicism among the recommended virtues.<sup>16</sup>

Lippmann added one further refinement to his concept of

disinterestedness. A disinterested man not only wants only what he can have, but he lives for ends which are transpersonal. The cardinal virtues -- courage, honor, faithfulness, veracity, justice, temperance, magnanimity and love -- all have disinterestedness as their inner principle, and are the deposited wisdom of the race. Thus a man has honor "if he holds himself to an ideal of conduct though it is inconvenient, unprofitable, or dangerous to do so."<sup>17</sup>

Lippmann is extremely optimistic about the future of disinterested man. He would be tolerant, skeptical, fearless, and intellectually alert. Moreover

Since nothing gnawed at his vitals, neither doubt nor ambition, nor frustration, nor fear, he could move easily through life. And so whether he saw the thing as comedy, or high tragedy, or plain farce, he would affirm it is what it is, and that the wise man can enjoy it.<sup>18</sup>

But not everyone accepted Lippmann's logic. Elmer Davis, in the New York Times, pointed out that Lippmann gave no real reason why even a disinterested man should live for transpersonal ends. If there was no God and the universe was indifferent, why should any man sacrifice his own pleasures? Logically, a disinterested man might try to amass as much power, pleasure and wealth as he could, fully understanding that he did not ultimately need them, that they were merely pleasant extras, which he could do without if necessity required. Davis believed Lippmann was irrationally asking modern man to "build

a Stoic ethic on an Epicurean metaphysic." And the Saturday Review of Literature feared that a disinterested man might lack ambition and become a fatalist. Edmund Wilson questioned why disinterested man should enjoy life if it was a tragedy. And both Wilson and Harry Emerson Fosdick wondered why mankind should aspire to disinterestedness even if he could achieve it; Wilson described Lippmann's disinterested man as cold, emotionless, and complacent; Fosdick thought he was lifeless and altogether unbelievable. Leon Whipple, in the Graphic Survey, pointed out that Lippmann had made an unstated act of faith in rejecting suicide and unquestioningly accepting the idea that life was worth living. This same act of faith would be made by every guide from 1929 to 1963. Basic optimism was a prerequisite for becoming a best-seller. No true pessimist ever made the charmed circle.<sup>19</sup>

No Freudian wrote a review of Lippmann's book. Thus a reader could only guess what their judgment of Lippmann would have been, but it is almost certain that they would have labelled his concept of disinterestedness as naive. Freud believed that human beings were biologically incapable of not wanting certain satisfactions since some of their erotic and hostile drives were instinctual, and could, at best, only be modified, leaving a human being at least vaguely discontented. But Lippmann, like all future best-sellers, was arbitrarily selective when dealing with Freud, and simply ignored those aspects of

his theory which were inconvenient.

After dismissing popular religion Lippmann reclaimed the words religion and God for disinterested man. He did this by making a distinction between popular religion and what he calls high religion or the religion of the spirit. Popular religion was created for the masses. It was actually a form of government, commanding, punishing and rewarding. High religion had disinterestedness as its core, and it emphasized conversion and education, not government. High religion had been epitomized in the work of Confucius, Jesus, Buddha, Eckhart and Origen. The main concern of these men "was not to placate the will of God but to alter the will of man," so that he would be happy and at peace. Thus religion became "the art and theory of the internal life of men." Lippmann believed disinterestedness might properly be called by the name which these greatest teachers gave it, the religion of the spirit. Lippmann then re-defined God as the highest good at which man can aim. Earlier, Lippmann had accused liberal Christians of misusing the word God. Edmund Wilson now leveled the same charge at him; and Shailer Mathews, Dean of Chicago University's Divinity School, denied that Lippmann's concept of disinterestedness actually constituted a religion.<sup>20</sup>

The great teachers of the ancient world had been well aware of how difficult it was for most men to achieve disin-



terestedness, and had "confessed frankly that the perfect life was for a select few." But given the crisis of the modern world, Lippmann was convinced that the only solution was for the heretofore reluctant masses to embrace what was once the exclusive possession of the aristocracy of the spirit. And it was the moralist's task to convert them. The moralist could not command. He could only persuade. In former ages, this would have been an impossible mission. For ordinarily, men refused to devote themselves to cultivating disinterestedness. But Lippmann believed that events had conspired to drive mankind toward disinterestedness. Our technology demanded it. The idea of disinterestedness was inherent in our way of life. The signs of the on-going process could be seen in science, business, government and changing sexual customs.<sup>21</sup>

Pure science was high religion incarnate. It depended upon a group of men who consciously refused to regard their "own desires, tastes and interests as affording a key to the understanding of the world." They have cultivated, at least in one sphere of their lives, disinterestedness. Moreover society had tried to train the great majority of people to understand and use the machines and the processes which have become available through science. Thus the habits and motives of maturity and disinterestedness were brought "into play at the very heart of modern civilization." This development

was not the primary intention but it was the inevitable result. Lippmann assumed that men will see the advantages of this style of thought and adopt it. But will they? As the Times Literary Supplement pointed out, even a scientist may not apply disinterestedness to his private life. "He may be humble enough before some facts of nature; he may be arrogant and impatient before others - his wife, for example."<sup>22</sup>

Lippmann also described the influence of disinterestedness on business. The preceding seventy-five years had witnessed "the birth pains of an industrial philosophy that will really suit the machine technology and the nature of man." Laissez-faire had been discredited. It leads to waste of resources, painful cycles of boom and bust, and numerous social evils such as slums and child labor. Moreover laissez-faire was "utterly atheistical in its premises, for it displaced the notion that there is any higher will than his own to which the employer is accountable." And certainly it was "barbarous" in that it sanctified the supremacy of the acquisitive instinct. Moreover, the attempts to police capitalism had not been totally effective because the policemen themselves, the politicians, were not disinterested. The same was true for socialism. It was inefficient. Not "that a revolution like the Russian does not sweep away a vast amount of accumulated rubbish." But the "corrupt, stupid, grasping functionaries will make at least as big a muddle of socialism as stupid, selfish and

acquisitive employers can make of capitalism." For "unregenerate men can only muddle into muddle."<sup>23</sup>

But there was still hope for society, since the very complexity of the new techniques was forcing the leaders of industry to evolve forms of self-control. And the reforms were dictated by the nature of modern technology itself. There was a pressing need for expert skills and planning, all of which called for a degree of disinterestedness, which could only be provided by hired specialists. And the growing influence of these specialists was creating a split between management and ownership. The shareholders and directors were losing the actual direction of the great corporations to the managers, who were becoming less and less dominated by immature acquisitiveness, and more and more interested in intelligent production and distribution. The old distinction between public and private interest was disappearing. And it was difficult to say "whether the great railways, the General Electric Company, the United States Steel Corporation, the bigger insurance companies and banks are public or private institutions." For the legal owners were "virtually disfranchised," and direction was in the hands of salaried experts who held "themselves more or less accountable in standards of conduct to their fellow professionals." Even the directors had begun to see their power in terms of public trust, not private profit. It was "not fanciful to say, as Mr. Keynes has said, that

'the battle of socialism against unlimited private profit is being won in detail hour by hour.'" Thus, there was no need to change the economy to promote happiness.<sup>24</sup>

But again not everyone agreed. Elmer Davis, Graham Wallas and William Seagle of the Nation thought Lippmann was much too optimistic about business' disinterestedness. In their opinion self-interest was still business' main motivation, and profits its prime goal.<sup>25</sup>

Lippmann believed that the new technology had also forced the introduction of the concept of disinterestedness into politics. A modern state "cannot afford the luxury of prolonged disorder or a general paralysis." Society is too delicately inter-connected. Thus, when a "modern state is in trouble it can draw upon incomparable reserves of public spirit." Lippmann quoted Herbert Hoover on the efficacy of voluntary cooperation:

No other Main Street in the world could have done what the American Main Street did in the Mississippi flood; and Europe may jeer as it pleases at our mass production and our mass organization and our mass education. The safety of the United States is its multitudinous mass leadership.

Lippmann agreed that "the real law of a modern state is the multitude of little decisions made daily by millions of men." Thus the prime business of government was not to direct the affairs of the community, but "to harmonize the direction which the community gives to its affairs."

Lippmann believed that the American ability to organize, to administer affairs, and to deal realistically with necessity was due to the fact that America had developed an advanced technological society. He concluded that all advanced societies automatically become independent and self-reliant. Of course, this was written before the Great Depression crippled the Western economies.<sup>26</sup>

Lippmann also believed that technology tended to dictate the style of government. Thus, "It is no accident that fascism or bolshevism took root in Italy and Spain, but not in Germany and England,...in China but not in Japan...". Dictatorships could only come to power in countries still living in a basically pre-machine age. Bolshevism and fascism "were attempts to cure the evils resulting from the breakdown of a somewhat primitive form of capitalism." But Lippmann doubted that they would ultimately succeed for a modern economy is too "complex, delicate and difficult to manage by commands from the top." Lippmann's attitude toward economic reform was typical. Until the 1960's no best-selling author, except Alexis Carrel in 1936, recommended re-organizing the economy through political action, although a number of writers were aware of the economy's weaknesses and inequities, and some even blamed the spirit of capitalism for much of man's unhappiness. A new system or even drastic

reform seemed inconceivable to most Americans who had been nurtured by the myths of laissez-faire capitalism. Even during the Great Depression no best-selling guide suggested drastic economic reform or a democratically controlled economy.<sup>27</sup>

Not everyone agreed with Lippmann that technology was driving mankind toward disinterestedness. Elmer Davis in the New York Times, and Charner Perry, in the International Journal of Ethics, both doubted that the common man would ever voluntarily accept Lippmann's aristocratic morality. These lofty ideals lacked popular appeal. And even if Lippmann's future moralists could succeed in some manner or another in convincing the masses to aspire to disinterestedness, Reinhold Niebuhr doubted that mankind would ever be capable of the self-discipline the ideal demanded. Man would always need society to help restrict his desire. He could never do it alone.<sup>28</sup>

According to Lippmann most human beings managed to ignore the changes taking place in business and politics for they seldom made decisions in these areas. (Earlier Lippmann had mentioned the "little decisions made daily by millions of men" concerning economics, politics and education. He was either inconsistent or felt that "millions" of men could take part in a decision-making process and still only represent a small minority of the population). But everyone was involved in decisions about marriage, divorce, contracep-

tion, continence, licence, monogamy, prostitution and extra-marital sex. Moreover the field of sexual morals had been revolutionized by the advances in contraception. People, especially women, had found a new freedom. But the new freedom involved certain dangers. There were two kinds of love; romantic love, consummated in sexual ecstasy, and mature love where "sexual intimacy is not the end of desire as it is in romantic or promiscuous love, but periodic affirmation of the inward delight of desire pervading an active life." Lippmann suspected that there were serious undesirable consequences if sexual gratification was not made part of an enduring partnership. Romantic or promiscuous love led to "either tedium in middle age or the compulsive adventurousness of the libertine." Thus Lippmann doubted that hedonism provided the basis of a happy life. Moreover, mates who were not mature lovers would not really cooperate in raising children. And love endured only when the lovers share a life together. Thus continuity was "the enduring wisdom of the institution of marriage." And a successful marriage could normally be achieved given an initial attraction, a common social background, common responsibilities, and the conviction that the relationship is permanent. It is dangerous for lovers to think that their passion was unique or must be unique to lead to marriage. Lippmann agreed with Santayana that nine-tenths of the causes of romantic love are in the

mind of the lover. But Lippmann did accept divorce if a couple proved truly incompatible.<sup>29</sup>

Lippmann's treatment of love and sex was short and sketchy. He never really defined love or probed its psychological mechanisms. And unlike many modern guides to happiness, he did not discuss sex technique. He also ignored what Freudians would term perversions. Elmer Davis and T. V. Smith were not so sure as Lippmann of the lasting value of marriage and monogamy. Lippmann never considered that his mature, disinterested adult might understand his emotions so well and have such control of his needs and desires that he would cease to view love, sex, marriage and children in conventional terms. Actually Lippmann's lack of imagination and daring concerning sex put him in the mainstream of the best-seller tradition. For, with the exception of Marjorie Hillis in 1936, all the best-selling guides were extremely conservative about sex until the 1960's.<sup>30</sup>

A Preface to Morals received a good deal of attention in 1929. It was a Book of the Month Club selection, was reviewed by at least twenty publications, and finished sixth in sales among non-fiction books. But it was an unusual best-selling guide to the good life. Unlike most popular guides, it offered little immediate consolation, and no easy or pat solutions. In fact Lippmann's view of life was rather somber and stoic. He was not interested in telling people how to find



supportive philosophies or institutions. He did not want men controlled either by the community or their own compulsive consciences. He wanted truly autonomous beings. But he was rather vague on how this state could be achieved. He said psychoanalysis was useful but, beyond this, Lippmann offered little in the way of concrete techniques. Unlike most popular guides, Lippmann did not recommend auto-suggestion, self-hypnosis, planned acts of charity, increased social activity, church membership, the compilation of a check-list of desirable traits, the keeping of a diary, special diets or exercises. He was content to state the goal and pinpoint the major obstacles. He was the strategist. It was for the future moralist to develop workable tactics and lead the masses to happiness.<sup>31</sup>

Just what audience did Lippmann appeal to? Who would be interested in his particular approach to the good life? Certainly not the same people who later read Vash Young or Marjorie Hillis. Lippmann admittedly addressed his book to an elite who were supposed to re-educate mankind. He was an intellectual. His special appeal was to people who had lost their religious faith, or had it weakened, and could not, as Dale Carnegie and Henry Link were later to advise, comfortably return to some form of traditional religion. His readers were primarily men and women who were not completely at home in the America of Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, peo-

ple who, if they did not agree with H. L. Mencken's view of the American business culture, were at least sympathetic to it. They were ready to listen when Lippmann described industrial man as lost, unhappy, joyless, lecherous, greedy and cruel. They were no longer optimistic. It was an era when men like Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Eugene O'Neill, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, and Ernest Hemingway dominated serious literature. Lippmann appealed to the type of people who read the New Republic, a magazine Henry Link would later list as a symptom of an unhealthy, introverted personality. Even Lippmann's critics reflected his seriousness. Men like Edmund Wilson, Graham Wallas, Elmer Davis and Reinhold Niebuhr did not review writers like Vash Young or Marjorie Hillis.

Lippmann's book, as compared to most best-selling guides to happiness, was written at a very sophisticated level. He was careful to articulate both his philosophical roots, and the somber moral and social conclusions he drew from his view of the universe and man's psychological nature. His basic philosophy did not remain an unstated assumption as was the case with many best-selling authors.

But there were other elements in Lippmann, juxtaposed to his stoic view of life, which also helped account for his popularity. Basically Lippmann remained an optimist, despite his seemingly dark, brooding view of man and the cosmos.

For in the end, man could find happiness. He had only to become disinterested. And luckiest break of all, Lippmann was sure technology was slowly, but steadily forcing mankind, whether they liked it or not, to accept this ultimate wisdom. His basic optimism and his traditionalism were reflected in other ways. He believed man, despite the indifference of the universe, had a duty to live by transpersonal values. He was also sure that the business community would reform itself, and that the traditional marriage and family were the wisest arrangements man could devise. Thus extremists like Marx, Mencken and Nietzsche could be safely ignored.

In the end, Lippmann accepted the nineteenth-century's belief in progress; life would automatically improve. Lippmann's ultimate faith and optimism might help explain, in part at least, why A Preface to Morals became a best-seller while a book like Joseph Wood Krutch's The Modern Temper, based on a similar theme, but ultimately more pessimistic, received less attention. According to Krutch, the blind striving of the ant hill was nature's real ideal. Man's fondness for individualism, art, and philosophy were cancerous perversions of nature's wisdom. Man himself was superfluous, a failed experiment:

Ours is a lost cause and there is no place  
for us in the natural universe, but we  
are not, for all that, sorry to be human.  
We should rather die as men than live

as animals.

As Lippmann's popularity proved, large numbers of educated, middle class Americans were willing to consider an indifferent universe, but in the end, they would not accept Krutch's conclusion; they would not be denied hope. In fact, no best-selling guide ever stressed the dark, absurd side of life. Pessimism did not sell.<sup>32</sup>

## NOTES

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## CHAPTER 2

## Ernest Dimnet

Ernest Dimnet wrote two best-selling guides to the good life, The Art of Thinking in 1928, and What We Live By in 1932. Dimnet was less austere and more traditional than Lippmann. He believed that

Life is given to all of us to make what we please of it; a masterpiece or a shabby piece of work. We are born with an infantile instinct to recognize what will satisfy our higher tendencies...Consciously or unconsciously, the desire is so deeply rooted in us that even a whole life-span of vulgarity does not succeed in killing it.

Dimnet's goal was to help men nurture their "higher tendencies."<sup>1</sup>

Man needed help because he was basically corrupt. Dimnet was a French Catholic priest, and his philosophy clearly reflected the church's doctrine of Original Sin. Man was composed of both matter and spirit. But most men followed the dictates of the flesh, and allowed their lower natures to dominate. Thus they tended to be indolent, lazy, greedy, petty, spineless and controlled by their passions. Of course most men were not out and out scoundrels. They were not selfish enough or unwise enough to be unkind or cruel when it is not necessary. In truth most men lacked clear definition. They were neither this nor that. They drifted through life without reflecting on their situation. They simply do not

think, except occasionally if it is to achieve a limited practical goal. About the rest of life--death, religion, morals, art, politics, etc.--they remained vague. They lived like automata, like sheep. They were imitative, and resented distinction and true individuality in others. Political democracy both reflected and intensified this pattern. And the sluggish, selfish attitude of the average man explained why most thinkers tended to be haughty and dictatorial. They saw the truth which the herd ignored or rejected. Thus for the good of society the thinker treated the ignorant masses "as grown-ups must treat children." Dimnet cited Mussolini as an enlightened thinker because he saw that "at times, tyranny is more beneficial than freedom." "How many Americans," Dimnet asked on the same page, "realize that their country is not a democracy but an oligarchy, and owes a good deal of its stability to that fact?" He warned his readers that true thinkers, like Napoleon and Mussolini, "see the necessities of an epoch, and woe to the people who will not see them as they do! The contempt of the eagle for crawling creatures will fall upon them." It is of interest to note that of the thirty-four reviews listed for Dimnet's two books in The Book Review Digest, only one, the Times Literary Supplement of August 15, 1929, made even an off-hand mention of Dimnet's praise of fascism and dictatorship. American



reviewers completely ignored these assertions.<sup>2</sup>

Except for Henry Link in 1937, Dimnet was the only pre-war author who spoke of Original Sin. Most religiously oriented best-sellers ignored this traditional Christian concept. It was too un-democratic and too pessimistic. In keeping with the modern spirit, even Dimnet and Link ignored the consequences of sin--hell and eternal punishment. Everyone underplayed the grimmer aspects of religion.

It was Dimnet's premise that if men want to conquer their lower natures, and find happiness, they must first realize that all men, whether they want to or not, live by some philosophy, although few are conscious of it. Happiness comes from following the correct philosophy. Thus it is of prime importance to become conscious of one's philosophical position. "Alone of all animals we can double ourselves up, so to speak, to look at ourselves." And man alone knows that he shall die, and that life is fragile, strange and mysterious, at least if it is viewed without the blinders of daily routine and custom. To find happiness man must first accept the mystery and uncertainty of life. He must not delude himself. This basic honesty is the beginning of wisdom. Then, having faced this truth, he must explore the great questions of life. What is man? How does he think? Why is he here? Why did God create the world? Of necessity, he must seek aid

among the great philosophers, men like Aristotle, Locke, Hume, and Kant. And it is not enough just to read them. He must ponder their ideas, interrogate them, take notes, compare and criticize, in short, struggle with them. Thus like Lippmann, but unlike most best-selling guides, Dimnet emphasized philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

As one studies, certain dominant problems soon emerge. There is, of course, the classic epistemological controversy epitomized in the work of Hume. But Dimnet denied that man must accept a constant state of uncertainty. He cited Kant's famous solution. Kant was fully aware that, in terms of pure reason, there was no way to prove the existence or non-existence of God, free will, or the validity of religion. But Kant was too wise to rely solely on pure reason. He knew this involved "only philosopher's philosophy." His own faith in God "had a deeper root than mere reasoning." Kant was aware of a reality beyond the physical senses. And Dimnet insisted that "the dignity of man lies in his desire to see beyond our material experience." Moreover, "All theologians admit that logic is only a preparation to faith. The final assent comes from the impulse of the will." The need for religion is a "craving in our nature which every great philosopher treats with reverence..." This craving for something beyond ourselves is also manifested in such altruistic acts as

defending one's country, or saving a drowning child.<sup>4</sup>

Dimnet was quick to explain that religion is not opposed to pure reason. It merely saw its limits. Nor were religion and science in conflict. They simply occupied separate domains. Condemnations of men like Galileo were the mistakes of individual churchmen, not the church. But the Times Literary Supplement thought Dimnet was much too glib in excusing the church. It believed a conflict did exist, and that the orthodox churches had obstructed science, and were usually about a century behind the march of progress. The Times Literary Supplement also questioned the value of intuition and emotion in ascertaining knowledge. It pointed out that a mystic, if he examined his mystical experience in the light of reason and logic, might have to admit "that such an experience was less likely to tell him anything about the nature of the universe than to tell him something about his own psychology." The Times insisted that clear thinking employed the reality principle, not wish fulfillment. Percy Hutchison in The New York Times liked Dimnet's work, but was not as sure as Dimnet that men had an infallible instinct for recognizing what will satisfy their higher instincts. How else explain, asked Hutchison, why so few people follow these instincts?<sup>5</sup>

But Dimnet had faith. He believed, with Lamarck, that evolutionary progress was the result of a vital effort. Further, he was convinced that evolution could never have culminated in mind if there was not a spiritual principle in the world. Morals could be called "either the supreme stage of evolution, or the voice of God speaking to our conscience." Of course, men can never completely understand God and his work. There is no hope of the finite grasping the infinite, the imperfect measuring the perfect. Man must remember that he is "mere clay," and that without religious insights, "the world is a torturing puzzle... ." But with religion, man can experience joy, and a sense of purpose and justice. In fact, happiness is merely following the dictates of God and religion.<sup>6</sup>

In his discussion of faith and theology Dimnet never tried to explain why God had originally felt a need to create sinful human beings. In fact, no religiously oriented writer from 1929 to 1965 bothered to explore this basic issue. But the deficiency did not injure the popularity of religious writers. Five of eleven writers of this period were religious, and religion proved to be even more popular in the immediate post-war period where six out of seven writers proclaimed faith in God as the key to happiness.

But why, asked Dimnet, do so many people attack re-

ligion and deny the existence of God, if there is no conflict between religion and logic, and if religion truly answers a deep-rooted human need? The explanation of "this strange anomaly is given not by philosophy but by history." Secular doubt was caused by the bad example given by priests and the lure of pleasure in modern civilization. But despite the widespread criticism of religion, Dimnet remained optimistic, for while "folly, levity or stupidity produce ridiculous notions," the passion for truth and God seldom fail to get their reward.<sup>7</sup>

Dimnet was a Catholic, but, as the magazine America wrote, his presentation "looks for agreement between the Catholic and non-Catholic position, and stresses these agreements." Dimnet believed that the fundamental unity of all religions was more important than their divergencies. (The desire for religious unity was typical of best-selling guides.) And yet, despite his desire for agreement, Dimnet made it clear that certain religions were superior to others, for "the Gospel has helped [the Christians] to rise high above the concepts of the Old Testament... ." Moreover, the extreme forms of Buddhism lead to "annihilation," while the foundations of Calvinism and Jansenism were joyless, and not in accord with the true doctrine of Christ who cultivated joy. Dimnet never explained how intuition led one man to Catholicism and an-

other to Calvinism or Buddhism.<sup>8</sup>

Once a man glimpses the possibility of leading a more spiritual life, his inspiration must be "treasured as the precious seed of a rare plant and treated as tenderly." To do this, a man must break the "rush of his life," reduce his schedule, and seek a certain amount of solitude. Dimnet made an interesting statement linking leisure time with technology and race. While discussing beauty, he warned people not to reject the modern machine, for it is not inherently ugly, and a wise man will use the machine "to be freer, to secure more time and more agility." Furthermore men who see the true value of the machine will "give it the sympathy to which it has a right, viz., the kind of sympathy which southern people give to their colored servants." This was all Dimnet said about race. He obviously felt no obligation to explain America's racial attitudes, or to direct any special advice to American blacks. This approach was typical of best-selling guides.<sup>9</sup>

Once a man decided to allow himself the necessary time, Dimnet recommended that he begin his rejuvenation by making a chart of desirable and undesirable traits, e.g., pettiness, egoism, time-killing, kindness, devotion to a cause, silence, etc., listing the traits opposite one another under the headings, Upstairs and Downstairs. He should refer to the

list every few days. He should also begin to take a daily inventory of himself, ruthlessly listing all his observed faults. To sharpen his critical judgment, he should imagine how his enemies see him. This process should continue for several months before the findings are submitted to a trustworthy friend or advisor. Dimnet considered open confession good for the soul. It would also be wise to keep a detailed record of both one's worst blunders and best moments. Men can learn a good deal this way. Dimnet also recommended inspirational biographies, meditation, and artistic endeavors, such as poetry, music or painting, for these activities help lift men's minds to a higher level.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately American education discouraged artistic activities. Education in the United States was too practical. Dimnet compared it to good commercial fiction. It was usually terse, rapid, balanced and marketable. It represented superior craftsmanship. But it was shallow and did not struggle with the complexity and depth of life. Thus it did not help to develop the reader's ability to think about life's problems. American children came to believe that culture is basically useless, and the privilege and the amusement of the few. American schools and parents also allowed children too much mental freedom. They made everything too easy. A subject like French grammar is not easy. But neither does it require genius. It

can be conquered by mere perseverance. Thus a student should be taught that he is expected to discipline himself. The ideal school would strike a balance between practicality and culture, freedom and discipline. Interestingly, few best-selling guides would recommend using the school system to propagate their ideas.<sup>11</sup>

To further strengthen the spiritual faculties, Dimnet strongly recommended that people do something constructive for other people, or a worthy institution. He labeled this concept "action," and claimed it was a

remedy for brooding, anxiety,...exaggerated introspection and, in general, for the dangers attending an ill-guided interior life. It is the golden mean between Oriental annihilation and the obsessive search after pleasure of the hedonist. People who wistfully look towards the psychoanalyst, people who suffer from chronic hesitancy,...should all plunge into action.

Action also increases one's mental resilience, and makes men conscious of a "truly divine force in us." The necessity of practicing Christian charity proved a popular theme with best-selling guides. But poverty was never praised as a superior state of life, and no one was ever asked to make any extreme sacrifices to help the poor either at home or abroad. Charity was always tempered with middle class reasonableness.<sup>12</sup>

Love was another aid to achieving and sustaining a



spiritual life. But love must never be confused with lust, or egoism. Love is real "when people's souls go out to their beloved, when they lose their hearts to them, when they act in the unselfish way...". Love makes one ready to sacrifice. And if people are not prepared to act this way, there is a "suspicion that their love is not love but a combination of egoisms." Moreover, real love "always wants to proclaim and to perpetuate itself." It desires children and the recognition of the world. And while "attraction is continuous..love only comes once." Thus "one should only fall in love with the woman who could be made a friend of if she were a man." It is wise to discount sex appeal as much as one can. And "love, as distinguished from desire, notices the face before the features...In short, it is pre-eminently conscious of personality, and that must remain its characteristic even when physical union is included... ." And love must be exclusive

for a person who cannot tell what of two attractions is the stronger upon him is in great danger of soon being conscious not merely of two attractions but twenty. It must also be independent of time and space. As Mrs. Browning says: unless you can love, as the angels may, with the breadth of heaven betwixt you, Oh! fear to call it loving.

Thus, "People with naturally refined natures will obviously be more likely to know real love than men and women of a coarser fibre, or merely of a more exuberant

disposition."<sup>13</sup>

But if love was a tremendous aid to man's spiritual growth, sex, without love, was a definite obstacle. Dimnet approvingly quoted George Sand, "unless one is in love with one's whole being, one should live...in complete chastity." Dimnet described the sex act as a "trivial experience." And it was merely a modern myth which claimed "that sexual urges are of exactly the same order as other physical impulses, and have the same right not only to be indulged but to be openly discussed." Actually, sex was not of the same order with the rest of man's instincts. Besides the moral considerations, there were social consequences which placed it in a class apart. Thus men had no right to act or talk freely in sexual matters. Moreover, sexual promiscuity was psychologically damaging. Don Juan was not a happy man; "and he is not a sane man either...Don Juan is a neurotic and has a right to medical treatment." Dimnet's conventional treatment of sex was typical of best-selling guides. There would be no strong criticism of traditional middle class sexual mores until the 1960's.<sup>14</sup>

Man's spiritual growth was also obstructed because all men, to some degree, are plagued by mental phantasms, that is, mental parasites which can obsess a man and leave him with a chronic sense of inadequacy. Psychologists referred to these phantasms as "inferiority complexes." And while he

rejected most of their theories, Dimnet thanked Freud and Adler for emphasising this particular problem, which can leave a man believing that growth is too difficult a task, or lure him into entertaining two opposite goals at the same time, making progress impossible. To overcome these phantasms, a man must note them, list them and become aware of their destructive nature.<sup>15</sup>

The Times Literary Supplement thought Dimnet underrated the importance of the unconscious. Character change was a much more difficult process than Dimnet lead his readers to believe. Dimnet discussed only superficial symptoms and causes. He never attempted a really profound analysis of motivation. Thus his suggestions would only help someone who was already moving in the direction he recommended. Leonard Woolf, in The Nation and Athenaeum, also thought Dimnet overrated the beneficial effects of conscious concentration. Although the issue was basically ignored during the Depression era, debating the relative therapeutic merits of depth psychology and "conscious concentration" became an important, if minor, theme in the post-war period.<sup>16</sup>

Gregariousness was another obstacle to spiritual growth. Dimnet defined gregariousness as "the multiplication of indolence by millions." Americans were especially susceptible to this weakness. Dimnet warned Americans "never to approach company without being on ...guard against its sterilizing

influence." He recommended meditating a minute or two and re-thinking one's goals before going into a group of people.<sup>17</sup>

A lack of solitude and leisure were also obstacles to the spiritual life. "Millions are oppressed by manual work, either because there is too much of it, or, because the life has been taken out of it by standardization." Others became insecure and preoccupied because they were unemployed or feared losing their job. Despite the Great Depression, this was all Dimnet had to say about unemployment. He showed no interest in the fact that millions were unemployed and in real need in America and Europe. He simply ignored the economic crisis, and never considered reform as a means of making men happy. There seemed to be the unspoken assumption that if man only worked out his relationship to God, the social and economic problems would take care of themselves, or, if they did not, that man would have the spiritual strength to endure his suffering, knowing that God would eventually dispense justice in heaven. Or possibly Dimnet thought it was the domain of real thinkers like Mussolini to solve economic crises. This attitude toward the Depression was not atypical. Most writers either ignored the economic catastrophe or blamed it on the average American's lack of character.<sup>18</sup>

Dimnet also believed that the rich were no better off

than the workers as far as solitude was concerned. They were slaves to amusement or sought happiness in pleasure, affairs and power. For them, gregariousness was a tyrannical phantasm.

J. Merrit Matthews, in The Saturday Review of Literature, denied that the rich are slaves to anything. Most were active in rewarding interest. He also thought Dimnet vastly underrated the value of modern working conditions. Matthews insisted that from the worker's point of view modern industrial techniques were immensely superior to the brutal, energy-draining work techniques and hours of earlier days.<sup>19</sup>

Dimnet warned his readers that they would not always find it easy to sustain a spiritual life, especially in the beginning. But, with a continuous effort the new style would become "a mastering purpose leaving no room for inferior preoccupations... ." Moreover, they could constantly gain strength for the needed effort by realizing that they were "collaborating with the Spirit and drawing as near to God as is possible for a creature originally made of clay." It was also wise to avoid places and people which might lessen one's resolve.<sup>20</sup>

The Art of Thinking was the number one non-fiction best-seller in 1929, with a sale of 125,000. It was a best-seller again in 1930, finishing ninth. In 1932, What We Live By finished sixth, and was a choice of both the Religion Book Club, and the Catholic Book Club. Who read Dimnet? What

did he offer his readers?

Like Lippmann but unlike most popular guides, Dimnet felt a need to explain the philosophical roots of his position. He clearly stated his metaphysics and buttressed his ideals with references to philosophers such as Kant and Plato, and literary figures such as Charlotte Bronte, Victor Hugo, Thomas Carlyle and Katherine Mansfield. He assumed his audience was middle class and would be impressed. He also took pains to prove that science and secular philosophy did not necessarily lead to agnosticism. He opposed just the position Lippmann espoused. Thus he assured middle-class America that their traditional religious values and aspirations were still adequate for the modern world. But Dimnet did not articulate his position as carefully as Lippmann. His arguments were less detailed and sustained. For the most part he simply stated his beliefs and quoted a few supporting "authorities." He had the assurance and tone of an upper-middle-class pastor, preaching to a group of suburban believers who only had to be reminded of the truth to win them back to the fold.<sup>21</sup>

Not everyone approved of Dimnet's approach. The Nation thought The Art of Thinking sounded "like an 'inspirational' talk of the sort that clubwomen and rotary members are said to like..."; it described What We Live By as "a profusion of platitudes." William Soskin in The New York Evening Post

said Dimnet was ponderous, unoriginal, stale and trite. Moreover, he was wrong to dismiss such "Downstairs" traits as gregariousness and flirtatiousness, for they did much to make life livable. But these negative reviews were exceptions. Allowing for minor criticisms, most reviewers liked Dimnet's work. John Chamberlain, in the New York Times, praised Dimnet's effort despite the fact that he thought the French priest was too wordy and more interested in making people cultured than "in forcing them to hew to the line of straight thinking." Mary Ellen Chase, in Commonweal, Albert Guerard, in the New York Herald Tribune, and John Palmer Gavit, in The Saturday Review of Literature were more typical of the favorable reviews; they praised Dimnet without reservation. They especially approved of his moral standards and basic optimism. For, unlike Lippmann who recommended stoic-like resignation as the ultimate hope of mankind, Dimnet promised peace, joy and salvation, if only man would cultivate his spiritual nature by aligning himself with God and religion.<sup>22</sup>

The next best-selling author was even more optimistic than Dimnet. In his opinion, a reader who allied himself with God could reasonably expect not only peace, joy and salvation, but material prosperity as well.

## NOTES

1. Ernest Dimnet, What We Live By (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1932), p. 159.
2. Ernest Dimnet, The Art of Thinking (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928), pp. 21, 23-24, 28, 29, 54-55, 79, 103, 124-125; Dimnet, What We Live By, pp. 161, 165.
3. Dimnet, What We Live By, pp. 3-5, 7-8, 10-11, 15-18, 22.
4. Ibid., pp. 23-25, 31, 35-38, 51-52, 67, 266.
5. Anon., Review of The Art of Thinking, Times Literary Supplement, August 15, 1929, p. 633; Anon., Review of What We Live By, Times Literary Supplement, July 14, 1932, p. 513; Percy Hutchison, "Abbe Dimnet on the Art of Living," New York Times, June 26, 1932, p. 2; Dimnet, What We Live By, pp. 264-266.
6. Dimnet, What We Live By, pp. 65-67, 71, 79, 182, 189, 284.
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8. Ibid., pp. 211-213, 274, 290.
9. Ibid., pp. 96, 176.
10. Dimnet, The Art of Thinking, p. 109; What We Live By, pp. xix, 94, 177-178, 180-181.
11. Dimnet, The Art of Thinking, pp. 53, 59, 61, 63-65, 67-68.
12. Dimnet, What We Live By, pp. 241, 246.
13. Ibid., pp. 233-236, 238-239.
14. Ibid., pp. 229, 232, 234, 240.
15. Dimnet, The Art of Thinking, pp. 41-51.
16. Leonard Woolf, "The Art of Thought," The Nation and Athenaeum, Aug. 24, 1929, p. 682; Times Literary Supplement, Aug. 15, 1929, p. 632.
17. Dimnet, What We Live By, pp. 173, 242, 257-258.



18. Dimnet, The Art of Thinking, pp. 75-76.
19. J. Jerit Matthews, "Points of View," Saturday Review of Literature, Oct. 19, 1929, p. 193; Dimnet, The Art of Thinking, p. 78.
20. Dimnet, What We Live By, p. 183, 185-189; Dimnet, The Art of Thinking, pp. 51, 93-94, 96-97.
21. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers--1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), pp. 141, 145.
22. Albert Guerard, "Canon Dimnet Sets Forth For Us a Way of Life," New York Herald Tribune, June 26, 1932, p. 1; Anon., Review of The Art of Thinking, The Nation, May 22, 1929, pp. 623-624; Anon., Review of What We Live By, The Nation, Nov. 30, 1932, p. 538; William Soskin, "Reading and Writing," New York Evening Post, June 25, 1932, p. 7; John Palmer Gavit, "Thinking Up-Stairs," Saturday Review of Literature, July 9, 1932, p. 825; Mary Ellen Chase, "The Art of Living," Commonweal, August 24, 1932, p. 414.

## CHAPTER 3

## Vash Young

Like Dimnet, Vash Young had faith in God and religion. But there the similarities ended. With Young we leave the urbane, cultured world of Dimnet and Lippmann, and enter the realm of the American salesman; Young sought both God's blessing and worldly success. A deep understanding of philosophy, history, psychology and theology were no longer considered important. There were quicker, surer, more exciting paths to happiness.

In A Fortune to Share (1931) Young claimed to have found a "sure-fired" formula to insure both personal happiness and national prosperity. As proof, he offered the example of his own life. He had experienced a wonderful "rebirth." His old self had died "of selfishness, pessimism, fear, worry, indecision, vain regrets, stewing about business, irritability, envy," and "false desires." He had been desperate but then Young applied his happiness formula, and a new personality bloomed, one dominated by "optimism, courage, contentment, dominion over business worries, patience, and freedom from harmful appetites." Moreover, "I took this inheritance out into the business world, and it has made me successful beyond my fondest hopes." Young wanted to share his good fortune with others. "There is enough of it to go around no matter how many of you take your cut, for it is not the kind of wealth that

is affected by bank failures, stock-market crashes, or business depressions."<sup>1</sup>

Before his rebirth Young had been a failure in business, poor, fearful, easily hurt, lacking in confidence and extremely unhappy. For a while he drank, but found no escape or release. He grew "sour," and considered suicide. "I continued to disintegrate until I began to see a light.... happiness or unhappiness is largely a matter of choice." As the Bible said, "The Kingdom of God is within you," if only you realized it. Young compared his mind to a factory, and decided that he, the owner, had foolishly allowed the factory to turn out defective products. "I saw now that my factory was capable of taking the raw materials of experience, mingling them with faith, love and other qualities, and so become a plant worth operating."<sup>2</sup>

His first task was to overcome fear. It had plagued him all his life. He had been too timid to begin new projects, and constantly worried about the future. He decided to analyze his fear. Were there good grounds for it? He was aware that he usually worried about disasters which were unlikely ever to happen. "I calmly realized that we had always had a place to sleep, something to eat and something to wear. As these three essentials were all we actually needed and as we had always had them, why worry that some day we would not have them?" And why worry because one failed in business, as long

as one made a sincere effort? "Honest failure certainly is no disgrace.... ." Because of these new insights, fear disappeared, and for the first time in his life Young felt a tremendous sense of freedom.<sup>3</sup>

Young conceived the conquest of fear as a conscious act by which a person replaced irrational fears and expectations with a clear perception of reality. Unlike Lippmann and Dimnet, he completely ignored those schools of modern psychology which depicted the unconscious or conditioned reflexes as elusive sources of fear and irrationality, whose illumination and control frequently required professional help. According to Young it was merely a matter of common sense. One had only to understand that man's true needs were few, and disaster unlikely. In 1937, Dale Carnegie would express a similar attitude. But neither Young nor Carnegie explained the technique in great detail, and neither specifically attacked Freud's theory of the unconscious. (It is interesting to note that Young was the only pre-war writer, besides Marjorie Hillis in 1936, who completely ignored Freud and modern psychology.) In the post-war period John Schindler in 1955, and Maxwell Maltz in 1965 also advanced the concept that a human being could control his emotions, at least to a great extent, through the conscious acceptance of sane and logical ideas. But unlike Young, these best-sellers made this belief the center of their approach to

happiness, and devoted a good deal of effort to clarifying the concept, defending it against Freud's theory, and developing techniques to implement it.

Ultimately Young discovered it was not enough to conquer fear. He needed something positive in his life. For "Vash Young was nothing, just one of the creeping things which crawl along the earth. But Vash Young and everyone else, is capable of expressing noble qualities and enduring ideas." Thus, it was important to "choose courage, or faith, or affirmative thinking or belief in God or whatever you choose to call the force that enables life to go forward." "It is silly for a poor insignificant mortal, such as I am, to buck the stream of life. I sought out its current and try to flow along with it." Young himself chose religion. He believed in God, heaven and prayer.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike Dimnet and Lippmann, Young never discussed religion from a philosophical, theological or historical point of view. Nor did he entangle himself in the intricacies of Original Sin and free will. He simply believed. He knew intuitively it was the correct decision. But he never singled out a particular church for praise. In fact he stressed the desirability of religious toleration. In keeping with the book's optimistic tone, he mentioned heaven but not hell. Young's lack of interest in theology and his tolerant attitude were typical of pre-war religious writers.<sup>5</sup>

Once he had decided to accept God, and the force "that enables life to go forward," Young made a list of the qualities upon which the continuity of life depends, Love, Courage, Cheerfulness, Activity, Compassion, Friendliness, Generosity, Tolerance and Justice," nine magic words, positive and dominant. He cultivated these virtues.<sup>6</sup>

Young then decided to test his new faith. What did he fear most? It was the loss of his job and income, for he had a wife and daughter to feed and less than a hundred dollars saved. He decided to resign, "in short, call the bluff of this great bully fear." He would risk working on a commission basis, selling insurance. He was sure the positive virtues would sustain him and they did. "Whenever I'd find myself thinking of myself, I'd say, Now is the time to think of somebody else, anybody else except myself." Once when he was without money, and tempted to become preoccupied with his own problems, he volunteered to sing for crippled children at a hospital, and found himself happy. On another occasion, a train conductor purposely slammed the door in his face leaving him to wait hours for the next train. At first he was enraged, then he decided to help a strange woman with a baby move her luggage across town, and, although it cost him even more time, he ended feeling content and at peace. It "paid" to think of others. He cultivated this attitude and grew strong. Young used an incident from his business career to illustrate his

progress. He invested a good deal of time and effort trying to sell an expensive insurance policy to a prospect but the potential customer unexpectedly purchased his policy from a competitor:

There was just a fleeting second of disappointment for me. Resentment, envy of the successful agent tried to rise up, but only for a flash. Almost immediately I was delighted that the man had taken out such a large policy, and I told him so. It will be a fine thing for him and his family to have this security....And it certainly was a fine thing for the agent who landed the insurance. I went back to my office walking on air, for this was final proof to me that I had gained dominion over disappointment.<sup>7</sup>

It paid off to be generous and giving within limits. Young had the same reasonable, middle class attitude toward charity that Dimnet had. No one was asked to give all to the poor, and follow Christ in poverty. In fact, during the entire period from 1929 to 1965, not one best-selling religious writer saw any conflict between religion and wealth.

Young ignored the elaborate rituals Dimnet recommended as an aid to character development. He never mentioned diaries, lists, open confession or art. Nor did Young single out sex as an especially dangerous hazard. In fact, he ignored it. He did believe that it was easier to maintain one's good spirits, if one ate prudently, played occasionally, rested sufficiently and kept in good physical condition. He also gave up alcohol, coffee, tea and tobacco because they were

not part of "the Kingdom of Heaven." But basically, he felt it was enough to perceive the truth and act accordingly.<sup>8</sup>

During the rebirth, Young had occasional periods of uncertainty but he persevered. "Doubts tried to creep into my mind, but every time a negative thought came to me, I stopped mentally,...challenged it, thrust it out of my consciousness and thought of something worth-while. This is a habit anyone can acquire..." Unlike Lippmann and Dimmet, Young did not mistrust the masses. Anyone was capable of common sense. The belief that happiness was a habit, a state of mind which could be cultivated by thinking the right thoughts was to prove a popular theme, especially in the post-war era.<sup>9</sup>

Young was now psychologically prepared to sustain his internal peace of mind in the face of business failure, but ironically he began to succeed beyond his wildest dreams. For when he ceased to be self-centered, and became an instrument for the expression of "life giving forces," he began to gain attention, and became one of the most successful insurance salesmen in America. "It often happens that the man who pursues the dollar too diligently finds it hard to catch, but if he will pursue some other and better goal, dollars come around to see what sort of fellow he is." As an example Young told of visiting a friend when he heard that her mother had died, although the visit forced him to cancel a very



important business conference. The woman's brother heard of his kindness and bought the largest insurance policy ever written by a single agent in the United States, over half a million dollars. But Young consciously subordinated business success to peace of mind. He decided never to undertake a business venture if his happiness would in the least be disturbed in the case of failure. But this very decision freed him to proceed with any venture whatsoever. For it enabled him to understand the true value of business success. It was just an extra, since with or without it he already had what a man needed to be happy, food, shelter, clothing, and God.<sup>10</sup>

Young recommended a low pressure approach to business. Always be a gentleman, and always look out for the customer's best interest. He'll feel better and recommend you to friends.

All of this, you may say, is pretty close to shrewd selfishness or self-interest. It can be so interpreted, but that is not the correct interpretation, for my actual thought is of the prospect's comfort. It is just a fine break of life that in some cases business follows in the wake of considerate conduct.<sup>11</sup>

And the approach which worked for Young could also work for the nation. Young was sure he understood the cause of the Depression. People had let themselves be dominated by the "getting," instead of the "giving habit." They were too self-centered and greedy. In 1929

the getting habit was rudely interrupted....  
It has been interrupted from time to time

ever since the world began, and there never will be a time when it will be free from interruption, because you simply can not stabilize self-interest ....[In the nineteen twenties] self-interest expanded....Greed for easy money grew to alarming proportions....Nobody thought about giving. Getting and spending--that was the order of the day. The result was inevitable. When people are not satisfied with a fair return, when they seek millions without effort, but one thing can happen and that thing did happen.

But the problem was not unsolveable. When the crash occurred the business community should have announced that it was switching from the "getting" to the "giving habit," emphasizing that the United States had the gold and machinery to make the switch work. The answer was better merchandise and services for less. Actually "that appeal...did go out for two years after the blow up, and it will mark the real beginning of the up-turn in prosperity... ." Young never named the source of the "appeal."<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, Young believed that unemployment could be conquered by positive thinking. He told of meeting a discouraged young man who had been unemployed for months. He advised the young man "to deposit the following thoughts in your mental bank... 'I am not afraid. I am a success, not a failure, I have an inexhaustible supply of courage, energy, confidence, and perseverance.'" It worked and the young man soon got a job. Thus there was no need to re-organize or reform the economic system, since prosperity could be achieved

by returning to the old virtues as exemplified by the "giving habit" and by practicing positive thinking. But a New York Times reviewer doubted that Young's approach would end the Depression. And A. A. Heist in the Christian Century, agreed, warning his readers that

one should not be fooled by the suggestion that to share his /Young's/ fortune of "mental peace and soul serenity" will ensure material wealth. As "a cure for our economic ills"...it belongs to the Pollyanna age of business from which even Rotary clubs and chambers of Commerce have passed during the last few months.<sup>13</sup>

At the time of publication Young's book created very little interest, and The Book Review Digest lists only three short reviews. But A Fortune To Share found an audience in America and was the third best-selling non-fiction book in 1932.<sup>14</sup>

Young appealed to people less sophisticated than the readers of Lippmann and even Dimnet. Probably it was the clarity and simplicity of Young's solution and style which attracted them. Unlike Lippmann and Dimnet, Young trusted the masses, and directed his message directly to them. Even his prose was extremely colloquial. Young believed that the conquest of fear was merely a matter of realizing how little man really needed to survive. A little common sense and intuitive faith would suffice. There was no need to undergo elaborate psychoanalysis, or assume the heroic burden of Lippmann's stoicism, or to keep diaries, or to go to con-

fession, or to take a deep interest in art or literature or philosophical debates. Young's view of religion was equally simple and direct. All religions were good. There was no need to discuss theology or ritual. Practicing the golden rule would automatically lead both to personal happiness and to business success. (After all Christ himself had been a successful salesman, as Bruce Barton had pointed out earlier in the twenties.) Even unemployment could be overcome through positive thinking, an optimistic technique which had a long tradition of popularity in America as exemplified by the earlier work of men like Albert Shaw, Frank Haddock, Orestes Swett Marden, Emil Coué and Napoleon Hill. Young believed that each individual controlled his own destiny; one had only to make a few simple choices to find happiness. No one was beyond hope. This optimistic message appealed to many Americans, especially those who were still captivated by the myth of the rugged individual, despite the fact that they lived in a nation dominated by large corporations and intricate social relationships.<sup>15</sup>

The next best-selling author also stressed individualism, but was more cold-blooded and elitist. Unlike Young, he believed that happiness was possible only for the fortunate few; in fact, he considered the Depression a blessing because it weeded out the unfit.

1. Vash Young, A Fortune To Share (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1931), pp. 15-16.
2. Ibid., pp. 36, 41-46, 50.
3. Ibid., pp. 20, 66-74, 79, 85.
4. Ibid., pp. 65, 89, 140.
5. Ibid., pp. 65, 150-151, 155.
6. Ibid., p. 51.
7. Ibid., pp. 22, 54-56, 60-62, 74-75.
8. Ibid., pp. 52-53, 55.
9. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
10. Ibid., pp. 23-25, 56, 137.
11. Ibid., pp. 91-97.
12. Ibid., pp. 27-28, 30.
13. Anon., Review of A Fortune To Share, New York Times, Sept. 20, 1931, p. 27; A. A. Heist, "Good Medicine But Not a Panacea," The Christian Century, Nov. 4, 1931, p. 1387; Young, pp. 33-34.
14. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967) p. 145; Marion A. Knight (ed.), The Book Review Digest 1931 (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1932), p. 1177.
15. Donald Meyer, The Positive Thinkers (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 144-157.

## CHAPTER 4

Walter Pitkin

In Life Begins at Forty (1932), Walter Pitkin introduced a number of new themes to the genre of best-selling guides to happiness. Pitkin was the first writer to ignore religion, to endorse Social Darwinism, and to attack both the American culture and the inefficiency of American capitalism. Pitkin was unique in yet one other way. He was also the first to condemn the work ethic of the nineteenth century. Pitkin, a professional writer and professor of journalism at Columbia University, insisted that most Americans were unhappy because they had been deceived by a myth. They still believed that man should "find the largest free outlet of" his personality in his work. But this was seldom possible, for few men were

small enough to be absorbed by the activities of pounding a linotype machine or entering bank deposits in a ledger or selling overalls to country grocers or greasing automobiles...or writing advertisements for talcum powder... Possibly one job in 500 contains within its own routine variety, difficulty, and suggestiveness enough to stimulate both the body and mind of the worker. The 499 other jobs compel their workers to look beyond the scene of toil for a chance to live.

And even those lucky enough to have challenging work seldom had the wisdom to use their good fortune to construct rich lives. Most Americans were trapped by a stereotype. They

clung "to the faded shreds of a pioneer outlook in which harsh toil, ceaseless striving, overshrewdness, animal cunning, and crude piety blend badly." They were "hang-over Puritans" who tried to legislate the lives of others. They were shallow and struggled to keep up with the Joneses. They carried their problems to bed, schemed relentlessly, and drove themselves to make more and more money, usually producing junk for an economy which specialized in selling useless goods and services at inflated prices. Then, instead of relaxing after work, Americans "buzz in the social bee hive," run from club to club, eat, smoke and drink too much and are surprised when their health declines. Around forty most Americans become miserable because their bodies rebel against the senseless routine they insist on continuing. In general the American culture and economy were geared to the mentality of morons. And the women of America were as bad off as the men:

They sit around wringing their hands....they dash hither and yon, joining clubs, signing petitions, mixing cocktails, reading best-sellers, touring Europe, doing anything to flee from that boredom which is the curse of our industrial barbarism! Their frenzy and flutter reveal their total lack of Real education.<sup>1</sup>

To escape this trap, Americans were admonished to live by Pitkin's two cardinal rules; work only for the sake of enjoying life, for "he who works for anything else is a fool;" and "remember that there is a proper career for each decade which is determined chiefly by the energy demands of

the work." Pitkin graded the energy demands of specific work; the most demanding was the arduous toil of managing people; followed by physical labor, public speaking and acting, writing, and pure thinking in that order. "We must learn that the ways of youth cannot be the ways of middle age...We must learn a new division of labor and responsibility. Let those past forty plan, while the young carry out programs." Since our energy supply drops as we grow older

the heavy work of the world must be done by the young. Not alone the digging of ditches! The managing of large affairs must be theirs too. They need not become yes men who carry out commands of the greybeards; they need only learn to utilize the information and broad perspectives of the able old. They must look upon hard work as the sure road to wisdom, rather than as a stepladder to fame.

After forty a man should cut down on arduous tasks, and begin to live a richer, more varied life. But Pitkin emphasized that life begins at forty only for those who had prepared themselves beforehand. For to find work and play that call for no more energy than a man can afford to expend, requires certain skills and attitudes which need time to develop. A man must train himself to think, write and speak. He must also learn to be flexible, so he can switch jobs if necessary.<sup>2</sup>

At forty a wise man is more likely to manage himself intelligently. He has less energy but "he manipulates every mouse power so that it does the work of a hundred horses."



He eliminates non-essentials which once taxed his time and energy. The indispensables receive the full force of his energy. Thus at forty a wise man "cuts out most of his golf and drops tennis cold." He eats more lightly and sleeps eight hours religiously. He begins to read more. He experiments with new hobbies. He also travels more for "to know the world first-hand is one of the foundations of culture." At forty five, he substitutes gardening for golf, and reduces the time he spends managing people. He studies economics, business and government. Thus in his fifties he has the skills to become an elder statesman, and spends most of his time writing and giving his advice to others.<sup>3</sup>

Pitkin believed that a wiser division of labor would benefit society as well as the individual. Clemenceau, Kitchener, Joffre and Woodrow Wilson were all too old to produce the energy needed to administer the tasks they attempted in World War I. They should have served as advisors, and left the arduous work to younger men. As it was, the older men "shattered the old civilization through the incompetence of senile egotism." American business was also in a bad state. It had

been mismanaged by amateur directors...We have ...more than 25,000 corporations which sorely need more intelligent directors. They have been muddling along for years with the sons of multimillionaires, slick promoters, super-salesmen, vice-presidents of banks, and sundry other gentlemen whose only claim to seats...is their wealth...

The tragic events of the past twenty years have demonstrated the pitiful incompetence of these directors.

Most of the leaders of industry, finance, and trade were basically ignorant men who were "little more than promoted salesmen, and elevator boys... ." They seldom understood the value of research and long-range analysis. They should be replaced with America's best thirteen thousand business men between forty and sixty five who would specialize in directing management.<sup>4</sup>

In general, America wasted its mature talents. The whole country would benefit if the older professionals were put in charge of educating the American consumer, planning reforms for the cities, the schools, politics, agriculture and the motion picture and radio industries. There was also plenty of work for those over forty who did not possess first-class minds, the carpenters, social workers, mechanics and nurses, etc.. They should be used as advisors and teachers. "Probably 50,000 [Social workers] would be needed to clean up sink holes like New York City and Chicago." And if the country had a million full-time workers politics could "be purged of the dirty politicians and their abominable organizations."<sup>5</sup>

But Pitkin doubted that America would adopt a wise approach to life as long as the minds of its citizens continued to be ruined by a primitive and destructive education

system. America favored "the Delicatessen School of Pedagogy" which believed that the "goods sold" must be "superlatively dainty, well-seasoned, sliced wafer-thin, prettily packaged, and sold in exceedingly small quantities....A customer who endeavored to buy a square meal on this basis would be a lunatic. Here we have an institution for nibblers only." The system produced immature and shallow people, and most Americans "are, at forty, still children in many respects." Moreover, we were dominated by old-fashioned ideals. Algebra was taught to millions who would never use it. "French, English, and other grammar is drilled into resistant minds which never learn to speak any language well and can find no meaning in the grammar itself. Those who have absolutely nothing to say are assiduously driven to write it out in full..." This approach may have been "sound enough in a simple farm-and-village society, where the tempo was sluggish, progress snailwise, and the strain upon rulers of business and state light." But modern America needed a change. Americans must be taught mature standards. Ideally, "all the able-bodied would go to work part-time in the fifteenth year at the latest. All would then begin to learn the serious business of making a living. The silly years of high school and college would be no more!" Thus "young people would plunge into serious work early, instead of frittering away precious years in worthless schools."

We must give children a sense of responsibility. They must learn to live by living. At an early age they should clean house, shop, cook and earn money. "Such abilities are a hundred-fold more important than modeling in clay...attending the children's concert at Carnegie Hall or composing a short story for the Senior Class... ." <sup>6</sup>

It was clear that Pitkin had little respect for American culture - the government, the economy, the schools, the social life; nothing functioned intelligently. Pitkin's contempt for the American way of life was matched by only one other pre-war writer, Alexis Carrel. But after World War II the mood changed and a number of writers wrote blistering condemnations of American society.

But Pitkin remained optimistic. He believed America would eventually learn to live more wisely. In fact he predicted that Utopia was "just around the corner" because "in all the more progressive factory centers life grows easier--in spite of depression and wars." And it would get even better. As technology improved, profits, wages, interest and rent would all decline, and people would see "how futile it is to aim at riches and despotic power." "The Gospel of Work will have joined astrology and palmistry: it will be no more than the after-stench of rotten quackery." Education would become more mature and realistic, and Americans would live more sensibly. "In the decade between 1970 and 1980 electric

and chemical power will be as cheap as water is now; energy will have ceased to be a factor in calculating costs of consumption goods." Food and clothing would cost a "trifle," and housing would be very inexpensive. Industry would no longer produce useless products. People would spend less on elaborate clothing, housing, cosmetics, and liquor. More time would be devoted to exercise, study, travel, conversation, games and art. "Regional planning will have transformed immense areas into parks, gardens, country homes and lovely community centers. Air conditioning will have become a public utility in a few progressive regions." Birth control would be used by all classes, and the population would decline from its peak of 148,000,000 in 1970 to 75,000,000 by 2100. And relatively, the number of young would decline the most, and that would be a good thing because we would no longer need their energy, while their bad taste inevitably leads to wasteful production. The population decline would also reduce land prices and promote decentralization. The disappearance of big cities would improve the moral climate of America; for city life led to a disintegration of family life, while decentralization fostered parental control. International peace would be secured because the nations of the world have the chemical weapons to destroy one another.<sup>7</sup>

Of course some people would not be bright enough to

develop the skills and attitudes required by the new life style:

Already we begin to drive out the stupid, the unskilled, and the misplaced alien, not with whips and scorn but through the kindlier method of firing him for keeps. Watch the outbound stream of European and Mexican toilers and you see the process in the first spurt. It must accelerate the years, for the superior people are gaining relatively on the inferior.

And the low-grade native Americans were also doomed. Industrial America would have less and less use for the only "product" they have to offer, muscle power. It would be best if they left America for more primitive countries which still had some need of their physical labor, since if they remain they "will be thrust farther and farther back into the lands of the hill-billy and the cracker. By 1975 the best quarter billion acres of America will hold none of their kind."<sup>8</sup>

Pitkin was so optimistic about the future that he described the crash of 1929 as "the luckiest event in American history; for it marked the beginning of a new era in which the nit-wits steadily lose ground to the Best Minds." Moreover, "thanks to hard times, industries are rapidly adopting the five-day week, and the six hour day. We shall never go back to the old order." Like most pre-war best sellers, Pitkin said very little about the Depression. He seemed to accept it as an act of nature, and made no attempt to explain its origins.<sup>9</sup>

A shrewd American would not wait for the future Utopia. He would do what he could now to educate himself in the ways of maturity, despite the fact the nation was still dominated by a barbarian culture. But self-education would not be easy. The American culture crippled its people. Even the able and lucky ones spent ten or fifteen years of their mature life trying to undo the damage inflicted by parents and schools. But it could be done. "Only the weak and the neurotic are slaves to their infancy." In this, Freud, Jung, and Adler were right. But their theories of regression, suppression and dissociation did not apply to mature men. Mature men did not live to fulfill childhood wishes. Mature men controlled their own destiny.<sup>10</sup>

Of course for most Americans self-education was impossible. For to rise above the barbaric culture, a man needed money to provide leisure. But most Americans had nothing left after paying for the necessities of life. Only the rich and some of the middle class, approximately eighteen million people, had the needed surplus. The "remaining one hundred and ten million Americans" must "spend their days grubbing away for bread and butter." They were doomed to a bleak existence. But this was the nature of life:

...Fools die young, superior people learn to live late. As for the average citizen, he goes on working, colorless and inert, neither a joy to himself nor a burden to anybody else. Neither

he nor the fool will read these pages, so we may safely blurt the truth about them both. Just as freedom is only for the free, and power for the powerful, so with living: life begins at forty for those who have something to live for and in and by. For the empty, it is a void. For the stupid, it is a stupidity. For the weak, it is a conscious death. But for the vigorous and the vivid, it is the end of an overture and the beginning of still greater music.

So we come at length to a pleasant thought. One of the richest rewards of life after forty is the infrequency of fools. The silliest, the stupidest, the most vicious, and the most reckless of your generation have, ere this meridian is crossed, gone the way of the worm. Your company embraces a steadily growing majority of sensible, substantial, enterprising, shrewd, healthy, and generally prosperous people. So, if you are lucky enough to cross forty, you draw an extra dividend in the form of more charming associates.

Pitkin was not sure whether the stupidity of the masses was due to heredity or environment, but in either case he wasted little sympathy on them. And his reviewers were not offended by his callousness. Only "Quadráginta" of the Saturday Review of Literature was even mildly affronted by Pitkin's indifference to the fate of "inferior" people. His other critics ignored the issue. Alexis Carrel in 1936 was the only other best-selling writer who preached Social Darwinism so openly.<sup>11</sup>

The New York Herald Tribune reviewer agreed with Pitkin that much of American life was infantile, but found the book poorly organized and not well thought out. "Quadráginta" doubted that the future would be as Utopian as Pitkin depicted it. Furthermore, he found Pitkin's message stale and remin-



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iscent of Rotary Clubs, revival meetings and college hygiene lectures. But despite indifferent reviews, Life Begins at Forty became the number one best-selling non-fiction book of 1933, with a sale of 88,895. It was number two in 1934.<sup>12</sup>

According to "Quadraginta" of the Saturday Review of Literature, Pitkin wrote for a special audience, people hoping for the perpetuation of a fast - fading youth. Pitkin flattered older people by praising their potential wisdom and judgment. He promised a bright future if they had money and leisure, and followed his advice. His approach to happiness was even simpler than Young's. To be happy, a man had only to choose the proper career for each decade, carefully husbanding his fading energy. Pitkin defined happiness as an "emotional tone accompanying the self-realization of a personality....the smooth functioning of the entire organism as it carries out successfully the dominant desires of the moment." But "self-realization alone is not happiness. It leads to happiness only when it is enjoyed. We must attend to it, reflect upon it and hold it for tasting." Pitkin stressed action and energy. He hardly mentioned ethics, philosophy, politics, psychology, sex or the family. He treated man as a worker and consumer. And unlike Lippmann, Dimnet and Young, he did not advise men to work and sacrifice for others. He looked forward to a Utopian society, but it had

nothing to do with brotherhood or God. Pitkin ignored religion, neither supporting nor attacking it. (The next three best-selling guides took the same approach.) A wise man simply did what was best for him, and only incidentally did society benefit. Pitkin's approach was reminiscent of the invisible hand so honored in nineteenth century laissez faire economics and social darwinism. Even the Depression was ultimately beneficial. It improved work techniques and drove the unfit from industry. Eventually the wise would replace the incompetents who presently controlled an inefficient economy based on infantile waste. Moreover intelligent people would learn to ignore the work ethic of the nineteenth century. Work had no inherent merit. It was merely a means to an end. During the transition the weak and stupid suffered, but that was not the concern of the wise man; he merely made good use of his energy, and savored his wisdom.<sup>13</sup>

Pitkin had indeed simplified the search for happiness. People did not need God, psychoanalysis or disinterestedness. But the next best-seller, Edmund Jacobson, pushed beyond Pitkin, and developed an even less complicated approach to the search for the good life; he reduced it to physiology.

## NOTES

1. Walter Pitkin, Life Begins at Forty (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Co., 1932), pp. 8, 65-66, 88, 99, 112-113, 153-154.
2. Ibid., pp. 44, 45-48, 50, 78-79, 96, 152-154.
3. Ibid., pp. 38, 48-49, 51-54, 100-106.
4. Ibid., pp. 141, 151-152, 158-159.
5. Ibid., pp. 113, 160, 164.
6. Ibid., pp. 64-65, 110, 150, 163.
7. Ibid., pp. 6, 82, 122-123, 127-128, 130-132, 134, 136-139, 144, 147-148, 153.
8. Ibid., pp. 139-140.
9. Ibid., pp. 7, 143.
10. Ibid., pp. 17-18, 56-59.
11. Quadraginta, "Suckers Abound at Forty," Saturday Review of Literature, Dec. 24, 1932, p. 339; Pitkin, pp. 9, 43.
12. Anon., Review of Life Begins at Forty, New York Herald Tribune, Dec. 11, 1932, p. 18; Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), pp. 147, 149; Quadraginta, p. 339.
13. Pitkin, p. 107.

## CHAPTER 5

Edmund Jacobson

According to Edmund Jacobson, a physician associated with the University of Chicago, the pace of American life had grown steadily more frantic since the eighteen-nineties. Americans had become more and more competitive. They had repudiated the ideal of their forefathers - patient toil. They were engaged in a wild scramble for "immediate wealth and material possessions." They wanted instant success, and counted the cost chiefly in terms of dollars. "Few persons cared what their expenses were in nervous and mental energies." And the irrationality of their social lives only increased the tension afflicting modern men. Americans competed as much socially as economically. They desperately wanted attention, praise and constant activity. They were over-stimulated, and strained their nerves with dancing, alcohol and fast automobiles. There had grown up "new generations of persons lacking in balance and self-control, impulsive, and dangerous for society and the state." The Depression only aggravated a situation which was already destroying the peace of mind and health of so many Americans. Jacobson wrote You Must Relax in 1934 to show people how to cope with the problem. His approach was unique. It required no knowledge of religion, philosophy or psychology. One had only to under-

stand physiology to achieve a greater degree of happiness.<sup>1</sup>

Traditionally, when a patient complained of tension and a physician found no serious damage to the structure of the nervous system, the doctor assumed that nothing was really wrong. At best, people were advised to get sufficient sleep, to take regular naps, to rest, to avoid excessive work and social activities, to vacation frequently, to exercise regularly, and to take warm baths and massages. Some were given sedatives which could be dangerous and habit-forming. But in most instances these remedies gave only moderate and temporary relief. People then looked elsewhere for help. Some went to psychoanalysts who "believe that all nervous tension is fundamentally due to sexual maldevelopment during the infantile years and can be relived through measures leading the individual to become aware of these previously unconscious urges." Thus the patient was encouraged to delve into the secrets of his unconscious. But this approach had not proved particularly successful.<sup>2</sup>

Some nervous people sought relief through the physical manipulation of their joints and nerves. Others went to pseudo-religious cults and charlatans. Others read books on the "Power of Mind Over Matter," and "New Thought," or they embraced theories that claimed that evil and disease were non-existent. But Jacobson had no faith in these approaches, or in the approach used by Coué and the pseudo-religious cults which

taught the sufferer to say "All is Well." From experience, Jacobson had learned that these techniques seldom distract or reassure for very long.<sup>3</sup>

Some thinkers recommended ending tension by removing the causes of worry. This approach made more sense than "the all is well" school, but its ultimate value was also limited because many of the causes of worry, such as poverty and unemployment, were extremely difficult to remove. (This was all Jacobson said about poverty.) And certain losses could never be remedied under any circumstances - for example, the death of a loved one. It was usually more practical to change one's philosophy than one's circumstances; and Jacobson was aware that

a man's concerns or worries can sometimes be diminished if he altered his ambitions or his outlook on life. Books on popular philosophy, the teachings of men like Epictetus, Epicurus, and Marcus Aurelius are illustrious efforts in this direction. The various religions tend in this same direction, particularly that taught by Buddha.

But, Jacobson, unlike Lippmann, did not develop this approach. He merely noted its existence.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, Jacobson did not concern himself with philosophy, religion, politics, economics, sex, or the family. He was not particularly interested in the stimuli which caused men to worry. Instead he sought to understand what happened physically once a man was upset, and to use this knowledge to reverse the process. He trained his patients to note what took

place when they first felt nervous. They inevitably reported that some stimuli triggered the process; they saw, or heard, or remembered something which made them feel uneasy. At the same time, they also felt a degree of muscle tension, frequently so slight that it would have escaped detection except that they had been trained to look for it. Jacobson's goal was to teach his patients to relax this muscular tension quickly. Relaxation was defined as the complete absence of all contraction. Relaxation produced immediate benefits because "when muscles relax, the nerves to and from these muscles relax also.... ." And if a patient learned to relax the voluntary nervous system, he usually got similar quiescence of the involuntary system. And all this added up to relief because Jacobson believed that "it is physically impossible to be nervous in any part of your body, if in that part you are completely relaxed." The ultimate aim was to learn to pass from the state of tension to complete relaxation within a few minutes or less, and to repeat this again and again until relaxation became habitual. Jacobson saw his approach as the reverse of Pavlov's method of producing conditioned reflexes. Pavlov formed new habits; Jacobson aimed at undoing old connections.<sup>5</sup>

Jacobson began by teaching his patients to recognize muscle tension in various parts of the body so that they

clearly understood the difference between tension and relaxation. (In the 1970's some scientists were using electronic equipment to improve a patient's ability to detect tension.) Then the patient learned to relax one small part of his body at will, adding other portions gradually until the whole body was relaxed. To begin with, the patient learned to master this technique while in a supine position, then while standing, and finally while moving through his regular life. Some patients learned in a week, others in months, some in years.<sup>6</sup>

During the treatment, reality was always faced;

The purpose is not to palliate the unavoidable hardships of life but to recognize them clearly and to live through them successfully. No attempt is here made to paint joyfully in words what is an evident source for misery. Rather, the aim is to reduce excess emotion so that adjustment can be made to the source of grief or anxiety with such calm that health and efficiency are not seriously affected.

If you learn to relax your muscles, "questions that seemed fundamental, crying aloud for an answer, may still appeal to your intellect but no longer affect your emotions so morbidly."<sup>7</sup>

Jacobson was even less concerned than Pitkin with philosophy, religion, ethics, politics, economics, sex and the family. He never questioned the purpose of life, or supported any particular life style. Jacobson simply ignored the various stimuli which triggered worry. Instead he concentrated on controlling muscular reactions, which, he said, would limit



tension irrespective of the source.

In a sense, Jacobson made happiness dependent on a physical skill. Virtue or psychological insight had nothing to do with it. Theoretically a killer or a manufacturer of shoddy goods could employ the technique to overcome guilt or anxiety. Thus Jacobson's approach had some very interesting moral and philosophical implications, but no critic commented on this aspect of Jacobson's theory.

In general the reviews of the book were cautious. Jacobson, a physician, said his approach had the sanction of scientific research, a claim which would impress many Americans considering the prestige of science and medicine in the United States. Most reviewers refrained from overt criticism, as if they considered themselves incompetent to judge his scientific claims. They merely described Jacobson's theory, and commented that it sounded interesting and was worth investigating.<sup>8</sup>

You Must Relax was the ninth best-selling non-fiction book of 1934. Who read Jacobson? In a sense, he transcended classification. Unlike Lippmann, Dimnet, Young and Pitkin, Jacobson's approach did not presume that his readers had any particular educational or cultural background. He offered a technique available to everyone. In a pluralist society it was the perfect solution. Christian, Jew, agnostic, capitalist, socialist, nihilist--everyone and anyone could avail themselves

of the wonders of science. And yet, compared to most guides to happiness, Jacobson was relatively modest; he never promised to make his readers happy, only less nervous and fearful. The next best-selling author was more ambitious; she promised her readers not only happiness but worldly success as well.<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

1. Edmund Jacobson, You Must Relax, (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Co., 1934), pp. 4, 7-8, 141-142.
2. Ibid. pp. 21, 33, 37-38, 40-41, 129.
3. Ibid., pp. 17, 123, 158.
4. Ibid., pp. 36, 157.
5. Ibid., ix, xi, xii, 42-43, 50, 57, 150-151, 158-159.
6. Gay Luce and Erik Peper, "Mind Over Body, Mind Over Mind," New York Times Magazine, Sept. 12, 1971 p. 34; Jacobson, pp. 57-59.
7. Jacobson, pp. 123-124, 161.
8. Louis Johnson, "To Quiet Your Nerves," New York Herald Tribune, June 10, 1934, p. 13; Anon., "How To Relax," New York Times, April 29, 1934, p. 10.
9. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), p. 149.

## Chapter 6

### Dorothea Brande

Dorothea Brande had experienced personal failure. She was a magazine editor who wanted desperately to write but could not force herself to work at it. She was sure that she had talent but could never complete a project. She was crippled by inertia, tentativeness, and timidity. And the same negative attitudes ruined her social life. She became unhappy and depressed. She consulted teachers, physicians, psychologists and psychoanalysts but nothing helped. Then she came across one sentence in F. W. Myers' Human Personality which gave her a device for counteracting failure and discouragement. Her life changed. She found success and happiness, and wrote Wake Up and Live! (1936) to tell others of her discovery.<sup>1</sup>

The key to happiness, as unlikely as it may sound, was Freud's concept of the death-wish. As the individual emerged from childhood into adolescence, and then maturity, nature reconciled him to the new demands of each new stage by showing him the pleasures and rewards of the new state. As part of this same process nature prepared men for death. Thus, to make aging and extinction easier to bear, nature gave all of us a death-wish and a "will to fail," which gradually diluted our will to live and our will to power. But the will to fail and die belonged to the end of life, not in the earlier stages

where it was obviously a symptom "of something wrong."<sup>2</sup>

A premature "will to fail" prevented people from fulfilling their potential. It stifled their initiative and kept them from acting, and naked action, for Brande, was the source of happiness, just as it had been for Pitkin, and would be for Marjorie Hillis in 1936 and Helen Gurley Brown in 1962. These writers were not very contemplative, and had little interest in philosophy, theology or politics. They saw life in terms of action and movement.

The symptoms of a premature will to fail were varied and could be seen in a myriad of types: the frivolous playboy, the cracker-box philosopher dreaming in the sun, the man who works at a job which leaves him both tired and unsatisfied, those who sleep two to six hours a day more than they need, the obsessive solitaire player or crossword puzzle addict, the pathological bookworms and theatre goers, the obsessive dancers, knitters and conversationalists, the perpetual students, and the social butterflies. The real goal of all these types was "to fill life so full of secondary activities or substitute activities that there will be no time in which to perform the best work of which one is capable."<sup>3</sup>

Of course, people disguised their failure both from themselves and others. A favorite technique was rationalization; they told themselves that they would begin a new career tomorrow, or that they could not leave their mothers, or that

they would work on their true ambitions in their spare time. People used any excuse to avoid the truth. And failure did offer certain compensations. You could avoid the struggle and pain of competition, and live on day-dreams, while criticizing the imperfections of those who did real work in the real world. Some failures slipped through life without ever being fully aware of their loss, while others sensed it, and watched their lives twisted into a nightmare of regret and yearning.<sup>4</sup>

Brande defined success as

accomplishing well what one sets out to do, and in receiving in return rewards in the shape sometimes of the approval of one's peers, sometimes the quiet knowledge that the world is richer for one's contribution, or sometimes in money paid out gladly for an object or service fully worth the price to the purchaser...

"No outsider can dictate another's private definition of success," which may be calculated in terms of money, fame, applause, helping humanity, or scholarship.<sup>5</sup>

But people could only discover what they really wanted if they were completely free of the will to fail. And luckily this plague could be checked. There was a formula "on which, consciously or unconsciously every successful person acts." All one needed was "imagination and the willingness to disturb old habit-patterns for a while, to act after a novel fashion long enough to finish one piece of work." Good results would be seen at once. The energy which once went into failure --and it is a prodigious quantity--could now be used by the

will to succeed. People had to realize that "the unconscious dreads pain, humiliation, fatigue; it bends its efforts even more ceaselessly to the end of avoiding pain than it does to the procuring of positive pleasures." Thus, "rather than face the mere possibility of pain we will not act at all." But these same cowards will risk pain under hypnosis because the hypnotic suggestion has purged the inhibiting memory of previous failures. But hypnosis was undesirable as a therapeutic technique because it distracted the mind from reality and was followed by a feeling of depression. Luckily one could achieve the benefits of hypnosis by an act of the imagination:

You will find that if you can imaginatively capture the state of mind which would be yours if you knew you were going towards a pre-arranged and inevitable success, the first results will be a tremendous surge of vitality, of freshness....Then the long-damned-up flow sets in; directly, irresistibly, turned at last in the right direction, the current gathers strength from minute to minute.

If the reader lacked a vivid imagination, or had been badly hurt by past failures, he could build to the imagined act gradually. He should begin by remembering some past success, no matter how trivial. Then, nurturing his feeling of success, he should attempt some easy task, one he was sure to master. Thus he could gradually increase his confidence, and subsequently undertake more ambitious ventures. Brande emphasized that she was not recommending telling oneself sen-

tences such as "I cannot fail," or "I am successful in all I do." These techniques only worked for a few people. Her approach was not based on verbal conditioning; it constituted an act of imagination. She also assured her readers that they were not being invited to deceive themselves "into a feeling of success." Her technique had a pragmatic sanction; it worked. And the test of whether one was using his imagination correctly was "whether or not action follows the mental work."<sup>6</sup>

During the period of re-education, one should not seek advice concerning one's work. People must learn to be independent since only a child is dependent. It was best to set aside regular hours for work, and begin each session by freeing the mind of inhibitions. Brande also recommended practicing twelve specific disciplines, each of which "develops or strengthens a faculty of the mind which should be kept in good condition if a life is to be led purposefully and under one's own control." These disciplines included such tasks as: remaining silent for one hour a day; thinking for a half hour exclusively on one object, such as a flower or an ink bottle; voluntarily putting oneself into a situation which was unusual, such as asking for food at a farm house, or teaching a night course. Brande also recommended keeping a written record of one's progress. But if a person continued to feel lethargic or act neurotic, they should seek medical or psychological help.<sup>7</sup>



Brande received mostly favorable but short, perfunctory reviews which did little more than list the book's content. Nevertheless, Wake Up and Live! became the second best-selling non-fiction book of 1936. Part of Brande's popular appeal was due to the fact that she shrewdly mixed the old with the new. In the nineteen-twenties Freud's theories had become fashionable in the United States, and Brande combined several of his concepts with the older tradition of positive thinking, although she was reluctant to admit that she was borrowing from the older tradition since positive thinking seemed unscientific to her.<sup>8</sup>

Katherine Bregy, in Commonweal, liked Brande's book, but complained that she never clearly defined the Freudian terms she used. Was the "will to fail" the same as the "will to die?" And just how did "the will to fail" differ from an inferiority complex, or the fear of pain, or "old-fashioned laziness?" Like the other best-selling guides which used Freud, Brande never examined his ideas in depth or critically. And one might add that while Brande employed Freudian concepts, she ignored Freud's warning that man, given his biological inheritance and the structure of civilization, could expect little true happiness, even under the best of conditions.<sup>9</sup>

Brande made few intellectual demands on her readers. She conceived successful living in terms of action, energy and individual initiative. Unlike Lippmann and Dimnet, she

never discussed religion, ethics, philosophy, sex, or the Depression. Nor did she consider the possibility of changing the social environment to produce happier individuals. She treated people as isolated atoms whose life-style was determined by their personal histories and the species' genetic inheritance, which included a death-wish. Brande seemed to accept philosophical relativism. She maintained that no one could dictate another's definition of success. To be happy, people merely had to release the energy and confidence trapped by the will to fail. Like Jacobson, she concentrated on a single technique.

The next best-selling author made even fewer intellectual demands on her readers. There was no longer a need to understand Freud's death wish or any other complicated concept; happiness could be achieved through everyday common sense.

## NOTES

1. Dorothea Brande, Wake Up and Live!, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), pp. 1,4,6,8,11.
2. Ibid., pp. 18, 23-25.
3. Ibid., pp. 33-40, 44-45.
4. Ibid., pp. 26-28, 30-32, 48-54, 56.
5. Ibid., p. 62.
6. Ibid., pp. 15, 19-20, 75-76, 78, 80-81, 84-85, 87-92, 106-108.
7. Ibid., pp. 111-113, 122-123, 155-182, 186-187.
8. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), p. 153.
9. Katherine Bregy, "A Dream for the Will," Commonweal, July 24, 1936, p. 331.

## Chapter 7

### Marjorie Hillis

Marjorie Hillis wrote two best-selling guides to the good life, Live Alone and Like It in 1936, and Orchids on Your Budget in 1937. Both books had the same theme--that optimism and imagination could enable a woman to overcome both the anguish of loneliness and the limitations imposed by a low income. Of course, neither set of circumstances was pleasant, "but anyone who pities herself for more than a month on end is a weak sister and likely to become a public nuisance besides." To be happy, "you'll need at least two things: a mental picture of yourself as a gay and independent person, and spunk enough to get the picture across... ." No woman should become discouraged. She had only to decide what kind of life she wanted and then arrange it. Drive, ambition and determination were the keys to successful living. And no woman should expect help or kindness from other people. If people were good to her, that was a pleasant extra, not a necessity. She must learn to be independent. Like Pitkin and Brande, Hillis stressed action as the key to happiness. She basically ignored religion, philosophy, politics and psychology. Life was simply a matter of keeping busy, of seeing people socially, of working, of consuming goods and services, without reflecting on the ideals, mores or tastes of the era.<sup>1</sup>

Hillis made it clear that she was not writing for the

destitute. Her audience still had some income, and for them, the Depression actually offered new opportunities for "conditions have never been so favorable for those of us who are not millionaires, but still want the orchids (or parties or attractive apartments)." Family and money were less important now. The Depression had remolded public opinion. The emphasis was now on wit and grace. At one time you needed money, but since the Depression "even Society admitted that Nice People were often poor." In fact, money often made people dull, while "a slight financial pressure sharpens the wits, though it needn't sharpen the disposition."<sup>2</sup>

To begin with, a woman determined to enjoy life, should plan a budget, and know how much money she had to spend. And the budget should include some money for entertaining, for companionship was very important. A woman should never be afraid to invite people for a visit, a party or an evening out. And she should never sit around waiting for other people to make the first move. Meet them half-way and more. And work diligently at socializing, for a variety of friends and acquaintances was one of the richest rewards of life. So extend yourself at work, become active in a church and join clubs. "Be a communist, a stamp collector or a Ladies Aid worker if you must..." but cultivate people. And if a single woman met a man she liked, she should ask him out if necessary. "After all, it's better to be brazen than neglected."

Whether or not a single woman should have an affair was "every woman's own special problem, which nobody else can settle," for times had changed, and a "woman's honor" was now "her own affair." But if a woman did have an affair, she would be wise to keep it to herself. And of course, she must be prepared to pay a price "in a thousand little shabbinesses and humiliations, in the almost inevitable bitter ending, and in nervous wear and tear." But Hillis immediately modified her liberal attitude; affairs

should not even be thought of before you are thirty. Once you have reached this age, if you will not hurt any third person and take all that you will have to take - take it silently, with dignity, with a little humor, and without any weeping or wailing or gnashing of teeth - perhaps the experience will be worth it to you. Or perhaps it won't.

Even with the reservations, this was the most unconventional approach to sex expressed by a best-selling guide until Helen Gurley Brown in 1962. Hillis was also liberal about husband hunting. If a woman, with an income, wanted a husband and knew a willing man who could not afford to marry, she should not hesitate to marry and support him. Happiness was a good investment. And even leaving out the question of love

It is perfectly understandable that any woman should like to have a man to sit at the head of her table when she entertains, and make a fourth at bridge, and go to the theatre with her, and open the ginger-ale bottles, and get out the ice cubes.

Moreover, most charming men were seldom big money-makers, for getting rich usually left little time for developing grace and charm.<sup>3</sup>

But if a woman was lucky enough to have a husband who was able to support her and give her a home and children, she should recognize her good fortune, and not spoil her luck by yearning for the world of business or the arts. Being a housewife was an honorable position, and a married woman should take her domestic duties seriously, do the best job possible, and maintain a good attitude. On the other hand, if a husband made a wife miserable, and she could not remedy the situation, she should not hesitate to divorce him.<sup>4</sup>

Hillis gave many concrete and practical suggestions for making life more enjoyable. She described the ingredients of a good party in great detail, including the recipes for Martinis, Highballs, Old-Fashions and Manhattans. Unlike Vash Young she considered alcohol, used intelligently, a valuable social lubricant. But a woman had to be careful for drunkenness was "revolting," and "shrill voices, familiarities, vulgar stories, and other obvious results of a lack of discretion are, frankly, disgusting." Hillis also stressed the advantages of dressing well, and wearing the proper jewelry. Good clothes and good grooming created an image which people reacted to positively. Thus "a dowdy appearance is as much of a handicap as a crippled leg and not so unavoidable."

To stay in style, a woman should buy and study a few issues of the "most authoritative fashion magazines every spring and fall." A woman could also create a chic, vibrant image in other ways. If she could not get to see the latest plays or read the latest books, she should read the reviews carefully, and sprinkle references to the play or book in her conversation. No one will know the difference. Hillis ignored the moral implications of her advice. She considered illusion and deception legitimate social tools. (Helen Gurley Brown in 1962 would agree.) Hillis was especially proud of a woman who, despite a large salary cut, maintained such a deceptive facade that her friends and relatives never guessed her change of circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

To develop a rich life, it was best to cultivate a wide variety of interests: people, clubs, hobbies, clothes, food and travel, etc. And "get into the habit of planning your week ahead, instead of drifting along, thinking something pleasant will turn up." And most important, don't spoil what you have by yearning for what you cannot have.<sup>6</sup>

Although Hillis clearly stated that she did not write for destitute people, she did devote one chapter of Orchids to the problem of "real poverty." "Most people, and especially most men, would rather admit ignorance, dissipation, being jilted and a collection of physical disabilities than having no bank account." And this reluctance usually indicated a



healthy attitude, for "there is something definitely wrong with people who don't mind needing to be helped....When you stop minding, when being helped becomes a habit, you're on the skids... ." One must never believe that the world owes one a living. "You owe it something worth paying for." But the Depression did present a special problem; the crisis was so severe that "at this particular stage of our national history" it was permissible to ask a friend for help. Under the circumstances he would not look down on you. And if you had no friends to ask, you were a "little suspicious," and should do some serious self-investigating. (Hillis did not suggest any particular technique of investigation.) In any case, never let asking become a habit. Get on your own quickly. And always remember that you got yourself in trouble. Don't use the Depression as an excuse, for failure was seldom altogether a matter of bad luck. Many people had had a series of bad breaks

but they have usually put a little something by for just such emergencies, or they have made connections, or a reputation that helps them to another job before the crisis is too acute....Even the poor starving widow with several small children has frequently, if the truth were known, passed up a few opportunities to build up a small savings account or made it difficult for her husband to save up for investments....And most of the saddest hard luck stories can be explained by the victim's character, once you know him well enough.

If you could not find a job, and felt desperate, go to church, for church was a good place to think, and thinking was a legitimate form of worship, as well as a means of solv-

ing problems. Hillis was convinced that a person who thought things through could find work since "there is a job ready for most people who are willing to work and aren't too high-hat about the kind of work they will do." But above all one should not envy those with work, or give in to self-pity. It was too demoralizing.<sup>7</sup>

Hillis's economic values were typical of the pre-war best-selling guides. With the exception of Alexis Carrel in 1936, they never questioned the economic system, despite the Depression. And they never explored the complex, inter-relatedness of the modern industrial structure. They wrote as if they lived in an economy where it was still possible for each person to be self-sufficient. Furthermore, the reviews of Hillis's books reflected the same attitude.<sup>8</sup>

Live Alone and Like It! sold 100,000 copies in 1936, and was the eighth best-selling non-fiction book. Orchids On Your Budget finished fifth in 1937. Dorothea Lawrence Mann in the Boston Evening Transcript thought that the mere publication of a book like Live Alone and Like It! was indicative of a cultural revolution which had changed the status of women in America. Large numbers of women could now consider living alone because for the first time in history they were in a position to earn good salaries, frequently in interesting jobs. Women, single or married, could at last look forward to rewarding careers, a fact which automatically made them less dependent

on men. (In 1964 Betty Friedan's best-selling The Feminine Mystique would claim that the revolution had subsequently been sabotaged.)<sup>9</sup>

But just which women read Hillis? It is doubtful that she appealed to Lippmann's audience, or Dimnet's, or even Vash Young's. She might have appealed to Pitkin's readers for she too stressed action and materialism. Her formula for happiness was deceptively simple: remain optimistic and imaginative; put up a good front, even if it required a bit of deception; and become active in a variety of interests. She gave a good deal of advice concerning clothes, parties, apartments, friends, dating and love affairs. She ignored the possibility that psychological problems might prevent a person from following her common sense approach. Like Pitkin she simply assumed that her readers were psychologically sound. Therefore it was only a matter of exercising will power.

She was just as casual about the goals and life style she recommended. For the most part she accepted the middle class standards of her day without reflecting on them, although, within certain limits, she had a permissive attitude toward sex. And despite the Depression, she never questioned the wisdom of the economic system, only the good faith and initiative of the unemployed, and the failures. She wrote for people who still had an income, and eased their conscience by reminding them that the people who failed were responsible for

their own plight. In fact, she advised her readers to exploit the Depression, an attitude in keeping with the nineteenth century concept of laissez faire economics and Social Darwinism.

Even Hillis' style and choice of material reflected her casual approach. She did not make heavy demands on her readers. Her prose was folksy and breezy; and she never defended her beliefs with extended arguments or references to famous psychologists, philosophers or classical literature. Instead, she stated her position axiomatically and illustrated her principles with colorful anecdotes. Like Pitkin and Brande she never really discussed or questioned the purpose of existence. One gets the impression that living was merely a matter of energy and action, of sustaining motion, of keeping abreast of "the sound and the fury" without becoming depressed and bitter. But of course, if she and Pitkin and Brande had brought this theme into the open, they would have given their books another dimension, and introduced new and complex problems which would not have appealed to the American middle-class.

The next best-selling author doubted that Western Civilization could survive the shallowness of people like Hillis, Pitkin and Brande. The West faced a deadly crisis and survival required wisdom and planning, not blind, self-centered action.

## NOTES

1. Marjorie Hillis, Live Alone and Like It! (New York: Sun Dial Press, 1936), pp. 11-12, 17-19, 27.
2. Marjorie Hillis, Orchids on Your Budget (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1937), pp. 10, 12, 14, 65-66.
3. Hillis, Live Alone and Like It!, pp. 27-28, 40-41, 93-98; Orchids on Your Budget, pp. 65, 135.
4. Hillis, Orchids on Your Budget, pp. 16, 75-76.
5. Hillis, Live Alone and Like It!, pp. 30, 36, 39, 102, 104-105, 107-109; Orchids on Your Budget, pp. 19, 38-39, 41, 57, 123-124.
6. Hillis, Live Alone and Like It!, pp. 45, 57.
7. Hillis, Orchids on Your Budget, pp. 157-159, 160-164.
8. Agnes Rogers, "Advice to the Luxury-Lorn," Saturday Review of Literature, June 26, 1937, p. 5; Lisle Bell, "More for Your Money," New York Herald Tribune, June 13, 1937, p. 6; Anon., Review of Live Alone and Like It!, Springfield Republican, July 31, 1936, p. 12; Lorine Pruette, "Pleasures of Independence," New York Herald Tribune, Aug. 9, 1936, p. 12.
9. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), pp. 153-155; Dorothea Lawrence Mann, "On the Notable Pleasures of Living Alone," Boston Evening Transcript, Aug. 22, 1936, p. 2.

## Chapter 8

## Alexis Carrel

Alexis Carrel, a Nobel Prize winning scientist and a practicing Catholic, was even more pessimistic about the state of civilization than Lippmann or Pitkin. The Industrial Revolution and science had completely disrupted the life style of the West. The great white civilization, heir to Greece and Rome, was rapidly deteriorating. And it was questionable whether or not the West would make the sacrifices necessary to save itself. But Carrel hoped it would, and wrote Man the Unknown (1935) as a plea for action.

The decay had reached its zenith in the United States. Man had become a slave to the machine. Production was constantly increased so that people could consume larger and larger quantities of useless goods and services. "The worker spends his life repeating the same gesture thousands of times each day.... He is the blind horse plodding round and round the whole day long to draw from a well." The position of both the proletarians and the white collar workers was "as low as was that of the feudal serf." Symptoms of the deterioration were everywhere. Nervousness, insanity, crime and feeble-mindedness were all on the rise. People were worried, overworked, insecure about their jobs, and worn out prematurely. The diet of industrial society was poor, and included much too much processed food, and sugar. Consequently there was

a clear increase in disease and physical disorder. And the soul was just as poorly nourished as the body. Religion was in decline because ministers had rationalized it and destroyed its mystical base. Morals were abysmal. And the Freudians had made the situation worse with their stress on materialism. People were sexually promiscuous, homosexuality was increasing and alcoholism was prevalent. Modern cities reflected the same decay. They consisted "of monstrous edifices and of dark, narrow streets full of gasoline fumes, coal dust, and toxic gases, torn by the noise of the taxicabs, trucks, and trolleys and thronged ceaselessly by great crowds." Like the society, the cities had grown haphazardly, unplanned and unsuited to the needs of men. And the neglect was costly in human terms. Modern man had lost the zest for life, and

takes pleasure in watching...athletic spectacles, in seeing childish and vulgar moving pictures, in being rapidly transported without effort, or in looking at swiftly moving objects. They are soft, sentimental, lascivious, and violent. They have no moral, esthetic or religious sense.

Advertising had become a highly developed art, and instead of countering the decline, was extensively used to control and mislead people into accepting this inferior life style.<sup>1</sup>

The rate of deterioration would probably accelerate because man had interfered with natural selection. In fact, society was actively aiding the weak and unfit to survive:

Modern civilization, with the help of hygiene, comfort, good food, soft living, hospitals,

physicians and nurses, has kept alive many human beings of poor quality. These weaklings and their descendents contribute, in a large measure, to the enfeeblement of the white races.

And while the weak were coddled, the problem was further compounded because the best elements of the race refused to breed, and thus faced extinction. In the United States, "it is the newcomers, peasants and proletarians from primitive European countries, who beget large families. But their offspring are far from having the value of those who came from the first settlers of North America." Unfortunately, the women of good stock refused to have children. Their minds were corrupted by selfishness, the lure of pleasure, and the feminist movement. Meanwhile, "the Asiatics and Africans...are increasing with marked rapidity. Never have the European races been in such great peril as today."<sup>2</sup>

Considering these trends, the Depression was probably a fortunate event. It dramatized the corruption endangering civilization. The edifice had at last collapsed, and the rot was exposed. Discerning people understood that the causes of the Depression were not uniquely economic or financial:

Should we not also incriminate the corruption and the stupidity of the politicians and the financiers, the ignorance and the illusions of the economists? Has not modern life decreased the intelligence and the morality of the whole nation?

The Depression was simply a symptom of racial and moral decay.

But there was still a chance to save civilization. The



"great white races" could regenerate themselves. They were "the hardest of all races," and could, if they acted resolutely, maintain their "predominance over the rest of the world" thanks to their potential robustness and mental superiority. "The ancestral potentialities still exist in the germ plasm of their weak offspring." To recover his unique capabilities Western man must realize that he has fallen into an imbalance. Modern civilization had "amputated his moral, esthetic and religious functions." It had over-stressed his material needs. Moreover he had become too specialized. To reactivate his potential, Western man had to restore a proper harmony to his life. And to do this, man needed a moderate amount of economic security and leisure balanced by sufficient privation and struggle. He must relearn the value of privation and hardship. He needed variety. He must fight, suffer, love and hate freely. And most important

it is imperative that social classes should be synonymous with biological classes. Each individual must rise or sink to the level for which he is fitted by the quality of his tissues and of his soul. The social ascension of those who possess the best organs and the best minds should be aided. Each one must have his natural place. Modern nations will save themselves by developing the strong. Not by protecting the weak.<sup>4</sup>

As it was presently constituted modern civilization seemed incapable of restoring the proper balance or of producing people endowed with imagination, intellect and courage. Political leadership was poor, and frequently corrupt. Busi-

nessmen and bankers tended to be greedy and short-sighted.

"The democratic principle has contributed to the collapse of civilization in opposing the development of an elite...The standardization of men by the democratic ideal has already determined the predominance of the weak." But democratic dogma was "breaking down under the blows of the experience of the nations....The equality of...rights is an illusion... The only means of producing democratic equality among men was to bring all to the lowest level."<sup>5</sup>

But if the proper balance were somehow restored and an elite developed, the white races would return to their former greatness. Then Western man would once again be a proud creature who was

endowed with natural immunity to fatigue and to fear. He does not think about his health or his security...He looks upon himself as destined to fight, to love, to think, and to conquer...His action on his environment is as essentially simple as the leap of a wild animal upon its prey.

But to re-establish the needed balance, the West must re-design its educational system to inculcate the necessary moral, religious, esthetic and intellectual values in its people.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately Carrel was never explicit about the metaphysical basis of his morality. He was sure there was something beyond the "known" whether it was called God, a Platonic ideal or absolute beauty. He himself used the word God, but

was rather vague and uncertain about God's nature, aims and relationship to man. He was also uncertain concerning life after death, but suspected some form of immortality existed. Ultimately, he was sure about very little, and admitted that "the search for God is, indeed, an entirely personal undertaking."<sup>7</sup>

Yet despite metaphysical uncertainties, Carrel was positive that mysticism brought "inner strength, spiritual light, divine love, ineffable peace," and ultimate truth. Moreover, he believed that "Christian mysticism constituted the highest form of religious activity," and was superior to Hindu and Tibetan mysticism because it had received intellectual insight from Greece and order and measure from Rome. Besides mysticism, Carrel believed in miraculous cures, telepathy, clairvoyance and levitation. Later in the post-war era, Norman Vincent Peale would cite Carrel to verify his own belief in faith healing.<sup>8</sup>

Man had a mixed potential for good, bad and mediocre conduct, but Carrel was sure the moral sense could be "developed through education, discipline and will power." Carrel never explained how or why God graced one man with will power while he denied it to another.<sup>9</sup>

Carrel was more explicit about the more mundane aspects of education:

Dogs themselves learn not to steal. Honesty, sincerity, and courage are developed by the

same procedures as those used in the formation of reflexes - that is, without argument, without discussion, without explanation. In a word, children must be conditioned.

Each individual would be raised as a male or a female, and neither sex would be allowed to "manifest the sexual tendencies, mental characteristics, and ambition of the opposite sex." Any other procedure was opposed to nature and dangerous, for sexual glands have a powerful influence on personality. "The testicle engenders audacity, violence and brutality..." Moreover, the shorter life of the ovaries "gave the aging woman great inferiority to man, whose glands remained active until extreme old age." Women's main function was clearly motherhood. This was for their own and the race's good, for "women who have no children are not so well balanced and become more nervous" than those who do.<sup>10</sup>

Early moral responsibility and harsh physical activity were extremely important for children, and brought about the harmony of muscles, bones, organs and consciousness. Their diet should be coarse and feature meat and "late fermented drink," both of which stimulate action, as opposed to milk, vegetables, fruit and cereals which helped produce peaceful, weak, submissive people. Carrel was even specific about where schools should be located. "Endurance and strength generally develop in the mountains, in the countries where seasons are extreme, where mists are frequent and sunlight rare, where hurricanes blow furiously, where the land is poor and sown

with rocks." In general, the white race does not do well with too much sun or heat. This was clearly illustrated in France where "the population of the north are far superior to those of the Mediterranean shores." "Florida and the French Riviera are suitable for weaklings, invalids, and old people, or normal individuals in need of a short rest."<sup>11</sup>

For adults, Carrel favored decentralization. People would be happier "in small communities instead of in immense droves." And the Western world had to stop transforming farmers, artisans and professionals into manual and intellectual proletarians. The old skills and professions should be encouraged. And since the modern business techniques and mass production prevented this, industry had to be reorganized.<sup>12</sup>

Also to protect itself, civilization must learn to spot and segregate people with intellectual and moral maladies. Defectives and criminals were a burden to civilization. "The abnormal prevent the development of the normal...The community must be protected... ." Thus until society could prevent criminality, feeble-mindedness, and insanity through eugenics and education, the defectives must be separated by the community:

The conditioning of petty criminals with the whip, or some more scientific procedure, followed by a short stay in a hospital would probably suffice to insure order. Those who have murdered, robbed while armed with automatic pistol or machine gun, kidnapped children, despoiled the poor of their savings, misled the public in important matters, should be humanely and economically disposed of

in small euthanasic institutions supplied with proper gases. A similar treatment could be advantageously applied to the insane, guilty of criminal acts. Modern society should not hesitate to organize itself with reference to the normal individual. Philosophical systems and sentimental prejudices must give way before such a necessity. The development of human personality is the ultimate purpose of civilization.<sup>13</sup>

If the white race was to be saved the necessary reforms had to be begun immediately, but Carrel knew that this would be difficult for "the mode of existence brought to us by technology is as pleasant as the habit of taking alcohol, opium or cocaine." But western man must make the effort. The transition would be painful "for he is both the marble and the sculptor." But if necessary "he must shatter his own substance with heavy blows of his hammer," even if it required "a destructive revolution. After all, the purpose of civilization was not the progress of science and machines, but the progress of man." Enlightened men must fight industrial civilization as the Encyclopedists fought the Ancien Regime. It might even be necessary to form a secret society with military discipline to research and execute the change. Carrel was the only best-selling writer to suggest the possibility of violent revolution. Hopefully society will eventually be ruled by a group of gifted individuals, reminiscent of Plato's guardians. The future leaders, an elite, would receive a broad education in all the sciences and humanities while living like medieval monks, isolated from society. At the age of fifty,

they would assume control of human affairs. Carrel was not explicit about the form of the new government, or whether it would be elected or not, but he was not opposed to a dictatorship, as was shown by his praise of Mussolini whom he called a great leader who had grown "beyond human stature." (Later, in 1941, Carrel agreed to head a research institute for Marshal Pétain's Vichy government of France; the institute was designed to improve the physical and spiritual health of Frenchmen.) In any case, Carrel predicted that, as the crisis of civilization got worse, the people of the United States would insist that the government begin to implement the needed reforms.<sup>14</sup>

The American Sociological Review, the American Journal of Sociology, and the Atlantic were all very critical of Carrel's book. Read Bain in the American Sociological Review set the tone by describing Carrel's work as a "pitiable hodge-podge" which was "mostly pure poppycock, naive speculation, opinionated guess...medieval mysticism, a kind of research foundation Fascism and superiormanism which sneers at democracy... ." A. J. Carlson in the American Journal of Sociology thought the book lacked logic, accuracy, humility, and sounded like "the froth of the seasoned raconteur at Greenwich Village cocktail parties." The three reviews specifically questioned Carrel's racism, his view of climate, class, women, economics, telepathy, miracle cures and clairvoyance.

"One wonders," wrote Hans Zinsser in the Atlantic, "how much harm may be done in the minds of the intelligent lay public by such statements." The Times Literary Supplement was less hostile, but thought that Carrel underestimated the merits of both the common man and democratic leadership. The Times conceded that civilization was not perfect, but doubted that it was anything near the absolute failure Carrel depicted. They suspected he was over reacting to the Depression. Moreover, the Times feared that Carrel's Platonic guardians would eventually develop into a dictatorship.<sup>15</sup>

Raymond Pearl in The New York Times basically liked the book, but was critical of Carrel's acceptance of telepathy and mysticism. Mary C. Colum in the Forum said Carrel mixed wisdom with puerilities, and had a mind "that is a cross between that of a village curé, a Sinclair Lewis Rotarian, and a man of profound insight into the needs of humanity... ." But she agreed that our civilization did not suit man, and thought Carrel put "forward the soundest suggestion for curing its ills." Bertrand L. Conway in the Catholic World warned his readers that they might not like Carrel's criticism of democracy, but added that he was a wise man and praised his attacks on Freud and liberal protestantism and his belief in miracles. Still, as wise as Carrel was, he was not Catholic enough for Conway, who suggested that civilization could cure its ills if only it followed the teachings of



the Catholic Church.<sup>16</sup>

Man the Unknown was the number one best-selling non-fiction book of 1936. One suspects that Carrel's book was popular partly because it was, as some critics complained, a hodgepodge, extremely speculative and inconsistent. Like most popular politicians, he managed to offer something to as many people as possible. And in the process, Carrel saw nothing wrong in combining logically inconsistent concepts. Thus he could advocate a brutal form of Social Darwinism (not even Pitkin recommended executing the socially undesirables) and white supremacy, and still claim to be a Christian. Further, Carrel saw no conflict between being scientific and believing in miracle cures, telepathy and personal immortality. The very fact that a Nobel Prize winning scientist embraced these "spiritual" and racist ideas must have made them more acceptable to many laymen. And it must be remembered that in 1936 racism and Social Darwinism were still respected doctrines in many quarters in the West. Hitler ruled in Germany, classical imperialism still flourished in Africa and India, and segregation was openly defended in the American south.<sup>17</sup>

Carrel also appealed to people who were angry because of the Depression. He lashed out at industrial society for de-humanizing man. He was the only pre-war writer who held the leaders of democracy up to scorn. He branded politicians, businessmen, bankers, and economists as failures. And to the

people who led dull, boring lives in the industrial waste land, he promised excitement and vitality, if only they re-structured society and promoted the survival of the fittest. He was the only pre-war writer in our group, in fact the only best-selling writer between 1929 and 1965, who suggested a way of life which stressed struggle, striving and excitement. Carrel's boldness contrasted sharply with the bourgeois caution and conservatism of the other best-selling guides. Moreover, Carrel was the one guide to the good life who actually wanted to reshape society, even if it required a violent revolution. The other best-selling writers saw improvement either as a matter of individual concern or as part of an automatic evolving process.

Yet, looked at from another angle, Carrel offered people a large element of escapism. Carrel believed it was the responsibility of a revolutionary elite to change society. But he was extremely vague on the details of the movement. In any case, there was little the average person could do at the moment. Therefore Carrel did not discuss techniques which could be used to change a person's personality through day to day effort. Thus a reader had the satisfaction of being told how society had failed him without being burdened with the responsibility to make daily sacrifices to improve himself, or society.

## NOTES

1. Alexis Carrel, Man the Unknown (2d ed.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), pp. XII, 3, 11, 14-15, 25, 43, 132, 139, 145, 153, 179, 233, 281, 316.
2. Ibid., pp. XI, 19-20, 211-212, 299.
3. Ibid., pp. 275, 321.
4. Ibid., pp. 1, 59-60, 109-110, 230-231, 269, 273, 276, 299, 310.
5. Ibid., pp. 21-22, 153, 271-272.
6. Ibid., pp. 110, 129-130, 138-139, 276, 315.
7. Ibid., pp. 136, 264, 267.
8. Ibid., pp. 67, 124-125, 135, 137, 147-148.
9. Ibid., pp. 128-129.
10. Ibid., pp. 89, 92, 314.
11. Ibid., pp. 87, 214, 304-306.
12. Ibid., pp. 301-302, 316.
13. Ibid., pp. 280, 318-319.
14. Joseph T. Durkin, Hope For Our Time (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. XVI, 130, 135; Carrel, pp. XVII, 62, 233, 262, 285, 294.
15. Read Bain, Review of Man the Unknown, American Sociological Review, Oct. 1936, pp. 815-817; A. J. Carlson, Review of Man the Unknown, American Journal of Sociology, March 1936, p. 677; Hans Zinsser, "Bookshelf," Atlantic, March 1936, (no page listed); Anon., Review of Man the Unknown, Times Literary Supplement, Oct. 24, 1935, p. 662.
16. Raymond Pearl, "Dr. Carrel Ponders the Nature and Soul of Man," New York Times, Sept. 19, 1935, p. 3; Mary M. Colum, "Life and Literature," Forum, March 1936, p. 192, IV; Bertrand L. Conway, Review of Man the Unknown, Catholic World, Sept. 1936, pp. 756-757.
17. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), p. 153.

## Chapter 9

### Henry Link

If Carrel was a potential revolutionary, Henry Link was an apostle of tradition. He believed that Americans were unhappy because they had denied God and forgotten the conservative wisdom of their forefathers. But it was not too late to undo the damage. As proof, Link, a psychologist and director of the Psychological Service Center of New York, offered the example of his own life.

He explained, in The Return to Religion (1936), how he had lost and regained man's most precious possession, his religious faith. A college course in the history of philosophy had treated religion as a mere superstition, pointing out the absurdities in church doctrine and showing "how the forms of religion, the doctrines, the churches, changed in keeping with the shifts of nations and political power." Another course subjected the Bible to a brutally unfavorable analysis. Many of the duller students resisted the teachers and kept their faith, but the brighter students quickly "saw the absurdity of religion." Link was Phi Beta Kappa, and soon became an agnostic. His return to religion was gradual, and "was due entirely to the routine experiences encountered in the practice of my profession, psychology."<sup>1</sup>

Link emphasized that scientific psychology was "not to be confused with the popular psychology, in the name of which

so many speculative theories have been advanced, including half truths about self-expression, inhibitions, dreams, the sub-conscious, the libido, the inferiority complex," and progressive education. Scientific psychology had nothing to do with Freud. It was based on the findings of thousands of objective tests and studies such as the Stanford-Binet IQ Test. In the course of his psychological work, Link found himself using more and more Biblical expressions and stories to reduce scientific theories to simple practical precepts which his patients could understand. He gradually realized "that the findings of psychology in respect to personality and happiness were largely a rediscovery of old religious truths." Scientific testing had merely confirmed "certain fundamental religious beliefs... ." Moreover, individuals who believed in religion had significantly better personalities, by Link's standards, than those who did not. Link was the first religiously oriented writer in our group to bolster religion by blending it with modern psychology. Later in the pre-war era, the proper relationship between religion and psychology became a major and controversial theme of best-selling guides.<sup>2</sup>

Link was never completely clear about his conversion. Was it merely a pragmatic decision concerned with good health, or was grace involved? For the most part, he sounded coldly pragmatic:

My return to religion is not the fervent or emotional return of the prodigal son. Unfor-

fortunately, it is a highly intellectual return. It is not something which all religious people would find wholly acceptable, nor do I consider it perfect myself.

"I believe in God because I have found that without the belief in some one more important than themselves people fail to achieve their own potential importance." To be happy, a person needed religion:

By nature, the individual is selfish, and inclined to follow his immediate impulses. The personality tests and the clinical experience of psychologists prove conclusively that this road leads to introversion, to emotional instability and neuroticism, to intellectual futility, to maladjustment, to unhappiness. It requires religion...to overcome the selfish impulses of the natural man and to lead him to a more successful and a fuller life.

"Happiness never resides in what an individual does... or receives, but in what he gives of himself." And to be a truly giving person, a man needed a faith which was "fundamental and which no logic can displace," religious faith. Link was a bit clearer concerning his beliefs:

I can sum up what I mean by religion, it includes the belief in God as a Supreme Being; the belief in a divine moral order expressed in the Ten Commandments and the life of Christ, and the acceptance of the Church as the chief, even though imperfect, vehicle of religious truths that are greater than science, and values that are higher than reason.

Link admitted that from the point of view of pure logic no one could prove the existence of God, or even explain why man should want to live at all. But men did want to live, and

life was not a logical or rational experience... Individuals are born for no reason of their own. They live by a mixture of instinct and reason which is neither rational nor consistent... Reason is not an end in itself but a tool for the individual to use in adjusting himself to the values and purposes of living which are beyond reason ...The mind is an instrument to live with, not to live for.

The basic values of religion were "often unreasonable and in the last analysis, beyond reason." But man must trust in God. "Psychologically, and...from every conceivable point of view, the individual seems made to believe... ." He needed faith. "Agnosticism is an intellectual disease, and faith in fallacies is better than no faith at all." Thus Link said it was better to believe in numerology and astrology, in palmistry and phrenology, in spiritualism and mental telepathy, than in nothing. And a person should never let doubt or confusion concerning the minor details of religious doctrine shake his faith. It was not really important whether or not you literally believed that the bread and wine were Christ's body and blood. Nor should a person become involved in the study of comparative religions. Link encouraged his patients simply to return to the faith of their families, whether they were Protestants, Catholics or Jews. The Catholic World found "nothing helpful in the undogmatic Y.M.C.A. religion he /Link/ offers as a relief to distressed souls. A strange world indeed which repudiates the priest as confessor and spiritual director and accepts as a guide a well-meaning but unspiritual man." It

was impossible to be certain what the Catholic World meant by Y.M.C.A. religion, but it probably referred to Link's toleration of all Christian and Jewish sects, and his indifference to dogma and such philosophical issues as the nature of evil and the necessity of hell.<sup>3</sup>

Link's tolerance and his desire to find an approach acceptable to all western religions were typical of most religiously-oriented best-selling guides both before and after World War II. They felt it was important to include everyone. But a critic like Lippmann thought that this sort of tolerance actually undermined religion for the average man found it "difficult to remain warmly convinced that the authority of any one sect is divine, when as a matter of daily experience all sects have to be treated alike."<sup>4</sup>

Link defined outgoing, self-sacrificing, happy, religious people as extroverts. An introvert was someone who was unhappy because he had learned "to substitute thinking for action, reason for faith, analysis for conviction." Luckily, an introvert could change. But psychoanalysis was not the answer. Talk was never effective. In fact, "One of the common symptoms of the over-educated, ineffective personality is an interest in psychology or the reading of books which he believes represent psychology." Actually the whole trend of modern, scientific psychology was away from analysis and toward an emphasis on work, activity, and the forming of new habits.<sup>5</sup>



The first step in becoming a happy and contented extrovert was to become religious. Next a person should make a real effort to make new friends, always accepting the demands and obligations such relationships imposed. An extrovert always considers how his conduct will effect his associates, friends and relatives. Moreover, the more you make others feel good "the more friends you will have, and the more you will be invited out... ." Thus in the end, friendship was its own reward. And never be ashamed of making mistakes and social blunders, or of being rejected. Trial and error were part of life. Link advised one woman to join a church to meet people. She replied that it was sordid to use a church to develop social grace, but Link explained that "Jesus Christ...was an extrovert" and "highly aggressive in making social contacts." Link himself went to church to please his parents, to set a good example for his children, and to discipline himself both by socializing with people who did not interest him, and by listening to sermons he rarely agreed with. Link also recommended dancing and bridge because they lead to social contact. And he advised one patient to stop reading "so called good books" which actually encouraged introversion, and limit himself to the New Yorker magazine, the Reader's Digest, a daily newspaper and a chapter each day in the Bible.<sup>6</sup>

But above all, to become extroverted, a person should marry. "Marriage is one of the most important steps in the

development of an unselfish or extrovert personality. It is better...to have made the attempt and failed, than not to have made the attempt at all." Marriage forced people to think of others. Tests showed that introverts had more divorces, and were less happily married. Divorced people also had more intellectual interests, including a liking for psychology, philosophy, chess, political radicalism, and the New Republic. They were also less interested than extroverts in social service, "uplift interests," picnics, conventions, excursions, soliciting funds for charity, the Y.M.C.A., and biblical studies. But there was no real need for either marital unhappiness or divorce. To be happily married, people had only to learn to accept obligations, and develop extroverted personalities. Women especially should stop trying to make careers for themselves, and be content to raise a family, and further their husband's career. And the Freudians should stop misguiding people. They were wrong in claiming that sexual dissatisfaction was the cause of unhappy marriages. Actually it was the emphasis put on sex that created discontent and gave people an excuse to justify their unhappiness which was really caused by their introverted personalities. In reality, sex was relatively easy to master, much easier than developing an unselfish personality, which was the true key to happiness. Considering the rising divorce rate, Link suspected it might be wiser to go back to the old custom of having parents select

their children's mate, and just telling them to make a go of it.<sup>7</sup>

Link was willing to use any technique which encouraged extroversion. He was especially impressed by a French psychologist who conducted a sanatorium for extreme introverts and for extroverts whose minds had become tired and disorganized through overuse. A disturbed patient was ordered to dig a ditch fifty feet long, three feet wide, and as deep as his own height. The patient worked each day for approximately ten hours. When the work was completed, he filled in the hole, and began a similar mindless, task. This process continued until his energies were turned outward, and a proper balance was restored to his mind. The French psychologist understood that activity was vital for happiness. Thus in Link's opinion, people were fortunate

who persist in knocking a little white ball around in every direction except the right one; who have a lawn in which the weeds, despite their continual efforts, never stop growing. Fortunate the women with families whose appetites are never satisfied long...Fortunate all those people who, through either choice or force, make the most of the unreasonable tasks of living, whether they be digging ditches or scrubbing floors, collecting postage stamps or crocheting doilies, driving a truck or washing the baby's diapers.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, in a truly wise society, it would be unnecessary to retrain adults. They would have been raised as extroverts. Unfortunately, the American education system was geared to producing liberals, and liberalism encouraged introversion

and unhappiness. Liberalism freed a person from the traditions and restraints of the past without substituting an adequate set of restraints or ideals for the future. Thus liberalism usually manifested itself in a lack of convictions on matters of basic right or wrong, an attitude which the liberals glibly described as tolerance. In their ignorance, they considered property rights, the constitution and religion obsolete. They promised future utopias, but actually left people ill-equipped to deal with the realities of daily life. Thus Link joined Lippmann, Dimmet, Pitkin and Carrel in attacking the over-optimism of the liberals. The other pre-war writers ignored the issue. Harry Emerson Fosdick in 1943 was the first best-selling guide to offer even a mild defense of liberalism.<sup>9</sup>

In a decent educational system, a child would be taught religion because religion gave the parents the authority they needed, and encouraged extroversion. And it was best to teach children these values "when they are too young to understand, but not too young to accept." Also, American schools put too much emphasis on scholastic achievement. Psychological tests had found no correlation between scholastic success and a good personality. In fact, it had been proven that formal education above the grade school level did little or nothing to improve personality or character. There was even evidence to indicate that prolongation of formal education resulted in a deteriora-

tion of personality. And certain subjects should receive more attention than others, because "children who like mathematics and the sciences, including the mechanical and household arts tend to have better personality traits than do the children who prefer English, languages and history." In general American schools put too much stress on abstract learning and theories. It would be better if a child learned a vocation and such extroverted virtues as how to give himself to the world, how to pay complements to others, how to be friendly to people whether he liked them or not, and above all how to hide and control his anger. Games and sports should be encouraged because they help a child's social growth. And marks were important because a child needs incentives, and because marks also prepared him for the future when his efforts would be rated, whether he liked it or not.

Link was completely opposed to progressive education. It indulged children and encouraged introversion because it did not understand that from a psychological point of view, the doctrine of original sin and the "need to conquer natural man" were profound truths.<sup>10</sup>

The Depression clearly illustrated the dangers of faulty education and liberalism. Americans blamed the economic crisis on everyone--bankers, businessmen, politicians--but themselves. In truth, the Depression was not caused by the breakdown of capitalism, but by the disintegration of the character of the

American people. They had become greedy. They wanted something for nothing. They had gorged themselves on stocks and installment buying. And they had learned nothing from the experience, for Americans were still "speculating just as madly today in theories of social security, social justice, in horse races, lucky numbers, chain letters, old age pensions, and other mechanical devices calculated to produce happiness without pain." Link also attacked the Townsend Plan and the idea of a central banking system. These various new economic and social schemes would inevitably lead to the destruction of both "personality" and national wealth. "We see here a national tendency toward introversion...a nation, a people...dodging the realities of life, avoiding personal contacts with suffering...which lead to extroversion... ." Moreover, Link could not see how America could change the economic system without violating the basic principles of religion. The American people were evolving a "new dispensation with respect to the Ten Commandments." They were using the law to appropriate other people's property. And "the Commandment, six days shalt thou labor and do all the work, is hereby modified to five days, and, preferably, a maximum of thirty hours a week."<sup>11</sup>

But true religion had nothing to do with social reform. "Christ was not a social reformer, he was a reformer of men." Christ refused to identify himself with any social schemes. (Billy Graham would express the same attitude in the 1950's.)

Jesus would have been against government programs and government interference with business. Jesus would have housed the destitute in empty churches and inspired the employed to help the unemployed. He would have promoted the block or neighborhood relief plan, and encouraged the rich to give their money and experience to plan wise employment. Above all, Christ would have stressed personal self-reliance. Nor was Christ against wealth. He criticized only those rich people who put wealth above everything else. In fact, Christ had "a genuine sympathy with ownership and production of wealth... ." Christ also had "a keen appreciation of the mutual obligations of servant and masters... ." Jesus approved of businessmen, for

the businessman, the employer, perform daily the miracle of converting water into wine. He converts raw materials into the means of a livelihood, and he converts undirected employees, individuals, into members of a team which has both direction and power.<sup>12</sup>

"The fact that the businessman may benefit, materially, more than any other one individual is inevitable...and not an indictment of his character." In fact, most successful employers were "nearly always less self-centered and possessed of a wider range of unselfish habits than are most of his employees." Link seemed to contradict himself later in his book when he wrote, "The children of poor parents have a tremendous advantage in the struggle for character." In fact, people were better off under the earlier, more primitive economic conditions for then they had to work longer and harder, and this

almost automatically insured the development of many good work habits and character traits. In keeping with this point of view, Link approved of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the C.C.C., because the C.C.C. were against the easy life, paid "ridiculously" low wages, and forced people to work with all kinds of people whether they liked them or not. Unfortunately, there were no other institutions in our country "based on the principles of enforced work and group discipline." In the future, we must guard against the insidious doctrine that the world owed people a living and security. Edwin E. Aubrey, in the Journal of Religion compared, unfavorably, Link's view of labor to the enforced cooperation found in the military. Aubrey also complained that in Link's system "mental hygiene threatens to become a substitute for aggressive social reconstruction" because "religion and social conservatism are bound together by psychology" in an effort to strangle social justice. But except for the Journal of Religion and the Catholic World, all the reviews liked Link's book, and the Catholic World did not oppose his social or psychological conservatism, only his lack of Catholicism. L. L. Riley, in the Churchman, praised the way Link tied psychology and science to religion. W. L. Sperry, in The Christian Century, approved of Link's use of psychology, as well as Link's criticism of the government's interference in the economy. John Haynes Holmes, in the New York Herald Tribune, liked Link's sane



approach to life and his basic common sense.<sup>13</sup>

The Return to Religion was the third best-selling non-fiction book of 1937 with a sale of 83,000. It had a total of thirty-four printings in the following five years. What was the book's special appeal? Basically Link offered a return to traditional nineteenth-century values. Donald Meyer, in The Positive Thinkers, believed that Link's "image of human nature was still indebted to 'hard' nineteenth century male Protestant individualism,...Social Darwinism [and] the gospel of success and competition." Certainly for Link religion was paramount. But he did not believe in bogging down in philosophical or historical debates about religion's validity or the superiority of any particular church or sect. Intuition, tradition and experience were better guides than logic. Doubt or suspended judgments were anathema. Link was not interested in subtleties or nuances. He knew what was best for everyone. One read the Reader's Digest, not the New Republic (never both?); and one considered himself lucky if he worked so hard at digging ditches he collapsed at night into an exhausted sleep. Link had a narrow vision and was proud of it. He was self-righteous and totally lacking in humor. At times he read like an H. L. Mencken caricature of a Y.M.C.A. group leader. Once accepted, religion should encourage and supplement a life of hard work, community service and rich friendships. Link was equally conservative about economics. He had a firm

faith in laissez faire capitalism and the doctrine of self-help. And like Vash Young, but with more emphasis and gusto, he blamed the Depression on the deterioration of the American character, not the collapse of capitalism. He attacked the New Deal (it was actually contrary to God's will), liberalism, and the ideal of the independent woman so admired by Hillis. In fact, Link opposed all innovations in the area of values. But what was unique about Link's defense of economic conservatism and traditional religion was his appeal to science as a validator. He insisted that the findings of modern, scientific psychology confirmed both the teachings of the church and classical capitalism. God too loved an extroverted winner.<sup>14</sup>

## NOTES

1. Henry C. Link, The Return to Religion (New York: MacMillan Co., 1936, 1937), pp. 5-10.
2. Ibid., pp. 11-13, 95, 101, 106-107.
3. Anon., Review of The Return to Religion, Catholic World, Sept. 1936, p. 764; Link, pp. 14, 34, 57-59, 61-63, 69, 87-88, 162, 168.
4. Walter Lippmann, A Preface to Morals (New York: MacMillan Co., 1929), pp. 75-76.
5. Link, pp. 21, 59, 151, 170.
6. Ibid., pp. 6, 19, 39-40, 49, 74-76, 84-85, 105.
7. Ibid., pp. 115-116, 119-120, 123-126.
8. Ibid., pp. 59-60.
9. Ibid., pp. 159-161.
10. Ibid., pp. 101-102, 104-105, 109-110, 144-145, 150, 155, 157.
11. Ibid., pp. 58, 130, 137, 172, 175.
12. Ibid., pp. 79, 135-136, 139.
13. Edwin E. Aubrey, Review of The Return to Religion, Journal of Religion, Oct. 1936, pp. 483-485; W. L. Sperry, Review of The Return to Religion, The Christian Century, May 6, 1936, p. 667; John Haynes Holmes, "A Challenge to Character," New York Herald Tribune, April 21, 1936, p. 11; L. L. Riley, Review of The Return to Religion, Churchman, June 15, 1936, p. 18; Link, pp. 80-81.
14. Donald Meyer, The Positive Thinkers (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 224, 228; Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), p. 156.

## Chapter 10

### Dale Carnegie

Like Link, Dale Carnegie was a staunch supporter of traditional values. He preached the glories of middle-class bourgeois life and the magic of salesmanship, and was so successful he became part of America's folklore. His most famous book, How to Win Friends and Influence People was published in 1936. He also wrote a lesser known best-seller in 1948, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living. Carnegie's formula for happiness seemed simple: assume a positive attitude, stop worrying and act. "We already know enough to lead perfect lives. We have all read the golden rule and the Sermon on the Mount. Our trouble is not ignorance, but inaction." Carnegie's aim was to restate "a lot of ancient and basic truths," which would enable men to break through the bonds of inertia and "start living,"<sup>1</sup>

Carnegie claimed religion was the key to the good life. Like Henry Link, Carnegie had lost his religious faith while at college. The study of science, history, and philosophy had made him an agnostic. He saw no purpose in life. Our solar system was just one of "billions of suns whirling through black, cold, lifeless space." And man was merely the product of blind, indifferent forces. But experience forced Carnegie to re-think his position. He realized that religion worked. It gave men hope and courage, it banished fear, anxiety and

worry, and it promoted good health for it linked man "with the inexhaustible motive power that spins the universe." Thus it made sense to embrace religion. And it was foolish and wasteful to worry about the differences between the various sects and creeds. Ignore these insignificant details. It was enough to be a good Christian. And any man who had the right spirit could be counted as a Christian, even if he called himself an agnostic. Jesus was more interested in fear than sin. He wanted joy, peace and love, not doctrinal disputes. Like the other religiously oriented writers of this era, Carnegie ignored hell, and the purpose of pain, and poverty. And he gave the qualities of joy, peace and love a rather broad interpretation. He found nothing un-Christian or improper in the fact that Jack Dempsey, the heavy-weight champion, prayed before each round that God would help him "fight with courage and confidence." Dempsey had faith; that was sufficient. Carnegie saw nothing un-Christian in boxing.<sup>2</sup>

Carnegie admitted that he did not understand why God created the world. There were some questions man could not hope to answer. But

the fact that we don't understand the mysteries of our bodies or electricity or a gas engine doesn't keep us from using and enjoying them. The fact that I don't understand the mysteries of prayer and religion no longer keeps me from enjoying the richer, happier life that religion brings.

Carnegie concluded, "If religion isn't true, then life

is meaningless. It is a tragic farce." He agreed with Kant who said man should simply "accept a belief in God because we need such a belief."<sup>3</sup>

To reinforce and supplement the benefits of religion, Carnegie offered a three-step plan which enabled people to stop worrying about personal and business problems. The first step was to analyze the problem and ascertain the worse consequences that could possibly befall you if you failed completely. Next, you reconciled yourself to these ultimate consequences, even death if it was inevitable; last, you calmly devoted your time and energy to improving upon the worst which you had already accepted mentally, always remembering that, in most cases, percentage and probability were against the worst actually happening.<sup>4</sup>

In elaborating his system, Carnegie pointed out that fear and worry frequently made it difficult to analyze problems effectively. Thus in an effort to achieve objectivity, he recommended that a worried person imagine that he was analyzing the problems of a friend. In the course of the analysis, three key questions must be answered. Was the goal really worth the worry? Exactly how much were you willing to pay in effort or money to attain what you want? And last, at what point will you admit defeat and cease pouring time, money and energy into a futile effort? Once these questions were answered, the results should be reviewed from the point of view of a

devil's advocate.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, even with the best mental attitude and the best techniques, a person could not always get what he wanted. But failure would be easier to contemplate and accept if men understood the true nature of psychic pain. Carnegie believed that

happiness doesn't depend on outward conditions.  
It depends on inner conditions.

It isn't what you have or who you are or where you are or what you are doing that makes you happy or unhappy. It is what you think about it.

Thus two men in just about identical situations could lose their jobs, and one would be depressed and bitter while the other will retain his good spirits. We must strive to develop an inner sense of well being which was impervious to external fluctuations. Carnegie believed men could adjust favorably even to dire circumstances if their attitude was positive:

Two men looked out from prison bars,  
one saw the mud, the other the stars.

Carnegie also quoted Epictetus and Seneca, the Roman Stoics. "The essence of philosophy is that a man should so live that his happiness shall depend as little as possible on external things." "If you have what seems to you to be insufficient, then you will be miserable even if you possess the world." In the same spirit, people must stop worrying about things which are beyond their powers to control. Carnegie

quoted Reinhold Niebuhr:

God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change;  
The courage to change the things I can;  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

But men must never stop trying, even in a bad situation. Pick up the pieces, and salvage something. Improvise imaginatively. "If you have a lemon, make a lemonade." And never feel sorry for yourself. Others are probably much worse off. Instead, count your blessings, and remember the following "inspirational" words:

I had the blues because I had no shoes, until<sub>6</sub>  
upon the street, I met a man who had no feet.

Carnegie was sure people could minimize their pain and mental suffering by changing their conscious ideas. As was mentioned earlier, John Schindler and Maxwell Maltz would develop this concept in greater depth in the post-war period.

But of course Carnegie's major interest was not failure, but success. He had many tips for his readers; organize carefully, make a detailed schedule, learn to deputize and supervise, switch jobs if it's advantageous, avoid fatigue and overspending, keep a notebook of inspirational poems, prayers, and quotations, talk to a trusted friend about your problems, never seek revenge, and ignore unjust criticism. But the real key to success was understanding people. "When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures



bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity." People were interested mainly in themselves. As far as the average man was concerned, "his toothache means more to him than a famine in China that kills a million people. A boil on his neck interests him more than forty earthquakes in Africa." But people were not to blame for their selfishness. Their personalities were determined by factors beyond their control:

Take Al Capone, for example. Suppose you had inherited the same body and temperament and mind that Al Capone inherited. Suppose you had had his environment and experience. You would then be precisely what he is--and where he is. For it is those things--and only those things--that make him what he is...You deserve very little credit for being what you are - and remember, the man who comes to you irritated, bigoted, unreasoning, deserves very little discredit for being what he is. Feel sorry for the poor devil..."There, but for the grace of God, go I."

By Carnegie's logic, human beings could not be held responsible for their behavior since they were merely the helpless products of history. But complications arose if the reader chose to juxtapose Carnegie's determinism with his Christianity. Christianity believed that men were indeed responsible for their deeds since God had endowed each human being with free will. But Carnegie, in defiance of tradition, insisted on having the best of both philosophical systems. He believed in a loving, helpful God, and guiltless human beings. Carnegie's opportunism was typical of most religiously oriented best-selling guides. They tended to take from religion only

those elements which blended easily with an optimistic, hedonistic, business-oriented philosophy. Hell, Original Sin, guilt, mortification of the flesh, the glories of poverty, and the other "negative" elements of Christianity were either ignored or played down.

But Carnegie did agree with one pessimistic insight of Christianity. Men were indeed weak and self-centered creatures. But even this sad fact of life could be put to good use by an energetic capitalist for people's weaknesses made them vulnerable. Thus to make friends and to influence these irrational, selfish creatures, one had only to follow Carnegie's advice. To begin, motivate yourself by frequently recalling how "mastery" "will aid you in your race for richer social and financial rewards." Once motivated, never forget Carnegie's cardinal rule: base all your approaches to other people on the assumption that the only way to get people to do what you wanted was to give them what they wanted. But what did they want? On their own, most people could take care of most of their basic needs including food, medical care, sleep and sex; but there was one human need which was usually left unsatisfied, the desire to feel important. Feed this craving, and you will be successful socially and financially. Charles Schwab, an executive of United States Steel, was one of Carnegie's favorite heroes because he understood this principle, and exploited it to the full.

There were all sorts of techniques one could use. Remember names. Smile warmly, and use compliments freely. Find out what people were interested in, and encourage them to talk about themselves. They love this. And remember that everyone feels himself superior in some way, and that "a sure way to his heart is to let him realize in some subtle way that you recognize his importance in his little world... ." But underplay your own accomplishments, for people are naturally jealous and resentful. And flatter people's vanity. If they give money to charity in order to bolster their ego, or to impress their neighbors, don't remind them of their true motivation. Accept them as benefactors of humanity, for as "J. P. Morgan observed...a man usually has two reasons for doing a thing: one that sounds good and a real one." And he would rather not be reminded of the real one. And don't argue with people. If you make a man look bad he will resent it, and besides, "most citizens don't want to change their minds about their religion or their hair cut or communism or Clark Gable." Don't criticize people. It wounds their "precious pride." If they make a mistake, ignore it if it is at all possible. Remember that it is human nature to blame other people for one's own mistakes and misfortunes. People like to see themselves as victims. They crave sympathy. So give it to them, and they will love you.<sup>8</sup>

But if you yourself are wrong on any occasion, admit

it quickly and emphatically. It disarms people and wins sympathy. If you are in a position of authority, try to avoid giving direct orders. People resent them. Instead, ask questions which let your subordinates know what is to be done. If possible, let people think your suggestions were their own ideas. Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly. If you must criticize them directly "talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person." It puts them at ease, and protects their vanity. If a person was responsible for a serious error or mistake, and must be punished, give him some way to save face. For example, if you demote someone, make it seem that the employee voluntarily asked to be transferred to a less desirable position.<sup>9</sup>

Carnegie also believed that his technique would work in marriage. "Never get married until you have kissed the Blarney Stone....Matrimony is no place for candor. It is a field for diplomacy." To achieve a successful marriage one must use flattery, compliments, courtesy, and other ego building devices. Never try to remake your mate. People, including spouses, don't want to change. Carnegie said very little about sex, but he did advise his readers that it was wise to read a good book on the sexual side of marriage.<sup>10</sup>

Was Carnegie's approach to people cynical and exploitative? Carnegie did not think so. He insisted that his readers must be sincere. He even advised reading Henry C. Link's

The Return to Religion for further advice on how to become an outgoing, giving person who was sincerely interested in other people and worthy causes. He drew a distinction between insincere flattery and true appreciation. (Although he himself frequently used the "naked" word flattery.) But even in drawing the distinction, Carnegie unintentionally re-introduced the problem of intellectual integrity, or, at least, consistency. He began by defining flattery as selfish, and appreciation as unselfish. Then he told his reader how to be sincere when giving compliments. Just think of the other person's good points, for they all have some. But then Carnegie casts doubt on his own sincerity by warning that flattery was less effective than appreciation, for flattery seldom worked with discerning people. Was Carnegie making a moral or pragmatic distinction? Suppose a man was a good enough actor to fool even discerning people? Would Carnegie have accepted the deception?<sup>11</sup>

The same moral ambiguity appeared when Carnegie considered the art of smiling. It was important to smile frequently. But one must never fake a smile. "I am talking about a real smile, a heart-warming smile, a smile that comes from within, the kind of smile that will bring a good price in the market place." The reference to the market place cast some doubt on his sincerity. And what if you don't feel like smiling? Force yourself. "Act as if you were already happy and that will

tend to make you happy."<sup>12</sup>

James Thurber, the American humorist, doubted that a man could actually "be sincere and at the same time versed in the tricks of influencing people." Thurber used one of Carnegie's anecdotes to illustrate the problem. During a lecture, Carnegie casually explained how he once paid a gratuitous compliment to a hotel clerk to make the man feel better. But

one of Mr. Carnegie's listeners, who had apparently come to learn about how to influence people, how to get what you're after, asked naturally enough it seems to me, "What did you want to get out of him?" Writes Mr. Carnegie: "What was I trying to get out of him!!! Great God Almighty!!!" Steady on Mr. Carnegie. Remember "Smile," and some of your other rules, and also one of mine: exclamation points, even three in a row, do not successfully convey depth of sincerity or intensity of feeling.

Thurber's account of the incident ignored several statements which further illustrate Carnegie's moral ambiguity. For Carnegie clarified his exasperation at his listener's question by pointing out that a spirit which was so "contemptibly selfish" that it couldn't "radiate a little happiness" free was too small to achieve success. Thus Carnegie's gesture to the clerk actually had a pragmatic sanction. Besides Carnegie admitted the incident bolstered his ego. Thus, like Vash Young, Carnegie and his followers always had it both ways; they were altruistic, and at the same time they accrued profits. Norman Vincent Peale and Pat Boone would continue this tradition in the post-war era.<sup>13</sup>

To develop a Carnegie-approved personality took sustained

effort. It was necessary to constantly re-read Carnegie's teachings. It also helped to keep a diary. For motivation, one should daily remind himself of the social and financial advantages the new attitude will bring. Eventually, if a person worked diligently, Carnegie's principles would become "habitual and unconscious."<sup>14</sup>

Carnegie was an immensely popular author. Friends was the number one best-seller of 1937 with a sale of 729,000. It was number six in 1938. Altogether the book sold 1,627,511 hard cover copies, and 6,578,314 in all editions. Living was the second best-selling non-fiction book of 1948 with a sale of 235,636. It eventually sold 2,471,146 copies in all editions.<sup>15</sup>

But it was more than a matter of sales. In The Positive Thinkers (1965), Donald Meyer wrote of Friends that

the book is one of those pulse points in modern American popular culture where the murmurs and racing of hidden currents can be discerned.... whether leading or following popular sentiments, Carnegie performed the task of scripturizing them.

The Boston Evening Transcript's reviewer was less than pleased with Carnegie's "murmurs." Undoubtedly Carnegie was sincere, but the reviewer was skeptical of the moral worth of his method, which was "to study your opponent for weak places in his armor, then with bland duplicity to stab there and make him like it." The Transcript suspected that the people who bought Carnegie's and similar books, were only interested in

exploiting other human beings, despite Carnegie's disclaimers. Thomas Lask in The New York Times agreed. He thought Carnegie read "like a revival meeting wherein everyone present trots down to the pulpit and tells how he was saved." He found Carnegie dull, monotonous, shallow and obsessive in his effort to offer something for everyone. Time magazine was even more vehement in its contempt. Time related six of Carnegie's anecdotes hoping to ridicule him. A typical story concerned a doctor who advised a suicidal patient to run around the block till he died of exhaustion, like a hero. The patient tried to execute the doctor's advice, but found himself feeling better and better as he exercised his stale muscles. So instead of suicide he decided on a membership in an athletic club and lived happily every after. Time may have exaggerated but only slightly. With Carnegie, glib anecdotes, jokes, poems and limericks replaced abstract arguments, logic and empirical evidence. His attitude was clearly revealed when he discussed religion. In his opinion faith gave men courage, hope and good health. To substantiate his claim, Carnegie cited his own experience and testimonials from famous people. In his opinion this was sufficient proof; psychological, theological and historical disputes were superfluous. Besides, they bored most readers and Carnegie wanted to entertain at least as much as to enlighten; his "wisdom" was always designed to be consumed painlessly. Was he sincere? Time clearly took Carnegie for an opportunist



and cynic: "today...Dale Carnegie is one of the world's richest authors and most famous men. He has recovered his faith in God and man... ."16

In 1937, a reviewer in The New York Times had a bit more respect for Carnegie:

There is a subtle cynicism, to be sure, in directions which depend so largely upon flattering the other man's egotism.../But/ Mr. Carnegie's book offers very good advice on bad assumptions. And it exemplifies thus the good and the bad of those "how to" philosophies which are sought by all the wishful millions who have never been able to influence other people much, who would like to begin life all over again even though they are past 40, who long to be told how they can think for themselves, who live alone, and hate it, or who even are so far sunk in dullness and anxiety and unsuccessful that they wake up every morning without any desire to live. The good is in the simple, sound, practical common sense of Mr. Carnegie's counsel, and the lively and well-illustrated directness with which it is given...But there is bad too: in the promise of what Lowell Thomas calls here a "short-cut to distinction"; in the suggestion that the superficial cultivation of "personality" may take the place of or even be more important than a sound foundation of knowledge, intelligence and ability; in the idea that one can or should whip up an effective "enthusiasm" without reference to the worth of the enthusiasm's object; and in the emphasis upon the supreme value of extraneous rewards.17

But was it not possible that it was just Carnegie's materialism, superficiality, cynicism and short-cut approach which accounted for a good deal of his huge popularity? He described a relatively easy and available path to happiness. His approach avoided the slow, tortuous, time-consuming anguish one found described in the literature of psychoanalysis,

and behaviour psychology. Even Carnegie's religion was painless. God would help man. Prayers were answered, sometimes even with miraculous cures. But man did not have to burden himself with any particular theology, nor was he threatened with hell if he failed to fulfill God's commandments. He could, in a sense, use God free of charge, a very advantageous business arrangement. Nor was he under any obligation to be his brother's keeper. He did not have to enlighten men, or attempt to make them wiser. And he certainly was under no obligation to make any financial sacrifices to help the poor of America or the world.

Carnegie believed that he knew what American businessmen and professionals wanted. He had made a living instructing them since 1912. They were wedded to capitalism, and the ruthless, competitive pursuit of profit. And Carnegie, unlike Young, Pitkin and Link, openly admitted that the road to profit was to manipulate the immaturity of the average man who was egocentric, selfish, childish and vain. This openness was probably Carnegie's unique contribution to the genre of best-selling guides to happiness.

## NOTES

1. Dale Carnegie, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living (New York: Pocket Books, 1953), pp. xix, 26. The hardcover edition was originally published by Simon and Schuster, New York, in 1948.
2. Ibid., pp. 170-173, 182, 186.
3. Ibid., pp. 171-172, 185-186.
4. Ibid., pp. 14, 19, 42, 46, 69-75.
5. Ibid., pp. 35, 86-92.
6. Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People (New York: Pocket Books, 1940), p. 89. The hardcover edition was originally published by Simon and Schuster, New York, in 1936;; How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, pp. 76-85, 131, 145-146, 263.
7. Carnegie, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, pp. 114-122, 192-195, 202, 215-222, 238-250; How to Win Friends and Influence People, pp. 35-36, 110, 189-190.
8. Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People, pp. 10, 27, 29, 36-38, 43-44, 96, 119, 132, 140-141, 177, 190, 196.
9. Ibid., pp. 126, 149-156, 179, 220-228.
10. Ibid., pp. 266, 268, 272, 275-285.
11. Carnegie, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, pp. 126, 162, 165-166.
12. Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People, pp. 85-86.
13. James Thurber, "The Voice with the Smile," Saturday Review of Literature, Jan. 30, 1937, p. 6.
14. Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People, pp. 66-69, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, pp. 48-50.
15. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), pp. 12, 156.
16. Donald Meyer, The Positive Thinkers (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 162; Anon., review of How to Win Friends and Influence People, Boston Evening Transcript, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 1;

Thomas Lask, Review of How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, New York Times, June 20, 1948, p. 14; Anon., Review of How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, Time, June 14, 1948, pp. 101-102.

17. Anon., "Soft Answers," New York Times, Feb. 14, 1937, p. 12.

## Chapter 11

### Harry Emerson Fosdick

Harry Emerson Fosdick, a liberal Protestant minister, was much less enthusiastic about American society than Carnegie. In his view, progress had proved a mixed blessing to civilization. Our modern world, with its freedom and almost unlimited opportunities, placed a great burden on the psyche of modern man. For "freedom involved...one of the severest tensions that the human organism can sustain...Our modern society...increases rather than decreases the internal conflicts, confessions and worries, and makes more difficult, not less, the avoidance of their solution." As a result, more and more people were frustrated, disintegrated, inhibited and unhappy. Fosdick believed that their misery constituted the world's greatest tragedy, and wrote On Being a Real Person (1943) to help them.<sup>1</sup>

Fosdick divided personalities into three general classes; those who never got themselves together, those who did manage to integrate their personalities but at a low ethical level, and those who lived happy, well-organized, ethical lives. The unintegrated group were characterized by their inability to give direction to their existence. They lacked internal control, were unorganized, racked with conflicts, and lead chaotic and unfocused lives. Occasionally disintegrated people escaped unhappiness because they were fortunate enough to be members

of a family, business or institution which structured their existence, and propped them up. But their coherence was merely the transient result of a "chance bond," and, if their supports were removed for any reason whatsoever, those unfortunate people rapidly disintegrated.<sup>2</sup>

Other unhappy people had achieved integration, but around a low ethical ideal. Men like Caesar and Napoleon were driven by a lust for power and personal glory. Unfortunately, some modern psychiatrists positively encouraged this inferior type of adaptation:

One patient...troubled by powerful animal impulses, had also a sensitive spiritual life involving respect for himself, reverence for others, and religious faith. The psychiatrist told him that unless he stopped bothering about his spiritual life, gave up belief in God, became ethically callous and exploded his animal impulses, he never could be happy.

But the psychiatrist, Fosdick contended, was wrong. His approach would never lead to true happiness for men needed a balanced existence which included love, security and a sense of significance. Thus to be truly integrated a person had to outgrow selfishness and become devoted to something outside himself. It could be a family, love, friends, a nation, or work. But ultimately, religion was the best solution; nothing satisfied a man's deepest needs so completely, for religion, besides being divinely ordained, gave man a sense of security. He was not alone. There was a God who cared,

and shared his responsibilities. Man could relax knowing there was a mind wiser than his watching over the world. Moreover, man could be sure that life had a purpose and that there was a reason for his suffering and pain, and that in the end, justice would prevail, and that good men would be rewarded with immortal life. Man also knew that there was a source of power he could call upon when the tasks of life seemed too much for him. Fosdick quoted Alexis Carrel to the effect that prayer linked man with the inexhaustible motive power that spun the universe. And man needed this divine power for there were situations he could not handle through his own volition and will. "It takes more than a knowledge of psychiatry to pull a personality together, else some of the psychiatrists themselves would be better integrated than they are." Fosdick agreed with Jung who criticized Freud for expecting man to handle by unaided will the disruptive forces of the subconscious life. "Freud has unfortunately overlooked...the fact that man...has always stood in need of the spiritual help which each individual's own religion held out to him...It is this which lifts him out of his distress." Certainly, man could never conquer a problem like alcoholism without God's help, and Alcoholics Anonymous wisely acknowledged this fact in their motto, "But for the grace of God."<sup>3</sup>

No one, Fosdick added, created a truly effective person-

ality, or great art, music or literature without some of God's power being released through him. Even the daily ethical demands of Christianity could not be fulfilled merely by trying hard. Man needed God's help. Thus a constructive faith was the supreme organizer of life. Without it, man will fail, and break to pieces emotionally. Without religion man was merely "an accident on one of the minor planets, a haphazard by-product of blind forces." Fosdick was sure agnosticism and atheism led to distraction at the center of personality. He pointed out that even an agnostic like Malinowski, the famous anthropologist, admitted that "modern agnosticism is a tragic and shattering frame of mind." Fosdick further agreed that Joseph Wood Krutch, a naturalist and drama critic, drew the logical conclusion from his atheistic position when he declared that the human race "is a lost cause and there is no place for us in the natural universe." Thus, considering the dire consequences, it was foolish of man to deny God and refuse divine help.<sup>4</sup>

But foolish or not, man was free to choose or reject religion. He had free will. Fosdick rejected determinism, although he admitted that there was a "kernel of truth" in the doctrine, and that, from the point of view of logic, it could "neither be finally proved nor disproved." But our everyday experience was more important than logic, and it clearly indicated that many men did direct their own destiny, and that men's



efforts could even change the course of history. Men were more than "marionettes, merely reacting to the pull of inheritance and circumstances." They "have power to confront life with a personal rejoinder....," and this power "redeems us from automatism." This was not to say that it was not important to improve the environment by remedying social evils that helped shatter human personality. On the contrary, it was certainly desirable to end war, predatory economics, and racial and religious prejudices. But no change in the social structure could make a disorganized person immune to the shock of change which, at any time, might reveal his inner lack of cohesion. The only true security was to believe in God. Thus, although he had more social consciousness than most best-selling authors, Fosdick too saw life primarily in terms of atomized individuals who were expected to control their own destinies.<sup>5</sup>

But why was one man granted faith, and another denied? Was God arbitrary? Not at all; Fosdick believed that faith was something we all had, not something we acquired. It was "inherent in our psychological constitution just as truly as affection is, and is sure to be used one way or another." Everyone believed in something - people, ideas or causes. Man did not lack faith, in fact, he had a surplus of it. And "if a man says he will have no faith, then the policy of no-faith is what he has faith in." True, people are not always aware of

what they believe in, for their philosophy was frequently inchoate or unconscious, but they all had one. Faith "pulls the trigger of human energy." Whether one believed in Hitler or God, it drove men to action. The important point was to develop faith in worthwhile and constructive causes of which religion was the most beneficial and necessary, although even religious faith could be misused. "Religious faith...can mass its powerful drive on the wrong side of great issues as well as the right; it has backed idolatry, human sacrifice and war; it familiarly issues in bigotry and persecution... ." Thus "whether intellectually true or false, whether ethically good or bad, religious faith is powerful... ." Fosdick never explained how a man decided whether or not his religious faith was true or false, and whether it was being used for an ethical cause. Still, despite this reservation, Fosdick was sure that conscience was inherent in human nature, and was "as inescapable as mind or emotion." We had only to listen to it to find the right path.<sup>6</sup>

Once a man put his trust in God, he was ready to arrange his life. To begin, it was all-important that he choose a scale of worthwhile values and goals. A man must become aware of what he wishes to achieve, and work toward this goal, foregoing lesser aims. But he must also be on the alert against creating an imbalance in his personality. Unlike Link, Fosdick did not dismiss introversion. He believed that the best men,

people like Lincoln, Pasteur and Wilberforce, represented a blend of extroversion and introversion, and that overdevelopment in either direction was dangerous. It was the same with ambition. Aiming too low led to listlessness and inactivity, while over-ambition produced a sense of failure, crushing inferiority, and frequently, a gloomy and overactive conscience. People must assay their abilities realistically, and strive diligently, yet remain charitable toward their human failings.<sup>7</sup>

Fosdick employed some of the concepts of modern psychology to aid people in their struggle for balance. Moreover, he concluded that all man's drives could be used to achieve goodness, either through sublimation, or re-direction. Thus the popular idea that the restraint of basic emotional drives was in itself unhealthy was nonsense. Actually man had to restrain all his primary impulses. He had no choice; they were in conflict with one another. The will to power battled with the desire to be submissive, fear struggled with self-assertiveness, and egotism with gregariousness. "The choice...is not whether our native impulses should be restrained and controlled but how that shall be done in the service of an integrated life." Human beings had a choice. Man's will to power could motivate either an Al Capone or a gifted teacher. His submissiveness could be placed in the service of a Hitler or a discipline like medicine. A man could even learn to replace resentment with good will, without becoming a "supine door-mat"

in the process. Unfortunately, Fosdick never specifically said how this delicate balance could be accomplished. In any case, the goal was to channel man's drives so that they were in the service of an "integrated life."<sup>8</sup>

The sexual drive was one of the most difficult to control. But ethically and emotionally the most satisfying expression of man's sex life was found in a monogamous family. In the pre-marital stage, people should practice sexual self control. And if marriage was impossible, they must sublimate the sex drive. Fosdick approvingly cited the example of an unmarried woman who worked with orphans. Thus she both sublimated her sex drive, and fed her maternal feelings. "Even such a dangerous tendency as homosexuality can be denied overt expression, and redirected so as to eventuate in some of the best work done on earth by men for boys, or by women for girls... ."<sup>9</sup>

But Fosdick was not overly harsh with single people who could not sublimate their sex drive. He considered pre-marital sex an undesirable but understandable weakness. Bertrand L. Conway, in the Catholic World, found fault with Fosdick's "live and let live attitude." He thought Fosdick was too lax in accepting pre-marital sex as a mere foible or mistake. Sexual sins should always be condemned vigorously.<sup>10</sup>

But even a religious person, with relatively good integration, must be prepared to deal with a certain amount of fear,

anxiety and depression for they were the lot of all human beings. It was extremely important to bring fear into the open, and seek its roots. And keep busy. Go about your appointed tasks, and even take on new responsibilities. Action was a good remedy for fear and anxiety. The same advice applied to depression. It was a natural part of man's life. He must expect to feel low at times. But never magnify depression, or see it as the dominant theme of life. With depression, as with fear, it helped to remain active and see people socially. And remember it will pass. Another aid against fear and depression was vigorous exercise. Our forefathers used their "major muscles" extensively, and went to bed too tired "to fret over imaginary worries." It was wise "to forget oneself in a strenuous game, to revel in a long hike, to work oneself out with an ax into a satisfying weariness... ." But if one's troubles persisted, or were of an especially difficult nature, it was best to see a psychiatrist, and "dig into oneself, bringing to light the hidden and often dark sources of one's own trouble." Fosdick did not recommend any particular school of psychiatry.<sup>11</sup>

On Being a Real Person was the fourth best-selling non-fiction book of 1943, with a sale of over 200,000. It was also reprinted in the Reader's Digest of March 1943. Most of Fosdick's reviews were favorable. May Lamberton Becker in the New York Herald Tribune, and Charles T. Holman in The Journal

of Religion, were typical. They thought Fosdick's prescription for happiness was one which could be understood by the average person. His message was clear and useful, and reflected both sound religion and sound psychology. Fosdick was reminiscent of Dimnet; both had the tone of high-minded preachers, although Fosdick was a bit more prosaic and businesslike, seldom striving for polished prose effects; both cited thinkers like Freud, Jung and Malinowski; and both discussed philosophical and theological problems without becoming involved in extended abstract arguments which might have bored or discouraged non-intellectuals. Donald Meyer, in The Positive Thinkers, believed Fosdick appealed "to a broad element in the culture — middle-class, white, mostly Northern Protestants in cities and the suburbs":

Fosdick was perhaps the first of the great liberal preachers to be confronted in its full force by the fact that for millions of persons it seemed reasonable to expect a comfortable world, that for millions a comfortable religion and healthy-mindedness seemed the most plausible reflection of reality.<sup>12</sup>

Fosdick certainly fulfilled their expectations. He was a Christian, and believed in God, but he avoided controversial theological disputes, and ignored the grimmer aspects of the Christian doctrine, including Original Sin, hell, and the nature of evil. He stressed love and brotherhood and attributed man's propensity for anti-social and destructive conduct primarily to his biological drives which, fortunately, could be controlled or re-directed with God's help, either through common sense or

modern psychology. Fosdick was the first best-selling author to attempt to reconcile religion and the psychologies of Freud and Jung, which Link had rejected. The relationship of modern psychology to religion would become a major theme in the post-war era.

Fosdick's attitude toward psychology and therapy, like his approach to religion, was extremely optimistic. He made it seem relatively easy to convert or sublimate "dark passions." Bertrand L. Conway, of the Catholic World, did not share his confidence in modern psychology. Conway believed that the confessional was the best aid for combating fear, anxiety, depression and "mischievous consciences." Thus the Protestants had lost a great spiritual aid because of their "sixteenth century revolt." In the post-war era, Fulton Sheen would continue the Catholic attack on Freud and modern psychology.<sup>13</sup>

Rheinhold Niebuhr criticized Fosdick's liberalism and his lack of social vision. Fosdick and his middle and upper-middle-class followers would never solve the real social, political and economic problems of society because that would require changes in the existing social and economic order, and the middle-class were too comfortable for this sort of adventure. Unfortunately, the middle and upper-middle-classes "were tailored to the leisure and privileges of a complacent class."<sup>14</sup>

## NOTES

1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, On Being a Real Person (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1943), p. 49.
2. Ibid., pp. 31-33, 47, 223.
3. Ibid., pp. 31, 40, 74-77, 79, 91-92, 99, 103, 210, 216, 221, 233-237, 250.
4. Ibid., pp. 74-75, 218, 233, 237, 260, 264.
5. Ibid., pp. 7, 8, 19, 22, 37, 206, 224.
6. Ibid., pp. 12, 239-240, 245, 257.
7. Ibid., pp. 44-45, 54-55, 62-63, 85, 146, 149, 264.
8. Ibid., pp. 71, 100, 161, 164, 171, 173, 185-186.
9. Ibid., pp. 161, 164, 167-168, 184-185.
10. Bertrand L. Conway, Review of On Being a Real Person, Catholic World, Aug. 1943, p. 554; Fosdick, pp. 161, 164, 167-168, 184-185.
11. Fosdick, pp. 88, 89, 114, 127, 130, 156, 189, 191, 193, 197, 200, 208-209.
12. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), pp. 167-168; Reader's Digest, March 1943, p. 121; Donald Meyer, The Positive Thinkers (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 193, 195, 197; May Lamberton Becker, "Drs. Fosdick and Niebuhr on the Role of Faith," New York Herald Tribune, March 28, 1943, p. 9; Charles T. Holman, Review of On Being a Real Person, Journal of Religion, July 1943, p. 214.
13. Conway, p. 554.
14. Meyer, p. 195.



## Chapter 12

### Conclusion 1929-1945

Except for the belief that many Americans were unhappy and needed help, no single articulated theme linked all the best-selling guides between 1929 and 1945. Instead, numerous paths to happiness were recommended, including religion, neo-Stoicism, Social Darwinism, racism, hedonism, and an understanding of physiology.

Six writers, Dimnet, Young, Link, Carrel, Carnegie, and Fosdick, based their plans for happiness on a belief in God. But their religious views were never dogmatic or exclusive, and they were indifferent to the intricacies of theology. They all sought a least common denominator and treated religious doctrine in a manner designed to alienate as few Christians, and "men of good will" as possible. None insisted that their readers convert to any particular church, although Dimnet, a Catholic, and the Catholic reviewers were more hesitant than the Protestants about accepting other religions or sects as equals. To attract the modern middle-class they all insisted that there was no conflict between religion and science, and most ignored the grimmer aspects of Christianity. Only Dimnet and Link described man as basically corrupt and burdened with Original Sin; and no writer, including Dimnet or Link, mentioned hell or eternal punishment. The ancient Christian concept of sin and divine retribution was out of style in

popular happiness guides. Also passé was the Christian tradition which glorified poverty; no one recommended postponing the pursuit of happiness till after death. The consumer mentality had clearly triumphed. Americans wanted comfort, not sacrifice; and they were not disappointed by the best-selling guides. Christian brotherhood did not mean sharing one's abundance with the poor of America or the world; nor did it mean making personal sacrifices to reconstruct society along Christian lines. Religion seemed primarily a convenience, a pacifier, an insurance policy which bolstered a man's confidence and protected him against anxiety and loneliness, without interfering with his material comfort or the consumer culture. Vash Young and Dale Carnegie were the most outspoken representatives of this point of view. In fact they made a caricature of the Christian religion.

Four writers, Pitkin, Hillis, Brande and Jacobson, ignored religion. But only one, Walter Lippmann, said happiness depended on giving up a belief in God, which he considered a childish denial of reality and a source of frustration and fear.

It was not always easy for a reader to determine the reasons why a best-selling author embraced or ignored religion. Most writers never discussed the fundamental assumptions upon which their philosophical and theological beliefs rested. In fact, only Lippmann and Dimnet felt the need to present a

detailed account of their view of existence. They discussed metaphysics, philosophy, psychology, and religion. They also discussed the historical roots of modern man's lack of faith. Although their conclusions were diametrically opposed, both considered it important to examine the origin and purpose of life in an effort to pinpoint the seeds of man's discontent. They wanted to give their readers a broad overview. Link and Fosdick discussed life's origins and purpose briefly, but were more interested in presenting techniques for combating fear, anxiety, and inertia. Young, Carrel, and Carnegie espoused Christianity without defending their fundamental principles intellectually. Carrel also espoused Social Darwinism and white supremacy on the same terms. These writers either believed that the validity of their position was self-evident, or they considered faith and intuition sufficient justification. In either case they felt little or no need to support their positions by empirical evidence or logical arguments. Significantly, no religiously-oriented writer even bothered to discuss why God had originally felt a need to create a universe, and weak, sinful human beings.

It is interesting to note that no one explored the chief danger of depending primarily on faith and intuition, although Fosdick hinted at the difficulty when he wrote, "whether one believed in Hitler or God, it [faith] drove men to action." But if faith or intuition, subjective feelings unique to each

individual, were the ultimate criterion, how could one say a Nazi's view of life was faulty? He believed as did a Lutheran, a Jew, a Catholic, a Moslem, an Amazon head hunter or Carrel's Christian mercy killer. If the test was an interior feeling, who could, with authority, claim one point of view was superior to another?

In general, the best-selling guides were not interested in probing fundamentals. Only Lippmann thought it important to examine all man's basic assumptions; he wanted to discard those which he considered irrational and fear-provoking. Lippmann was also the only best-seller who expected his readers to work their way through sustained arguments, and detailed discussions. Dimnet, Carrel and Fosdick introduced some of the same themes as Lippmann but their treatment was always much less detailed, either because they considered the truth of their position self-evident, or because they were afraid to bore or confuse their readers. The other writers made few, if any, intellectual demands on their readers.

Pitkin, Brande and Hillis did not trouble themselves with presenting a detailed picture of man or existence. For them, it was enough to remain active and optimistic. They saw life as action (although they never openly admitted adhering to this restricted point of view) and specialized in techniques which freed energy for constructive use. But the action recommended was always tame and conventional. This was true also of the

other best-sellers. Except for Carrel, who dreamed of a white supremacist, Social Darwinist, Christian Utopia, no one called for a Nietzschean or Rabelaisian assault on life; no one preached the wisdom of living dangerously, or with a sense of drama; nor did anyone advocate giving free-rein to the passions and sensuality. Even Pitkin, the only other visionary in the group besides Carrel, saw paradise in strictly bourgeois terms.

This conservative attitude was also reflected in their view of sex. All the best-selling authors, except Hillis, expressed a conventional, twentieth-century Christian attitude toward sex, marriage and the family, including Lippmann, the agnostic. Monogamy was the best solution. Hillis was relatively unconventional in giving even a modified, if timid, approval to sex outside of marriage. (The Boston Globe saw her book as a symptom of the growing freedom of women.) No book discussed sexual techniques although Carnegie recommended reading a good marriage manual. A plea for sexual freedom would not appear in any best-selling guide until the 1960's.

Even modern psychology was modified to serve the conventional wisdom. Both Link and Fosdick tried to prove that there was no conflict between psychology and religion, thereby freeing themselves to strengthen religion with the techniques of psychology. But Link rejected what he termed the pseudo-science of Freud, embracing instead a form of behaviorism.

Fosdick accepted much of depth psychology, although he criticized Freud's irreligious attitude, preferring Jung's position instead. Dimnet praised Freud's insight into the inferiority complex, but rejected the basic tenets of psychoanalysis. Most religious writers wanted to make use of psychology, but feared the philosophical consequences of viewing man's psyche as just another scientific phenomenon. They realized that psychology was a potentially dangerous ally. To be truly useful, it must be domesticated, and all heresy deleted. But the best-sellers of this era did little more than identify the problem. As we shall see, it would be the post-war writers who assumed the task of completely taming psychology, and of carefully defining its proper relationship to religion.

But it was not only the religious writers who felt uncomfortable with modern psychology. Lippmann was optimistic about the use of psychoanalysis, but he did not accept Freud's belief in the inevitable struggle between man's instincts and civilization. Lippmann was sure man could learn to adjust to civilization's demands. But he did not bring his disagreement with Freud into the open. Instead, Lippmann did what so many subsequent best-sellers would do; he borrowed only those elements of Freud's system which he considered useful without informing the reader that his interpretation conflicted with Freud's.

The remaining writers either ignored modern psychology

or paid it superficial attention. Brande claimed to have made extensive use of Freud's work, but there was little evidence of it in her book. Carnegie merely mentioned that several of Freud's ideas agreed with his. Pitkin said Freud's concepts of psychic determination applied only to neurotics, not healthy people who had complete freedom of choice. Carrel and Jacobson dismissed the work of Freud. Only Young and Hillis failed to mention Freud or modern psychology. Jacobson was the only writer to refer to Pavlov.

Jacobson was unique in another way. He ignored the causes of fear and worry altogether, and concerned himself exclusively with their physiological consequences. But no writer, including Jacobson, put a strong emphasis on physical exercise as a means of achieving happiness, although Carnegie, Fosdick, Carrel and Jacobson did mention its usefulness in promoting a sense of well-being. No writer recommended drugs, and, with the exception of Jacobson, none saw drugs as a serious problem.

The best-selling guides were as conservative politically as they were sexually and morally. Only one writer, Alexis Carrel, advised political action to create a new social environment which would produce happy people. Dimnet hinted that he too favored a new political system but never openly committed himself. Interestingly, both men were French Catholics, and both downgraded democracy. No other writer even considered re-constructing society. Pitkin and Lippmann were both unhappy

with contemporary society, but neither felt the need for overt political action to bring about the changes they desired since both believed that society was moving automatically toward the promised land, either because of technology or Darwinian competition. Fosdick also thought social evils should be eliminated, but never said how, and concluded that no change in the social structure could make a disorganized person immune to emotional stress if he lacked inner integration. Jacobson said it would be nice to eliminate poverty and unemployment but that such feats were extremely difficult if not impossible to accomplish. Young, Link, Hillis, and Brande ignored the possibility of changing society. They saw happiness as a strictly private matter. In fact, most best-selling authors reflected the laissez faire, Protestant tradition which viewed both salvation and progress as the outcome of individual initiative. Only Dimnet, Carrel and Link even advocated using the schools to inculcate their ideas in American children, although Pitkin explained in some detail how the improved school system would function once an enlightened society finally emerged from the competitive struggle.

Significantly, not a single best-selling guide was deeply concerned with the Great Depression or the New Deal. Their interest was marginal at best. Only one, Carrel, blamed capitalism for the Depression. Young was more representative. He believed the Depression was caused by the greed of the American



people. Link agreed, and added that government efforts to improve economic conditions amounted to theft, and were a defiance of God's law. He interpreted the Christian virtue of charity in terms of neighborhood self-help programs. Hillis believed that the unemployed had no one to blame but themselves. She even recommended that her readers exploit the Depression for their private gain. Even Pitkin accepted the economic system despite the fact that he believed it specialized in useless and overpriced goods and was dominated by poor leadership. A true Social Darwinist, he considered the Depression beneficial because it eliminated the unfit. Brande, Carnegie, and Dimnet simply ignored the Depression.

No writer, except Lippmann and Carrel, saw the complexity and the inter-relatedness of our modern industrial society. Instead, they viewed people as self-sufficient atoms, and thought in terms of an idealized 19th century laissez faire model where each man shaped his own destiny. Thus most best-selling writers continued to glorify the mythology of "individualism" and "free enterprise" in a world already dominated by huge corporations and complex technology. They were victims of "cultural lag." Ironically, the post-war writers, living in a relatively prosperous period, would be much more critical of capitalism.

In a book written before A Preface to Morals, The Phantom Public (1925) Walter Lippmann tried to explain the public's

lack of interest in the intricacies of modern society. He concluded that the private citizen was simply bewildered. Public affairs were

for the most part invisible. They are managed, if they are managed at all, at distant centers, from behind the scenes, by unnamed powers. As a private person he does not know for certain what is going on, or who is doing it, or where he is being carried. No newspaper reports his environment so that he can grasp it; no school has taught him how to imagine it...He lives in a world which he cannot see, does not understand and is unable to direct.

Besides, people had to earn a living and raise children. They were too busy with their private lives to investigate modern society even if they became curious. But with the exception of Lippmann and Carrel no best-seller portrayed the general public as helpless victims, manipulated by a complex industrial system.<sup>1</sup>

And no best-seller saw America's lack of social planning, as well as its religious attitudes as causes of unhappiness, as did Reinhold Niebuhr in Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932). Niebuhr believed that America had

developed a type of religious idealism which is saturated with sentimentality...The average liberal Protestant Christian is still convinced that the kingdom of God is gradually approaching.../and/ that the wealthy will be persuaded by the church to dedicate their power and privilege to the common good... .

But Niebuhr doubted that the rich would ever accept meaningful reform. Meanwhile society was "reeking with social injustice." The Great Depression proved that capitalism

was unhealthy. But capitalism survived because it served the purpose of the rich, while the poor, who suffered, were too ignorant "to attribute their difficulties to the social anarchy and political irresponsibility which the theory of capitalism<sup>7</sup> sanctions." Niebuhr reminded his readers, as no best-seller did, that Jesus had praised poverty and warned against the corrupting influence of wealth. "Special privileges make all men dishonest." Niebuhr wanted a socialist economy and thought that the trade unions should organize their own political party. Niebuhr was not sure if the goal should be socialism through evolution or revolution. "The contrasting virtues and vices of revolutionary and evolutionary socialism are such that no purely rational moral choice is possible between them." Of course, Niebuhr's point of view was anathema to all the best-selling guides. They ignored the possibility of restructuring society through democratic socialism. They reflected and re-enforced the creed of individualism. Actually, even in the post-war era, despite the increased criticism of capitalism, no best-selling writer suggested the possible advantages of socialism until the 1960's.<sup>2</sup>

Economic distress was not the only social problem best-selling guides tended to ignore. Except for Fosdick, Carnegie and Dimnet, race was never mentioned. And Fosdick merely said racism was bad, without elaboration. Dimnet only referred to race casually when he drew an analogy between the southern

blacks and machines. Thus Carrel was the only writer who made race an important part of his program. Carrel considered the white race superior to all others. Moreover, he drew distinctions even within the white race, subdividing it into superior and inferior types. To be happy, the whites had to protect their racial purity from external and internal threats.

The best-selling guides of this era reflected a cross section of middle class attitudes. Happiness could be found in religion, neo-stoicism, Social Darwinism, racism, bourgeois hedonism, and even in an understanding of physiology. There was a wide spectrum of opinion, and no single articulated theme linked all the guides; but there were two unstated assumptions accepted by every author. They all ignored, or in Lippmann's case, rejected democratic socialism; and they all believed that life was worth enduring, despite the pain and effort involved. This axiom was never questioned. And, of course, suicide was never mentioned as a possible solution to unhappiness.

## NOTES

1. Walter Lippmann, The Phantom Public (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1925), pp. 13-14.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics (New York: Charles Scribners's Sons, 1932), pp. 33, 79-81, 189, 200, 202, 230.

Part TWO: 1946 - 1960

## Chapter 13

Joshua Loth Liebman

Harry McNeill of Commonweal found the title of Joshua Liebman's Peace of Mind (1946) particularly significant:

In another day it might have been entitled, "Righteous Living," on the assumption that peace and contentment could be an adjunct of moral rectitude. But today the accent is different.<sup>1</sup>

According to Liebman, the old morality had failed. It had not given men peace of mind. In fact, men were more confused than ever. They were no longer certain what was moral and what wasn't. Yet men still yearned to live by the golden mean; they wanted proportion and harmony in their lives. But instead, most men suffered from guilt, isolation, anxiety and fear of death. Liebman believed they suffered because they were immature and unrealistic. And traditional religion instead of enlightening men, frequently encouraged their emotional ignorance. Liebman, a Boston rabbi, a professor of Jewish Philosophy and Literature, and a well-known radio preacher, was convinced that Augustine, Paul, Calvin and Luther had done mankind a disservice when they pictured human beings as morbid, guilt-ridden, wicked worms. This bleak self-image encouraged guilt and self-hatred. Moreover, traditional religion overburdened man by distorting the concept of free will and human responsibility:

Kant once declared that nothing proved to him the greatness of God more convincingly than the

starry heavens and the moral conscience within us. To which Freud ironically adds: 'the stars are unquestionably superb, but where the conscience is concerned, God has been guilty of an uneven and careless piece of work.'

Liebman agreed with Freud that the conscience cultivated by traditional religion was frequently sadistic, cruel and wasteful. It crippled men with impossibly high standards. Religious leaders seldom distinguished wisely between an immoral thought and an immoral act. They considered an evil desire the equivalent of an evil deed; "Christ, in effect, maintains that a man who lusts in his heart commits adultery..." This approach was childish, and encouraged a "morbid conscience" which led to repression which was psychologically dangerous. All men have amoral and immoral fantasies. They must face the truth. Repression only leads to mental illness, and violent outbreaks of rage and anger. Religion must mature and make peace with Freud. Freud taught us the necessity of being honest with ourselves. We must not hide our emotions. We all have good and bad traits; we all feel love and hate, generosity and pettiness. We must learn to love ourselves as we are before we can love others, and create a peaceful society. To find peace of mind, man must ultimately blend the ancient truths of religion with the new insights of psychology. The relationship of religion to psychology became one of the major themes of the post-war period, a period overwhelmingly dominated by religiously-oriented writers.<sup>2</sup>



Liebman was quite sympathetic to Freud, who had given the world a "magnificent new tool." It was now possible to investigate man's deepest drives, and "discover how, when and why these fundamental energies have become diverted into neurotic channels" which tortured men. Liebman called Freud the "shrewdest analyst of our civilization and its disorders." Freud saw the "grim battle between the forces of love (Eros) and the forces of aggressive self-destruction (hate)." Moreover, he taught man how to channel his drives safely.<sup>3</sup>

Liebman thought Freud's most valuable contribution was his description of man's maturation process. Liebman also gave a cursory account of such Freudian terms as libido, id, ego, superego, Oedipus complex, fixation and regression. He stressed the fact that Freud considered childhood a battlefield which left children feeling inadequate, inferior and helpless. Unfortunately, few adults survived the ordeal undamaged. Most were emotionally scarred for life. They were left with a sense of worthlessness and frustration. Moreover many were fixated and wasted their lives trying to fulfill childish needs. Their judgments were warped by infantile desires, demands and expectations. Frequently they were filled with rage and bitterness. If they expressed their anger, they were constantly in conflict with the people around them. On the other hand, if they suppressed it, they ultimately fell into a state of depression and listlessness. Liebman gave F. Scott Fitzgerald

as an example of a man who committed a partial suicide because he was emotionally childish and misinterpreted his real needs. In the end he was spiritually crushed by irrational self-doubts. Liebman also mentioned Orson Welles' film, Citizen Kane as an excellent account of a man crippled by childhood wounds.<sup>4</sup>

Psychoanalysis was a proven success, and could improve men's lives immensely. Thus Liebman agreed with Harry Emerson Fosdick about the use of psychology. In fact his book was the first of a number of post-war best-sellers which tried to blend religion and modern psychology. Liebman saw no rupture with tradition in the fusion. Prophetic religion had always stressed

the need for forgiveness and tolerance. /Freud's/ Dynamic psychology now supplements this insight by teaching us that we can achieve inner health only through forgiveness - the forgiveness not only of others but also of ourselves.

Thus Freud had fulfilled a spiritual purpose even if he had been unaware of it. Of course, Freud had been mistaken when he called religion a mass neurosis. Freud was too impressed with old fashioned 19th century materialism, and it had clouded his view of reality. Liebman, in fact, went so far as to diametrically reverse Freud's judgment of religion. Liebman saw atheism and agnosticism, not religion, as manifestations of neurosis. Atheists and agnostics refused to accept God because of "emotional conflict and disturbed human relationships in the early years of life." The non-be-

liever felt that "his parents let him down catastrophically." Thus he saw the universe as "untrustworthy and faithless."<sup>5</sup>

Of all the ordained writers Liebman was the most liberal to ever write a best-seller. He insisted that religious people should not be surprised at finding new paths to God, such as psychology, for God had not revealed himself once and forever to man. Religion was an evolutionary phenomenon, and "whatever aids mankind in its quest for self-fulfillment is a new revelation of God's working in history." In fact, all science, not only psychology, was a manifestation of God's activity. Liebman defined religion as the "accumulated spiritual wisdom and ethical precepts dating from the time of the earliest Prophets... ." Religion gave mankind a "sense of our purpose in the world, a feeling of relatedness to God, the shared warmth of group fellowship, and the subordination of our little egos to great moral and spiritual ends." In short, the purpose of religion was "the achievement of the good life." But God had not presented man with a finished product. In fact, religion was not the creation of God alone. Men must cooperate with the Lord. And "every culture must create its own God idea rather than rely upon outworn tradition." Thus "sects and orthodoxies perish" while man continuously searches for the "peace of God." A mature adult never expects final knowledge about Divinity.<sup>6</sup>

The peasants of fifteenth century feudal Italy "could

never have the idea of God that a free American can create out of his new culture... ." Unfortunately, many Americans still saw God as "a master chef at a gigantic fish fry--a cosmic bellhop who should respond to their every summons." But we can no longer think of God in feudal or monarchical terms. This outlook represents "childhood residues." It is immature. "The time is coming when we have to bring our idea of God into harmony with the new realities of our democratic life." Thus Liebman rejected both the favor-dispensing God of Vash Young and Dale Carnegie, and the frozen, orthodox God of Fundamentalists like Fulton Sheen and Billy Graham. Later Norman Vincent Peale would achieve immense popularity defending the concept of God as a dispenser of favors. But Liebman emphatically rejected the image of Americans as beggars or supplicants. Americans lacked the "feeling of helplessness and of dependence that characterized so much of Oriental and European religion." Americans should "begin to think of ourselves as responsible co-workers with God." For God needed our collaboration. We were, in fact, indispensable to God.<sup>7</sup>

Directly connected to the evolutionary quality of religion was the virtue of tolerance. Liebman insisted that men must "resist the temptation to private imperialism" in the realm of ideas. They must learn to understand and tolerate other viewpoints without necessarily sharing or accepting them. The quest for God was universal, and was found in the ideas of men

like Buddha, Maimonides and the Stoics. With the exception of orthodox writers like Sheen and Graham, most religiously oriented writers did stress toleration.<sup>8</sup>

In keeping with the pre-war tradition, Liebman did not give detailed theological arguments to support his position. He did, however, state that he agreed with Kant that the very process of human reason demanded the conclusions that God existed, that the soul was immortal, and that man's deeds would be judged. But Liebman was not dogmatic about immortality:

Whether one agrees or disagrees with these speculative arguments in behalf of life beyond the grave, one should always remember that there are other forms of immortality besides personal survival.

Liebman mentioned art, children and mere membership in the human race. He did not mention hell or any other form of God-inflicted punishment. As to the evolutionary nature of religion and man's status as a co-worker with God, Liebman seemed to consider these ideas self-evident truths.<sup>9</sup>

Liebman was ambiguous about free will. At one point he agreed with Freud that man's conduct was at least partially controlled by unconscious motivations. Yet on other occasions, Liebman insisted that man possessed free will; God had given him a "true conscience" which drove him to do good and equipped him to meet the demands of life. Liebman was equally muddled on the question of guilt. On some occasions he attacked the morbidity of the guilt instilled by religious teachers like

Augustine and Calvin, but on others, he insisted that guilt was man's valid reaction to not living up to his God-given conscience. At one point Liebman even demanded that the existence of the morbid type of guilt was ultimately man's and not God's responsibility. Liebman's confusion highlighted the difficulties religious writers faced when they tried to absorb modern psychology. As Franz Alexander, a well-known psychoanalyst, pointed out in a review of Liebman's book, physicians and psychotherapists had only recently begun to take over the duties which had traditionally belonged to the priest and religious counselors. There was still a good deal of confusion as to what constituted psychological technique and what constituted ethical and philosophical questions beyond the scope of the therapist.<sup>10</sup>

But like all the religious writers, Liebman insisted that psychology must be ultimately subservient to religion. Psychiatry had no authority to speak about the nature of God. Psychiatry and psychology were mere scientific disciplines, and "not basically concerned with moral judgments, whereas religion inevitably lives in the realm of ethical concepts." Psychology was a mere tool to aid disturbed people who were to be viewed as "defective transmitters of the Divine."<sup>11</sup>

But if one accepted Freud's theories of the id, superego, and the personal unconscious, and Pavlov's concept of the conditioned reflex, how much free will could be attributed to man?

What elements of man's conscience were culturally induced, and which represented God-given universals? The issues were vital. For, if man were largely controlled by unconscious elements, how could he be held responsible for his deeds? And why should a man feel guilty about committing a sin or a crime if his life were determined by factors beyond his control? Would religion end by ascribing guilt only to those who sinned after undergoing extensive psychoanalysis or therapy, or to those who refused to be analyzed? If so, no one could possibly be considered a sinner who lived before Freud. And suppose, even now, a childhood neurosis prevented a person from seeing the value of psychoanalysis, would he be breaking God's law if he continued to mistreat his fellow men? Liebman and all the other religiously-oriented writers of the post-war era simply ignored these questions. Instead, Liebman chose to blend those elements of traditional religion and modern psychology which appealed to him, without concerning himself whether or not they were logically consistent.

The question of good and evil also presented difficulties. Why did God permit so much evil and suffering? Liebman explained that God had established the natural laws of the universe, and had given man a mind and a conscience to guide him. If man abused these God-given gifts, it led to evil and suffering. It was ultimately man's responsibility. Moreover, God would not work miracles to save man from his self-indulgent

errors, for God was limited by his own creation. He could not change it at will. (Liebman was the only religious writer to limit God's power.) But why, some critics might ask, did God create weak human beings with a propensity to ignore their God-given consciences? Why didn't he create men who were naturally good? Because, Liebman replied, if God had not given man the freedom to choose between good and evil, man "would have been deprived of his noblest faculty: the power to choose right instead of wrong." God did not want to make man a slave or an automaton. Thus he refused to be a "Divine Tyrant and Dictator." "Let us not seek," counsels Liebman, "to defend democracy on earth and yet demand moral tyranny from Heaven." But God's aversion to dictatorship was not the only explanation of human suffering. "Apparently, nature does not have the power to create such marvelously sensitive organisms as we human beings are, and at the same time arrange for the durability in us of stone or mountain." Thus the price of human sensitivity was hunger, sickness and decay. But Liebman's explanation introduced further confusion. Earlier he had explained that God made each man different because "God apparently did not want a regimented world of sameness." The contradiction was obvious. In Liebman's universe God controlled some aspects of life, but not others. And like all the other religious writers, Liebman ignored a fundamental question: he never discussed why God created the universe and man in the first place. Liebman's indifference to theology did



not particularly disturb his critics. Nash K. Burger in the New York Times, Dean Campbell in the Springfield Republican and John Haynes Holmes in the New York Herald Tribune did complain that Liebman's treatment of religion was thin and inadequate, but no one questioned his liberal theology, his view of evolution or his ambiguity concerning free will and God's omnipotence.<sup>12</sup>

Liebman agreed with Freud and the pre-war best-sellers about pleasure. Moderation and the "golden mean" were the proper goals. Man must seek fulfillment within safe bounds, that is, within marriage, parenthood, work and art. Above all, men must develop loving relationships:

The source of all basic anxieties in human nature is a feeling of being alone and helpless in a hostile world, and the first compulsion of life is the weaving of a stable pattern of relationships between ourselves and our parents and all of those who in time take the place of our parents - the beloved, the friend, the co-worker.

Next to food, people needed and wanted love and fellowship. Love is a "vitamin of the soul":

When we are accepted, approved, needed by those who know all about us and like us anyway, we have the first inkling of the peace that transcends understanding.

All extremes must be avoided. The Don Juans are

lonely children lost and naked in a world that has never woven a garment of love for them and that has relentlessly driven them down the empty corridors of the years, desolate and alone.<sup>13</sup>

Even religion must be balanced; it too can be too emotional

or too rational, an error of many liberal religious sects. Liebman was also critical of the extreme asceticism and mysticism found in some Oriental and Christian sects. It was not wise to be too stoical. To find peace of mind, man must learn to renounce certain dangerous pleasures. He must sublimate his dark drives. Liebman cited the surgeon as a good example of how sadistic tendencies could be re-channeled into worthwhile outlets. Liebman did not discuss sex in great detail, nor did he explain which aspects of sex were sinful and which weren't.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike Dimnet, Link and Carnegie, Liebman said very little about such techniques as diaries, social clubs, or dancing. He was primarily interested in abstract principles. But he did devote an entire chapter to the problem of death and grief. He was the only best-seller to stress these aspects of existence. In his opinion, they were the keys to understanding contemporary society:

The whole superficiality of modern civilization is revealed in one sense in this realm of the grief situation. Modern man has made a god out of comfort and has grown afraid of facing reality in all its depths.

Death forced men back into reality. It cast an unpromising light which revealed much of man's daily life as shallow and trivial. Most people, even most religious sects, tried to arrange funerals so as to avoid unpleasantness. People were not encouraged to express their deepest feelings.

Thus some emotions atrophied, while others submerged into the unconscious, later to plague man with psychic conflict and misery. We must accept the intense feeling created by death. We must talk about loss, express our emotions openly, and then go back into the world, to work and to form new relationships. If a survivor felt guilty about the way he had treated the dead person, he should confess to God, and make expiation through charity and good works. Liebman drew an important distinction between confession and psychotherapy. Confession was useful but limited. "Atonement, rather than growth, is the aim...whereas psychotherapy does not require you to feel sorry for your sins so long as you outgrow them." In contrast, Fulton Sheen would later insist that confession was more effective than therapy. In any case, ultimately we must learn to accept death as a natural part of existence:

Judaism in its major traditions has attempted to avoid morbidity and pessimism, and has... sought to give its followers a sane perspective about life and death, a courageous acceptance of the role of death in the economy of life, and a life sustaining interest in this world in spite of tragedy and loss.<sup>15</sup>

Liebman said very little concerning the American economy and social system, and their effect on man's peace of mind. But he made it clear that he disliked capitalism. It was based on animal selfishness. He compared the American economic system to a competitive, envy-filled "marathon race" which stimulated greed and dissatisfaction. He wanted both political

and economic democracy, but he never defined economic democracy. He merely said that a good society must guarantee work and status to every person on earth

because we know now that lack of status and of security and the presence of joblessness and hunger can become the percussion cap on the atomic bombs of earth's destruction.

Liebman never mentioned the Great Depression or Hitler by name, but they obviously had made a strong impression on him. A more just social order would help man adjust. It was "unquestionably true that we shall have a healthier human nature in a co-operative society than under a ruthlessly competitive system... ." Liebman's was the only best-selling guide to recommend a co-operative society until Erich Fromm in the sixties. But Liebman never explained how a more just society could be established. And he warned that we must not hope for too much even with a co-operative society. Man would never create an earthly paradise. Whether under capitalism, socialism, or communism, men will still face personal psychological problems, and "grief will still remain no matter what the social system... ." Some fear and worry were inevitably "part of the fee we pay for citizenship in an unpredictable universe."<sup>16</sup>

Still Liebman was sure that men could find peace of mind even in our primitive society. For with faith, a human being could overcome the effects of competition and poverty. He could even surmount ill-health. Thus ultimately man's per-

sonal unhappiness was not due to the miserable state of the society. It was due instead to his lack of true religious faith. Any other explanation was only a dodge to veil personal inadequacies. A wise man did not become pessimistic. He worked with reality, and did the best possible.

Peace of Mind was an extremely popular book. It was on the best-seller list three consecutive years, as number two in 1946, number one in 1947, and number three in 1948, with a total sale of over 1,107,064. Frederick May Eliot, in the Atlantic, said Liebman's book was meant for those who had turned from traditional religion because their faith had been weakened by the findings of modern science. Liebman probably appealed to the same middle-class types who read Harry Emerson Fosdick. Both men maintained a serious tone, and avoided the pitchman approach of Carnegie and the folksy style of Vash Young; and both discussed Freud, psychology, philosophy and theology without involving themselves in detailed abstract arguments. But Liebman was even less traditional than Fosdick. God was no longer all-powerful, and God did not do favors. In fact, God was a mere co-worker with man. Furthermore Liebman did not offer a message of inspiration like Vash Young or Dale Carnegie. Nor did he suggest a return to orthodoxy, like Dimnet. According to Liebman, the old formulas would not work. People had to blend religion with the insights of depth psychology. This plea became one of the most contro-

versial themes of the post-war era. Liebman was pleased that more and more churches and synagogues were offering therapy to their members. And the only concrete political proposal he made was a plea for the government to "encourage and subsidize great numbers of qualified psychiatrists and psychological clinics throughout America, in small towns as well as in large cities." But of course they would be therapists who knew their place and left all moral judgments to churchmen.

## NOTES

1. Harry McNeill, Review of Peace of Mind, Commonweal, August 16, 1946, p. 434.
2. Joshua Liebman, Peace of Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), pp. 18, 20, 23-27, 38, 53-54, 125; McNeill, p. 434; Anna Rothe (ed.), Current Biography 1946 (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1947), pp. 345-346.
3. Liebman, pp. 9-11, 64.
4. Ibid., pp. 42, 46-49, 89, 92-93.
5. Ibid., pp. 18-19, 28-29, 146-147, 179.
6. Ibid., pp. 12-16, 22, 155-156, 172-174, 177-178.
7. Ibid., pp. 155-156, 172-174.
8. Ibid., pp. 5, 75-76, 174.
9. Ibid., pp. 138-140.
10. Ibid., pp. 23-25, 103; Franz Alexander, Review of Peace of Mind, Chicago Sun, April 7, 1946, p. 4.
11. Liebman, pp. 12-13, 180-181.
12. Ibid., pp. 75-76, 137, 162; Nash K. Burger, Review of Peace of Mind, New York Times, April 7, 1946, p. 5; Dean Campbell, Review of Peace of Mind, Springfield Republican, June 16, 1946, p. 4; John Haynes Holmes, Review of Peace of Mind, New York Herald Tribune, March 31, 1946, p. 6.
13. Liebman, pp. 51, 60, 69-72, 164.
14. Ibid., pp. 28, 108, 189.
15. Ibid., pp. 30, 108-109, 115, 121, 124, 136.
16. Ibid., pp. XII-XIII, 59-60, 81, 99, 102.
17. Ibid., p. 95; Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965, (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1967), pp. 85, 175-177, 180; Frederick May Eliot, Review of Peace of Mind, Atlantic, July 1946, p. 153.

## Chapter 14

### Norman Vincent Peale

Unlike Liebman, Norman Vincent Peale clung to the traditions of Vash Young and Dale Carnegie. Peale believed that Americans were more anxious, tense and neurotic than ever before; but they could find "peace of mind, improved health and a never-ceasing flow of energy," if they learned to believe in Christ and practiced positive thinking. A person's state of mind was determined by what he habitually thought. If he was dominated by a lack of faith and negative ideas, he was inevitably unhappy. Happiness was achieved by breaking away from the old, self-defeating thought patterns and replacing them with positive thinking. The principles involved were as old as the Bible. Thus Peale's mission was to demonstrate to modern man how he could adopt this ancient wisdom to his present needs. Peale described his books as "practical, direct-action, personal-improvement" manuals.<sup>1</sup>

Like Carnegie, Peale became part of America's folk lore. He had three best-sellers, and the most famous, The Power of Positive Thinking, was on the best-seller's list from 1952 to 1955, selling over 2,505,000 copies in all editions. Peale, a Protestant minister, also reached a wide audience through television and radio, and wrote a weekly column for Look magazine. It was estimated that he reached approximately 30 million people a week in 1957.<sup>2</sup>



Peale stumbled on his approach to happiness as a young minister. While counseling troubled people, he found that their psychological problems were frequently too complex for him. He lacked the required specialized knowledge. He turned for help to Dr. Smiley Blanton, a psychiatrist who trained with Freud, and who later wrote a best-selling guide of his own. Together they began a counseling clinic which pooled the skills of ministers, psychiatrists, physicians and social psychiatrists. At the clinic, a patient first saw a psychiatrist who told him why he acted in a self-defeating manner. Next he saw a pastor who told "him how to do what he ought to do." "The minister does not attempt to be a psychiatrist, nor the psychiatrist a pastor. Each performs his own function... ." Thus, like Liebman, Peale was careful to limit the role of psychology. In fact, he went much further. He claimed a certain ancient religious technique was really more effective than modern psychology:

...Dr. Smiley Blanton, and I have worked painstakingly on the problem of eliminating the tangles from people's minds. Sometimes it is a long, slow, tedious process. It is often effective, I am thankful to report. There is great effectiveness in the joint operation of Christianity and psychiatry. However, we have learned to rely upon another factor that cures the mind as a surgical operation oftentimes cures organic trouble that has not yielded to long treatment. Perhaps I can best explain this process by applying to it an old and often misunderstood term...The term is "conversion," and I take that to mean the inflow into the mind of spiritual power with such potency and therapeutic effectiveness that the mind is completely changed.

Peale saw no conflict between science and religion. In fact he described a minister as a scientist of the spiritual life. But despite Peale's praise of psychology, and the fact that he thought all ministers ought to study psychology, Peale actually said very little about modern psychology in his books. He never mentioned Freud, Pavlov or the Behaviorists. It was the instant religious conversions which truly interested him and to which he devoted his attention.<sup>3</sup>

The first requirement was faith in God. An ordinary person could become extraordinary if he "will yield himself completely to the power of God";

The basic secret of the Christian religion is not effort or will power, important as they are. The secret of Christianity is faith... When you have done so /attained faith/ you became a channel through which divine power flows.

Faith could be developed. It began "as a thin trickle across the mind. Repeated it becomes habitual." Work at it. Act as if you do believe. Pray. Ask for help. "Form a simple love for God as a kindly Father who will take care of you." It was clear that Peale did not accept Liebman's concept of God as man's co-worker. Peale was much closer to Vash Young, Henry Link and Dale Carnegie, all writers who saw God as a benevolent dispenser of favors.<sup>4</sup>

Once a person had faith, the next step was to learn to think positively because if you thought "victory," you gained "victory." As with faith, a person could work at developing

a positive attitude. There was a formula; one, affirm that you are in God's hands; two, make a true estimate of your abilities; three, get a competent counsellor to help you to understand how your doubts originated, which was usually in childhood; four, create and hold in your mind a mental picture of yourself succeeding and never let it fade; five, block out all negative thoughts with positive ones. Negative attitudes were lodged in man's subconscious mind. You must talk to it, Peale advised. Preach positive thinking to it. The subconscious will eventually be convinced. Imagine Jesus as your constant companion. Actually see him at your side. Repeat over and over to yourself St. Paul's exhortation, "if God be for me, who can be against me?" "By a subconscious procedure the sense of inferiority and inadequacy gradually give way to one of confidence and faith." Also memorize great verses, especially from the Bible, about faith, forgiveness and kindness. Make a list of your assets, including such things as your health, wife and family. And only cultivate friendships with positive, hopeful people. All this required real effort. But if a person sincerely implemented the formula and worked at it constantly, never letting up, he would find happiness. It was guaranteed.<sup>5</sup>

Peale elaborated on those aspects of his approach which he considered especially important. It was essential that people understood the nature of prayer, for prayer was an ex-

tremely valuable tool which connected man directly with the basic flow of divine energy which was God's power. Peale believed prayer was a "vibration from one person to another and to God." In fact, "all the universe is in vibration." Spiritual power was a "throbbing, pulsating, vibrant, creative energy...which can drive to the heart of a personality or of society... ." (Peale also believed in telepathy and clairvoyance.) On occasion, prayer could even eliminate pain. "Perhaps prayer and faith may also set in motion spiritual high-frequency waves vibrating from God to believer to destroy 'pain pathways' in consciousness." Faith and prayer could overcome disease including cancer. In documenting this claim, Peale listed Alexis Carrel as one of his authorities, although he carefully disassociated himself from what he termed Carrel's "political aberration." He never explained just what the "aberration" was. If a loved one was sick, a person should pray both for the patient and the doctor. Think positively and form a picture in your mind of the patient in good health. Above all, don't be afraid; you will send out negative thoughts to the sick person.<sup>6</sup>

Prayer could also reform an alcoholic. And certainly a businessman could make good use of it:

Today any successful and competent businessman will employ the latest and best-tested methods of production, distribution, and administration, and many are discovering that one of the greatest of all efficiency methods is prayer power.

Businessmen were encouraged to pray together. It was good for the company. It was even permissible to pray that a good customer would find the money to buy your product. God was pleased to help a businessman. He also helped baseball pitchers defeat their opponents. In one instance, a preacher even blessed the bats of a baseball team, which then went on to win the league championship.<sup>7</sup>

Peale disagreed with those Christians who equated happiness with poverty. He saw himself as "an apostle of hard work, of the good old American principle of creating your own wealth and position by means of your own abilities and efforts." As Donald Meyer wrote in the Positive Thinkers, "Peale was unmistakably an heir of the old gospel of success." Most of Peale's anecdotes concerned successful businessmen, salesmen and athletes. He advised people to select a big goal. Don't think in terms of one store, aim at a chain; practice "big thinking which is really a form of God-thinking... ." And never be afraid to ask God for help, he's happy to assist a true believer.<sup>8</sup>

But Peale's interest in business was limited. He made no attempt to describe the economic structure of the United States. And he only mentioned the Great Depression once, while describing how one of its victims, an unemployed man, found a job by learning to think positively and by praying to God. It seems Peale saw no connection between unemployment and America's

particular economic structure. Positive thinking could also overcome racial prejudice. Peale told how four policemen beat an innocent black man. But the black man was not angry. Instead, he prayed for God's spirit to flow through him into the hearts of the "misguided" policemen. Suddenly, one policeman stopped, bewildered, his arm poised about his head, ready to smash his victim's skull. The spirit of God had entered him. He could not strike. Other than this, Peale said very little about race. The only other comment he made concerned a conversation in 1957 with a black boy who doubted he could succeed in America. "Your thinking," replied Peale, "is twenty-five years behind the times, son. Then it was more difficult for Negro men and women, but some of them did mighty well, all the same." It's not your color, Peale explained, but what's inside you that determines "how high you go."<sup>9</sup>

Peale even had some advice on the technical aspects of prayer. It was important to relax and talk to God simply and directly. Be specific. And pray in a church whenever possible, for a religious gathering forms "a great reception center for power...Two thousand mental and spiritual antennae draw spiritual power to this congregation... ." Pray for your enemies, tell God you appreciate his help, and above all, believe your prayers will be answered. Of course, you may not get what you pray for, but you must accept God's decision. He knows best.<sup>10</sup>

Peale also discussed specific problems which might under-

mine a person's ability to think positively. Guilt tormented many people, and sabotaged their efforts to live a full life. The solution was to see sin for what it was. A person could never hide his transgression from his subconscious mind. But Peale never defined the subconscious mind. It may have been the equivalent of Freud's superego, or it may have been a blend of Freud's superego and his personal unconscious. Moreover, Peale never made it clear whether or not man's conscience was innate or socially acquired. At one point he discussed a man who committed the sin of fornication. Afterwards, the man was plagued with guilt despite the fact that consciously he did not consider fornication a sin. But "nineteen hundred years of Christian civilization," Peale explained, "had made his sub-conscious mind know that it [Fornication] was wrong." Thus he could not escape guilt. But suppose the man had been raised in a more permissive, non-Christian culture, would his subconscious mind still have been troubled by his sexual conduct? Peale simply ignored this aspect of the problem. He saw only one solution to guilt: follow God's law. But Peale was liberal in defining the law. Man must not be overstrict in interpreting God's commandments. Peale agreed with Liebman that an evil thought was not the equivalent of an evil deed. Peale was aware that the Bible said "that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." But Peale "pointed out...that we cannot govern the

thoughts that come into our minds." It was enough not to act on them. Peale never explained why the Bible was overzealous on this point.<sup>11</sup>

To overcome anger, another distraction which interfered with positive thought, Peale recommended making a list of the things which angered us regularly, and then praying about them. Also, it was wise, when one felt anger beginning, to repeat the Lord's Prayer slowly; it was more effective than counting to ten. And to overcome the sorrow of losing a loved one to death, remember that all men must die, and that death was not an end, but the beginning of a better life. (Nevertheless, Peale was against suicide, and believed that all suicides were mentally deranged.) Of course, it was natural to feel grief in the face of death, and Peale recommended that people openly express their sorrow, and then afterwards, go on with their normal life, keeping very active and trusting in God. And when facing our own death, we must have courage. Peale pictured death as a plane flight to a better life where

trusting those instruments of faith, you will come in, finally, to be welcomed by the lights on the eternal runway. And there will be your loved ones to meet you with the same old smile on their beloved faces. Believe...and live forever.

Marriage too could be improved by positive thinking. To create a truly happy marriage, take the whole family to Church on Sundays, and pray daily. Make your first words in the morning pleasant. Remember that your mate craves appreciation.



All people do, so give it to them. Here Peale was reminiscent of Dale Carnegie. And don't drink. Liquor was bad for family life. Above all, practice positive thinking. Peale told of a woman whose husband wanted a divorce so he could marry another woman. His wife got him to agree to a ninety day waiting period. She then began to hold a mental image of him as he was when they were happy. She even imagined him drying the dishes as he once had. She also imagined herself as a capable and attractive woman. She did this even on nights when he went out. After awhile, he began to stay home more often. Eventually he forgot he ever wanted a divorce, and they were happy again. Thus employ positive thinking. It was a powerful weapon. But if your marital problems persisted, seek help from your church's guidance facilities. Peale viewed divorce as a necessary evil at best. He said very little about sex, and not a word about sexual techniques.<sup>12</sup>

Peale was the first post-war best-seller to notice the drug problem in the United States. He quoted an article which claimed that drug companies and doctors made drugs too available, especially tranquilizers. But Peale thought the article exaggerated the danger. America was not approaching Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, with its dependence on soma. Physicians and manufacturers were responsible people. In fact, most of the physicians Peale knew suggested spiritual or psychological help to nervous patients, not drugs. Like the other

best-sellers, Peale paid little attention to the connection between health and happiness, although without going into detail, or recommending specific techniques, he said it was important to get the proper exercise, sleep and diet.<sup>13</sup>

Like the other best-selling guides, Peale made little attempt to support his religious convictions and his faith in positive thinking with theological, philosophical or empirical arguments. He did devote a few lines to explain God's use of pain and suffering; they enabled men to liberate "spiritual aspiration," and to become "humanized." Peale did not elaborate on these concepts. He defended his belief in immortality by arguing that "it would be incredible that a good God ...would make anything as horrible as the death we have traditionally pictured." Peale offered no proof of God's existence, and never speculated about why a powerful God had wanted to create the universe and man in the first place. Basically Peale was not interested in formal proofs. He was satisfied with the testimony of experience. His system worked. It changed people's lives. It even produced physical cures. Peale himself had witnessed God in action. In fact, he thought of Christianity as a science. It was only necessary to reduce it "to a precise formula," and to apply it "in simple techniques or devices."<sup>14</sup>

Peale was not intolerant toward Jews or non-Protestant Christian sects. Actually it was not important what Church you

belonged to, Protestant, Catholic or Jewish, just as long as you practiced your religion. Peale ignored non-Western religions, and never explained why God revealed the truth only to the Christians and Jews.<sup>15</sup>

Who read Peale? He himself said he aimed his message at what he termed "the plain people of this world," "the everyday people." With the exception of the New York Times the daily press gave all three books good reviews. It was only magazines like the New Republic and the Atlantic which were critical. Donald Meyer, in The Positive Thinkers, connected Peale's phenomenal success with the mood created in the American people by the "post-Korean McCarthyite anxiety," "the revival of religion," and the Eisenhower years. But of course not everyone approved of Peale, and it was his opponents who tried hardest to define his audience and find reasons for his popularity. Meyer pointed out that "by 1955 Peale's influence provoked something of a crisis in Protestant leadership." Some critics even claimed that Peale had actually left Protestantism. Curtis Cate in the Atlantic and Edmund Fuller in the Saturday Review of Literature expressed this point of view. During the last ten years, wrote Cate, there had been an attempt to give American religion, if not a new style, then "a new pace." Certain people wanted to eliminate the traditional Christian awareness of sin, hell, pain, and struggle. Cate claimed these new styled churchmen had formed an alliance with Madison Avenue.

Unfortunately, their joint creation had little to do with the Church of St. Paul. Cate saw Peale as the leading spokesman for the disfigurement of Protestantism. Edmund Fuller agreed and called Peale a religious pitchman who took

the natural craving for peace of mind and the good life and reduced these to the lowest denominator of social acceptance, business success, self-confidence and complacency--any or all of the phases of what has come to be generally known in the racket as "successful" or "confident" living.

Fuller insisted that this had no connection with true Christianity. It only misled people, and obscured the true Christian realities. It offered "easy comforts, easy solutions to problems and mysteries that sometimes, perhaps, have no comfort or no solution at all, in glib, worldly terms." Peale never considered the Trinity, Incarnation, salvation or sin. The fear of God was missing. And in the end, God became "man's omnipotent slave."

Cate saw the whole liberal trend as part of an attempt to bring God down to earth and to democratize him "in order to make God more palatable to the success-seeking, Freud-ridden, leisure-loving generations of the present." Peale read like an "anthology of success stories," and ended preaching "a hot-water bottle kind of piety." Fuller agreed, and said Peale's work was "man-centered and self-centered." It preached materialism, slightly disguised. "'Many are called but few are chosen' has given way to 'Everybody has won and all must have prizes.'"<sup>16</sup>

Cate believed that Peale's shallowness mocked true Christianity. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" was used by St. Paul to exhort the Christians against Roman persecution. But Peale used these sacred words to sell vacuum cleaners! Fuller pointed out that this cheap optimism and hunger for success were acceptable from a man like Dale Carnegie; Carnegie was obviously a salesman, not a religious teacher, thus, "the public was fair game." But it was dreadful when it came from clergymen like Peale and Liebman. Fuller granted that Liebman was in better taste and more restrained than Peale, but, ultimately, Liebman had similar aims.<sup>17</sup>

Meyer, in the New Republic, thought Peale aimed his message at people who were directly involved in or thought in terms of

the world of business, specifically, of small business, of sales and advertising, and of the lower executive bureaucracy. Here dwell Peale's typical patients: the would-be independent enterpriser, trying to live on his own guts and inspiration, still full of laissez-faire expectation but caught and exposed in the controlled markets of the modern economic system; the sales manager... drained endlessly by the demand put upon him that he not be himself but sell himself; the helplessly mobile junior executive gnawed upon by his dreams of status, roots withering by his changes in residence.<sup>18</sup>

Peale offered no vision of a better society. The goals of free enterprise were never questioned. There was no call to change America. Peale only offered to repair the damaged contestants, to make them fit to re-enter the battle and win.

"In more classic literature," Meyer wrote, "this sort of pretension to mastery has often been thought to indicate an alliance with a Lower, rather than a Higher Power," as in the Faust legend. Roy A. Burkhardt, in the Journal of Religion, made a similar criticism. He said Peale seemed to write only for the affluent. "There is little social concern in the book /A Guide to Confident Living/....Millions of babies do not have enough food and yet the book assumes that one can find happiness and peace of mind without concern for the hungry in the world." America needed a new social consciousness, concluded Burkhardt. R. C. Murphy Jr., in the Nation, and T. V. Smith and George R. Stephen, both in the New York Times, all made similar complaints. But no one listed a single concrete reform, or explained how a better world might be brought about. Certainly no one suggested changing or even reforming the basic economic structure of capitalism. Perhaps it was unreasonable to expect reviewers to offer alternative social philosophies; they had limited space and time. But it was interesting to note that many best-selling guides of the forties and fifties employed the same approach. They lashed out at the greed and short-sightedness of capitalism but offered no real alternatives. And interestingly, no one, except the religious fundamentalists, explained their lack of alternatives. To a fundamentalist salvation was an issue between an individual and God; social reform was superfluous. But what inhibited the secular critics? Were they holding back in the belief that Americans had to be care-

fully weaned from their naiveté before real social alternatives could be suggested? Or were they simply so devoid of ideas and imagination that solutions were beyond them? Had they too been stifled by the American tradition which stressed the myth of laissez faire capitalism and privatism, despite the reality of growing corporate power? Whatever the reasons, no real alternatives to America's economic and social system were suggested until the 1960's, and even then the would-be reformers failed to explain how their plans could be implemented politically.<sup>19</sup>

## NOTES

1. Norman Vincent Peale, A Guide To Confident Living (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1969), pp. V, 25-26, 63, 121, 132, 179; The original hardcover edition was published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, in 1948; Norman Vincent Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1965), pp. IX-X; The original hardcover edition was published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, in 1952.
2. Peale's third best-seller was Stay Alive All Your Life (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1969; The original hardcover edition was published by Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey, in 1957; Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1967), pp. 23, 179, 180, 183, 190, 192-193, 195-196, 198-199, 203; ~~Walter~~ Meyer, The Positive Thinkers, (New York: Anchor Books, 1965), p. 243; Anon., Review of Stay Alive All Your Life, Time, March 25, 1957, pp. 112-114.
3. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. V, 12, 29-30, 122, 191; The Power of Positive Thinking, pp. 181-182.
4. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 17, 47-48, 69, 88-89, 111.
5. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 33-34, 43, 46, 49, 63, 137-138; The Power of Positive Thinking, 22, 24-25, 113-114, 132.
6. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 14-15, 46, 60, 79, 125-126, 175, 181; The Power of Positive Thinking, pp. 59, 144, 151, 155-156, 204; Stay Alive All Your Life, pp. 227, 237-238.
7. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 125-126; The Power of Positive Thinking, pp. 61, 95; Stay Alive All Your Life, p. 89.
8. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 57; Stay Alive All Your Life, p. 88; Meyer, p. 245.
9. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 189-190; Stay Alive All Your Life, pp. 91-92, 94.
10. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 15, 92; The Power of Positive Thinking, pp. 65, 107.
11. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 35-40, 47, 105, 107, 112-113.



12. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 30-31, 147, 152-155, 161-162, 167-169; The Power of Positive Thinking, pp. 56-57, 163-166, 201; Stay Alive All Your Life, pp. 253, 256.
13. Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. 42.
14. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, pp. 16, 20, 35; Stay Alive All Your Life, pp. 229, 249, 253.
15. Peale, A Guide to Confident Living, p. 20.
16. Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking, p. VIII; Meyer pp. 26, 243, 245; Curtis Cate, "God and Success," Atlantic, April 1957, pp. 74-76; Edmund Fuller, Review of Stay Alive All Your Life, Saturday Review, March 9, 1957, pp. 28-29.
17. Fuller, pp. 25, 29.
18. Donald Meyer, "The Confidence Man," New Republic, July 11, 1955, pp. 8-10.
19. Meyer, pp. 8-10; Roy A. Burkhart, Review of A Guide to Confident Living, Journal of Religion, Oct. 1948, pp. 296-297; R. C. Murphy Jr., "Think Right," Nation, May 7, 1955, pp. 398-399; George R. Stephenson, Review of The Power of Positive Thinking, New York Times, Oct. 26, 1952, p. 36; T. V. Smith, Review of Stay Alive All Your Life, New York Times, March 31, 1957, p. 31.

## Chapter 15

### Fulton Sheen

Fulton Sheen had no difficulty explaining why he was not particularly interested in economic and social innovations. He was a religious fundamentalist, and believed that the soul was more important than the body.

Sheen, a Catholic priest, became a bishop in 1951. He was originally a professor of philosophy at Catholic University of America, but wanted to reach a wider audience, so he began speaking on the Catholic Radio Hour in 1931. His popularity grew steadily, and by 1954 he was considered a television star. His weekly television talk had an audience of over five million. Sheen also wrote two best-selling guides, Peace of Soul which was the ninth best-selling non-fiction book in 1949 and Life is Worth Living which was fifth in 1954.<sup>1</sup>

In Peace of Soul (1949) Sheen did not mention Joshua Loth Liebman by name, but, as William Lynch wrote in the Saturday Review of Literature, "the title of this book prompts an immediate and obvious association with Peace of Mind." Sheen totally rejected Liebman's liberal position. Sheen was particularly anxious to define the roles of religion and psychology, and to clarify the prerogatives of each. Unlike Liebman, he did not consider Freud a cultural hero. He began by accusing psychoanalysis of misrepresenting and slandering the true nature of man. Freud's major error was to deny the existence

of God. Once God was reduced to a mere father-figure other errors followed automatically. Freud was a materialist who denied free will. Everything was determined. Spiritual freedom was an illusion. Man was merely the accidental product of an evolutionary process. His personality was completely determined by his personal history and the race's biological inheritance. Conscience was a product of conditioning, the concept of sin a myth, morality a mere social convention. Each man was sole judge of what was right or wrong for him.<sup>2</sup>

Sheen was careful not to condemn all aspects of psychology, or even all aspects of psychoanalysis. "We criticize only those psychiatrists who, acting as philosophers, go beyond their proper medical or scientific sphere to deny the possibility of guilt and sin." He was aware that mental disease might have a physical cause, and he granted that the physical was certainly the preserve of the physician. But "disease is one thing, guilt another," and the distinction must be kept clearly in mind, although both traits may occur simultaneously in the same person. Even psychoanalysis could be useful if it kept within the acceptable guidelines. But it must never be viewed as a philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

Actually Sheen's limited acceptance of psychoanalysis was just a gesture. He specifically rejected almost every element of Freud's theory; he considered the Oedipus and Electra theory "ridiculous," denied the existence of the unconscious,

and rejected the necessity of transference. He concluded by insisting that many patients of psychoanalysis would be better off in the confessional box. (Sheen defined confession as a sacrament instituted by Christ where the sinner talks directly to God's representative, the priest.) Sheen further reduced the value of psychoanalysis by insisting that what was of use in modern psychology was not new. (For the most part Sheen seemed to equate modern psychology with psychoanalysis.) In fact, nothing psychology had to say about frustration, fear and anxiety could "even faintly compare in depth or breadth with St. Thomas's treatise on Passions, St. Augustine's Confessions or Bossuet's treatise on Concupiscence." To be happy, man only needed to follow God's word:

The very passivity symbolized by being stretched out on a couch is symbolic of the patient's irresponsibility, which the whole theory of Freud assumes. It is a striking contrast to the humility of a man who, kneeling, says, not "Oh, what a fool I have been," but "God be merciful to me, a sinner."<sup>4</sup>

William Lynch, in the Saturday Review of Literature, thought Sheen underrated the value of psychoanalysis. "Certainly many Catholic clergy and laymen would seem ready to accept more of the insights of psychology as we know them than would Monsignor Sheen." George N. Schuster, president of Hunter College, expressed the same opinion in the New York Herald Tribune. But neither were specific about what elements in Freud's work they considered acceptable. Thus they too avoided

the problem faced by Liebman and all the other religiously-oriented writers when they tried to blend religion and psychology. Almost all schools of psychology linked a human being's behavior to his early personal history, and this cause and effect relationship tended to strain the traditional concepts of free will and guilt. Sheen understood this, and took his stand with tradition.<sup>5</sup>

Sheen was critical of life in contemporary America; the American culture made man receptive to false philosophies such as psychoanalysis. Modern Americans expected life to be easy and smooth. Man was too involved with the needs of the flesh and this attitude was reflected in his commercial civilization. Many people wanted a religion which left out hell and punishment. They wanted divorce. They lacked mature standards. They were obsessed with sex, and would reduce man to the practices of the barnyard. The bourgeoisie judged people by their possessions. And if they prayed at all, they tried to make God a partner in their business dealings. Sheen said it was wrong to look to God for help with one's "finite interest." There were more important things to pray for than material success. We should ask God for spiritual guidance. This, of course, was a clear attack on the ideas and values of Vash Young, Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale.<sup>6</sup>

But for Sheen, even more depressing and dangerous than the actual decay of American morals was the attitude people

took toward their plight. They blamed poverty, or the environment, or economics, or politics or their unconscious for the decay. But they were wrong, although, unfortunately, they were encouraged to deceive themselves by secular and religious liberals "who taught that man was naturally good and progressive and on the high road to becoming a god without God." Liberalism was a destructively shallow view of man. Conflict and unhappiness were not caused by the social structure or the unconscious; tormented minds were not the result of a tormented world. Just the opposite. Twisted minds had upset the world. Man must reform himself, and then all things would follow.

Edmund Fuller, in the Saturday Review of Literature, praised Sheen's orthodoxy, and the fact that he opposed the easy confidence of Peale and Liebman; Sheen, said Fuller, had remained faithful to the true spirit of Christianity. (Fuller's only criticism was Sheen's theatrical presentation and slickness.)<sup>7</sup>

Sheen's economic and social conservatism harmonized with the prevailing mood of most post-war best-sellers. But unlike the critics who attacked the goals and mores of society, while remaining strangely silent about possible remedies, Sheen was articulate on the matter of reform. Reform followed spiritual rebirth, not political action. Man must "surrender to the will of God," control his desires, and worry about his soul, not his body. Sheen predicted that most men would reject the truth. They insisted on judging existence by secular standards. But

this approach was inadequate. The human mind was too feeble and "puny" to deal with concepts like God or angels which were "above the mind in dignity." Even the scientific method did not apply to religion, which was beyond the scope of science. Besides, Satan purposefully deceived men, and sin "darkens the intellect and weakens the will and leaves a bias toward the committing of another sin." Thus human reason was insufficient. Men needed faith. Atheists were especially resistant to the truth. They denied God either because they wanted to sin without reproach, or because they wanted to exalt their ego without challenge. "Atheists commit the sin of pride, by which a man pretends to be that which he is not, namely, a god." If men's minds had not been clouded by sin and pride, they could learn the truth by simply reading St. Thomas. But unfortunately, it was not that simple with most sinners. Before the average man could appreciate a mind like St. Thomas', he had to be weaned away from the liberal errors which dominated our culture.<sup>8</sup>

Sheen only gave one intellectual argument to prove the existence of God:

As the mind concludes to a watchmaker on seeing the watch, so too, it concludes to a Divine Mind on seeing the order of the cosmos.

Sheen not only assumed that God existed, he was confident that Jesus Christ was God's son. "The yearning of Buddha,

of Confucius, of Aeschylus, of Virgil, of Socrates, of Plato - all were now realized in a child in the stable." Christianity was the one true religion. Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism were inadequate. But Sheen gave no evidence that Christianity was superior to the other religions. It was an axiomatic, uncontested assumption. Except for his criticism of liberal Christians, Sheen, a Catholic, never openly attacked the other Christian sects, although he made it clear that he considered the Catholic Church the true Church of Christ. In fact, if there were any disagreements as to how Christ's teachings were to be interpreted, the Pope should decide. He was Christ's representative on earth. But the Pope's power did not mean that the Church was authoritarian, or that it restricted human freedom:

To myopic eyes, there may, indeed, seem to be a superficial resemblance between the authority of the Church and accepting the authoritarianism of a Stalin. But there are...profound differences between the two.

Acceptance of the Church's authority was merely following one's conscience. Moreover, the Church used "absolutely no threats or compulsion." Sheen did insist that education must include religious instruction, but concluded that "any one of its [The Church's] subjects is as free to reject the Church as Judas was."<sup>9</sup>

To find peace of soul, men must break with the illusion of a materialistic society. They must understand that the



true goal of life was heaven. The world was a mere testing ground, and the things of this world were not of the utmost importance. Thus physical need was not the principle cause of unhappiness. The paramount causes were unregulated desire and greed. No man would ever feel deprived or frustrated if he realized "that he does not truly need this or that (although he may desire it)... ." To be happy, a person must practice mortification. Thus, with grace, "the externals of life, such as politics, economics, and its daily routine, matter less, while God matters more." But, while the importance of economics and politics were limited, still they must be conducted in accordance with moral law. "Private ownership is natural to man. It is the economic guarantee of freedom, as the soul is its spiritual guarantee."<sup>10</sup>

And it was foolish to expect perfection on earth. Perfection came only after death. The bad were destined for eternal punishment in hell, while the good would be rewarded in heaven, although some may have to wait for a while in purgatory. (Only one other writer in the post-war period, Billy Graham, believed in hell.) Death was actually a blessing in a world of evil, for without death evil could continue forever. Death was a new birth, a new beginning. But it must never be self inflicted. Suicide was a grievous sin. Thus both Sheen and Peale opposed suicide, but it was interesting to note the difference in their rationales. Sheen spoke of sin, Peale of

an irrational act.<sup>11</sup>

Men earned heaven by obeying God's law. But to know the truth and to have the strength to follow it, men needed grace. They could not do it alone for all men were corrupted by Original Sin, which was the result of Adam's rebellion against God. Sheen quoted Abraham Lincoln to the effect that people were like a river in that they tended to follow the line of least resistance. (Undoubtedly humor of this sort helped account for Sheen's popularity on television, although it bothered critics like Fuller.) The only person born without Original Sin was the Virgin Mary, Christ's mother. But despite the taint of sin, all men knew right from wrong for God gave everyone a conscience. Thus every man was free to accept or reject God's grace. It was wrong to say that existence was determined or predestined because God was the all powerful creator:

The Devil suggests that, because the Divine Director had marked the script and told them what to play and what not to play, He was destroying their freedom.

But this was not true. Men had free will. And they were responsible, not only for their deeds but their thoughts as well. The desire for adultery was the same as committing adultery. Here Sheen directly opposed Liebman and Peale.<sup>12</sup>

Why hadn't God created strong men who always choose good and reject evil, Sheen asked rhetorically, and answered, like

Liebman, that "God refused to be a totalitarian dictator in order to abolish evil by destroying human freedom." But God was not cruel or arbitrary. He never refused grace to men who wanted it, although many rejected God's offer so they might continue to sin. Sheen never speculated why one man wisely chose grace, while another, short-sightedly and foolishly, chose sin knowing the eternal consequences.<sup>13</sup>

Sheen admitted that no one knew the complete reason for pain and suffering. But human suffering was certainly a consequence of sin and justly deserved. "Sin brings adversity and adversity is the expression of God's condemnation of evil, the registering of Divine Judgement." God's chastisements included war and sickness. But since each man's sin was responsible for Christ's crucifixion and suffering, man deserved his fate. Besides, suffering could be put to good use. God wanted man to suffer on earth for his sins, so that he may be purified, and deserve happiness in the next world. We should thus offer up our suffering. Sheen advised that those who found it intellectually difficult to accept the rationale for suffering should read the section on Job in the Bible. Pain was God's decision, not man's. We must accept his will. We will be rewarded in the end.<sup>14</sup>

Sheen even applied his concept of suffering to marriage. No matter how dismal the marriage, there could be no divorce. Even if your mate were an alcoholic, a spendthrift, a nagger,

or unfaithful, stick it out. Once given, love was not meant to be taken back. Sometimes perserverance and love would improve an erring partner:

An unhappy marriage is not a condemnation to misery; it is a courageous bearing of the burdens of another rather than denying the vow to "love until death do us part."

Thus some marriages must be seen as a "living martyrdom." An unhappy marriage was like all suffering, and must be looked upon "as permitted by God for a greater good." Viewed in this perspective, suffering "can positively create an inner joy."<sup>15</sup>

Sex was allowed only within marriage. God implanted the appetite for sex in man to preserve the life of the race through marriage. "Sex fanatics think that the Church condemns nature itself." But this was not true. The body was the temple of God. But without religion men would live like animals. Only those who could not make a distinction between the use and abuse of the body claimed that the Church was against sex. It was true that some Christians took the vows of chastity and poverty. But this was to balance those who abused the flesh and property. "Thus is the right order of goods preserved in God's universe."<sup>16</sup>

Sheen claimed that men and women each had a unique temperament. "A man may stand for the Justice of God, but a woman stands for his Mercy." "A man's love is always tied up with his intellect; but for a woman love is its own reason." Defects got in the way of a man's love, but a woman loved a man despit

his defects. Men were concerned principally with things, women with people. A man tended to be abstract, women concrete and intimate. "Motherhood...becomes a kind of priesthood"; and mental disturbances increased in women who avoid having children.<sup>17</sup>

Communism, like pain, was also a judgment of God on sinful mankind. It developed from "what was putrid, foul, and rotten in the atheism and materialism of the nineteenth century." The only good things in Communism stemmed from "some of the moral indignation that has been inherited from the Hebraic - Christian traditions... ." Nevertheless, Communism, despite its borrowings, was "intrinsically evil." Communism was God-less, materialistic and irrational. It denied the value of the individual, and used terror to crush resistance. Thus we must hate Communism, which appeals only to people whose self-hatred drives them to hate and envy their neighbors. Because of their hate, these misguided people become hypercritical, and falsely regard their neighbor's possessions "as something unjustly taken from oneself."<sup>18</sup>

The Communists were also a political threat to the United States; they intended to conquer the world, and would attack when they got the chance. "A peace overture of Russia will be the beginning of another Pearl Harbor." Sheen also warned America to be on guard against subversion. The "limit of freedom of speech" was "reached when we use freedom of speech

to destroy freedom of speech." "The Communist will not allow anyone to be a non-Communist." Why then should they be allowed to call fire in a crowded theater? But it was more than just a matter of self defense. America had a moral duty to save the world from Communism. "As God-fearing people" we should help the Chinese, and the Jews, and the other peoples of Russia preserve their rights to pursue happiness, free speech, and a government of their own choosing. America might also be called upon to bring prosperity, peace and fraternity to Asia in order to protect Asia from Communism. But in the end righteousness would prevail. The U.S.S.R. would perish because it was anti-God. And the Russian people would be converted to Christianity.<sup>19</sup>

Sheen attacked Communism in both his best-sellers, but the intensity of the attack increased in the second, Life is Worth Living (1953), which was published after the start of the Korean War, and during the McCarthy Era. Sheen devoted six of twenty-six chapters to Communism. It was also in the second best-seller that Sheen first mentioned racism, devoting four lines to condemning it.<sup>20</sup>

Whom did Sheen appeal to? Certainly not the same audience as Peale. Sheen was no glib salesman of success, promising both salvation and affluence. And unlike Peale he expected his audience to be interested in, or at least impressed by, discussions of Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, Freud, free will, evil and the

relationship of science and religion. Of course, the discussions were never detailed or sustained. The teacher in Sheen may have been tempted, but the entertainer knew better; he had no desire to restrict his audience to intellectuals. John J. Keating, in Catholic World, believed Sheen was aiming at as broad an audience as he could possibly reach. He wanted to make converts. (The reviews indicated that Sheen offended very few people; his books were widely and favorably reviewed in both the secular and Catholic press, and there were only two critical notices, cited earlier, and they disapproved of his harsh treatment of modern psychology, not his theology.) Ironically, Sheen's tact in approaching potential converts accounted for the fact that some Catholics thought he sounded too much like a liberal Protestant. They wanted him to stress what was uniquely Catholic in Christianity. But Keating thought Sheen's strategy was correct, for to make converts one had to approach them on familiar ground; and this required a broad message which both non-Catholic Christians and Jews could respond to. Thus Catholics should consider Sheen's approach a "preamble to the classical Catholic message." Sheen did have an impressive reputation for making converts; he had influenced a number of famous people including Claire Boothe Luce, Henry Ford II and Heywood Broun to become Catholics. But Donald Meyer, in The Positive Thinkers, while aware that Sheen wished to make converts, believed that Sheen was even more interested

in fortifying the self-confidence of Catholics against the doubts created by liberal religion and modern psychology. For despite the complaints that he was not Catholic enough, Sheen made it perfectly clear that Catholics had all the answers. Liberals like Liebman and Fosdick were wrong. Catholics did not need Freud or modern psychology. For a Catholic, "it was unnecessary to ask any questions, experience any doubts, suffer any moral arduousness." They had only to obey the Church, and true happiness was theirs.<sup>21</sup>



## NOTES

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14. Sheen, Peace of Soul, pp. 63, 116-117; Life is Worth Living, pp. 10, 133-138, 173.

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## Chapter 16

### H. A. Overstreet

H. A. Overstreet strongly disagreed with Sheen. He considered it vitally important that modern man ask himself questions. Overstreet, a professor of philosophy at the City College of New York, wrote The Mature Mind (1949) because Western culture had produced "what Karen Horney called 'the neurotic personality of our time': the isolated, fear-ridden, hostility-ridden personality; the personality therefore that is tenaciously immature." People were fragmented and compartmentalized. Their lives lacked unity, meaning and joy. It was Overstreet's premise that to become "whole" and therefore happy, a human being must become mature. But to be truly mature a person must meet a rather vigorous set of requirements: he must see himself as every man's brother; respond with empathy to other people's needs; communicate openly with others, gain knowledge of himself and the world; make judgments free of political or religious prejudices; ignore authority figures, whether patriotic or religious; do work which he accepts and can execute with a fair degree of expertness, and which gives him a sense of significance; and last, he must be sexually wise. Unfortunately our culture seldom encouraged these virtues. In fact it usually rewarded ignorance, irresponsibility, dependence, verbal isolation, egocentricity and provincialism.<sup>1</sup>

Overstreet believed that the West's plight had historical roots. Western man had only become aware of the human and social values, the various mature virtues, through a slow historical process in which each succeeding generation discovered some new concept of maturity, and added it to the cultural wealth of the race. Overstreet was the first best-seller to use a historical approach since Walter Lippmann. No other writer would use this approach until Erich Fromm in the sixties.<sup>2</sup>

The Jews contributed the idea of monotheism which struck at provincialism, and made it easier for man to develop a universal ethical norm. The writers of the Old and New Testaments also developed a concept of social justice which led to a more equitable society, and thus lessened discontent. These religious leaders understood that man could not be allowed to live by the egocentric selfishness which characterized both children and immature adults. Jesus also advanced man's maturity by teaching brotherly love. His insight has been confirmed by modern psychiatrists who agree that hate and fear lead to psychological illness while love leads to joy. Overstreet praised Erich Fromm, a psychologist who later wrote a best-selling guide, for stressing brotherly love as the solution for man's ills.<sup>3</sup>

The Greeks contributed the idea that reason created order, and turned confusion into clarity. The Renaissance encouraged men to seek secular solutions to their problems. The Renaissance man tended to be egocentric, and lacked a sense of moderation,

but he was wise in shifting his interest from heaven to earth. Overstreet compared the Renaissance man to an "adolescent emerging out of the long dependency of infancy and childhood." He was less pleased with the Reformation where man merely changed one orthodoxy for another.<sup>4</sup>

But the Enlightenment had been a truly progressive era:

In the second half of the 18th century two dramatic insights burst upon the horizon. They were expressed in two notable phrases: "created equal" and "consent of the governed."

These phrases became the basis of political and social liberalism which "asked man to grow up to full stature of a self-governing and self-fulfilling human being." Cosmopolitanism was another ideal of the Enlightenment which appealed to Overstreet. Fanatical nationalism was obviously dangerous and immature.<sup>5</sup>

The most recent contribution to the maturity of the human race was the concept of science. It was potentially a great asset which could help man transcend his subjectivity, although in the hands of the immature it too could be used to achieve childish goals.<sup>6</sup>

In Overstreet's opinion mankind had developed the ideals and concepts needed to produce a relatively happy people and productive societies. But obviously we had not made full use of our inheritance. Most modern men and institutions were an unstable mixture of the mature and immature. In fact our cul-

ture frequently encouraged immaturity. Religion presented a good example of how fruitful concepts were corrupted by immature men. Instead of liberating human beings through the idea of a just and loving God, God was twisted into a jealous, angry, vindictive old man who unjustly favored certain creeds, sects and nations. Augustine, Luther and Calvin built a church which stressed fear and punishment. They distorted Christ's message of love, and taught man to underrate himself; they pictured human beings as hopeless and incompetent, without the power to help themselves unless a powerful god arbitrarily intervened. Men were encouraged, in fact commanded, to beg heaven for assistance. Thus traditional religion encouraged men to remain children, using threats of hell and eternal punishment to intimidate them. Immature and misguided religious leaders classified human beings as good or evil, obscuring the truth that people were merely confused and misdirected.<sup>7</sup>

Then, to hold their power, religious leaders settled all disputes without reference to the relevant factual evidence developed by philosophy, and science. Instead, arguments were "settled by sacred writings, by theological disputations, and by theological politics." Whether Catholic or Protestant, the Churches stressed faith, and exempted certain areas of experience from critical examination. Thus they were intellectually destructive, and immature, and set a bad example. Augustine, with his concept of Original Sin and his view of sex as vile,

provided a good example of the distortions accepted as wisdom by immature Churches; Augustine's position

was so flagrantly a projection upon the whole human race of his own uncontrollable lusts that a modern psychologist would have thrown out his contentions as untrustworthy and misconceived.

Another technique used by religious leaders to hold power was to appeal to the immature desire of most people to see themselves as one of the elect, destined for eternal happiness in heaven if they obeyed like good children. People were encouraged to feel superior to non-believers. Given this parochial attitude, most attempts to build unity between various religious sects had failed, and would continue to fail. There could be unity only among religions which accepted the growth of maturity as the central aim of life.<sup>8</sup>

Overstreet's attack on traditional religion was more vigorous than Liebman's criticism and even Lippmann's. No other best-seller would express a similar attitude until the 1960's. But despite his elaborate critique, Overstreet never clearly stated his personal beliefs about God or religion. In fact, he ended his book by using the word "religion" in a manner reminiscent of Lippmann. He spoke of a "mature religion," and said it

invites man to a mature relationship with life - and...to a mature development of his own potentialities. The religious life, in this sense, is the one in which there is a constant effort to link oneself, in joy and contribution, to all the life - giving movements of one's world. The

religious, in short, is what we have been describing as the maturing life; it is the maturing life deeply and passionately committed to the search for wholeness.

Today therefore, religion and psychological science may properly join hands.

Thus, like Lippmann, Overstreet claimed a traditional word for his philosophy. But did Overstreet actually believe in a god? And if so what were his god's attributes? Was Overstreet a Deist of some sort like so many of the intellectual heroes of the Enlightenment he so admired? Or was the concept of god merely a pragmatic device useful in helping men learn the virtues of maturity?<sup>9</sup>

Overstreet also believed that the same immaturity which corrupted religion limited the growth of social relationships. At best our culture encouraged people to grow out of their infantile egocentricity in a limited way. Human beings were taught to relate only to special people - members of the same family, clan, race, religion or nation. The West had not accepted cosmopolitanism. We were still under the sway of dangerous 19th century ideas. Men like Nietzsche, Fichte, Hegel, Chamberlain, Marx, the Social Darwinists and the laissez faire economists had all

repudiated or undermined doctrines that were favorable to maturity - doctrines of social religion or political liberalism; they all...repudiated or undermined the theory that the human race is one in destiny because it is one in mutual need; they all took some selected portion of humanity - individual, nation, race, economic class - and urged it to become the triumphant protagonist in a drama of conflict...



Thus the symbols of the 19th century were nationalism, business trusts, class conflict, and imperialism. To complicate matters even more, the cult of the irrational, rooted in such thinkers as Fichte, Schopenhauer, and even Freud, developed in the early 20th century. This trend encouraged people to justify their egocentricity or ultra-nationalism by claiming they were in tune with the instinctive drives of nature. No other best-selling author attacked nationalism, or pleaded for cosmopolitanism until Erich Fromm in the 1960's.<sup>10</sup>

The dangers inherent in these antiquated 19th century concepts were clearly illustrated by the West's attitude toward economics. The West was dominated by two economic theories both of which had bloomed in the 19th century, Marxism and laissez faire capitalism. Overstreet opposed both Marx's view of the class struggle and his theory of historical inevitability. But he considered laissez faire capitalism equally immature. It was "madness" for men to go "too far alone." Capitalism was shallow. The capitalist wanted only money. If, because of the capitalist's selfish pursuit of profits, society also benefited that was merely an accidental secondary effect. And whenever "a conflict has arisen between money-making and raising the standard of living. It has been the former that has taken precedence." All businesses were selfish. American capitalists consistently ignored the obvious poverty and need in their midst. For example, the housing industry was against

badly needed low cost housing, so the housing was not built. And the health of the nation suffered because the medical profession had "less interest in extending medical services to all who need them than in protecting a vested professional monopoly." Overstreet was the first best-seller to criticize specific economic interests.<sup>11</sup>

Even sex was a means of exploitation in a capitalist society. "Our business civilization has made sex--like everything else--into a commodity... ." Sex was used to make money either directly or through advertising, movies or books. No effort was made to create a mature sexual attitude in the American people. "Sex is...all too often a hush-hush affair, an ugliness, an indelicacy, a thing of shame." Moreover most relationships between men and women were basically childish. Men were encouraged to be dominant, women submissive.<sup>12</sup>

But more significant than the actual greed or selfishness of the capitalists was the intellectual damage they did. The West had allowed the ideology of capitalism to corrupt the minds of its citizens. The West, under the influence of capitalism, had defined success too narrowly. It thought only in terms of money and job position. It did not matter how you made the money, or whether or not the product you produced was useless, or even destructive, like a racist newspaper; money was money. If the profit motive did not work, capitalism controlled people through fear. They could be fired or demoted

at will. Even the mere threat was a powerful weapon. And this fear damaged our society, for "long-sustained fear produces apathy rather than energy." In the end, capitalism confused people by preaching contradictory standards; for example, our churches and mass media verbalized a belief in brotherhood, but actually capitalism was ruthless and highly competitive in seeking profits and power. Confused people tended to become cynical, if not emotionally unstable. (Overstreet mentioned no names when he spoke of ambivalent standards, but he certainly could have been referring to the work of Dale Carnegie, Norman Vincent Peale, and Vash Young.) Moreover, the American public was never encouraged to understand the true nature of the economic system. They were treated like children who did not need to understand. Big business constantly spoke to the public in terms of free enterprise and competition while it actually manoeuvred for monopolies, tariffs and subsidies. And when the so called free enterprise system broke down, as it did during the Great Depression, the government was supposed to rescue business from its predicament; but the government was

not supposed to ask embarrassing questions about the why of the breakdown; and it is supposed, as quickly as possible, to join in the general pretense that all is well, and that the breakdown was, in fact, only a minor adjustment in a system "fundamentally sound."<sup>13</sup>

Advertising was a vital weapon of capitalism. Besides

encouraging greed and the sale of frequently useless products, it was designed to stifle people's critical sense. It encouraged America to ignore important economic, social and emotional problems. Businessmen "like priests, demagogues and dictators before them" were developing people's minds in a manner which protected their position. Business made no effort to foster higher levels of insight and discrimination. There was more profit in immaturity.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately our educational system complemented the mass media. It too paid lip service to the concept of maturity, but actually did little to instill true adult virtues in students. Instead, it attempted to cram them full of facts. Knowledge was usually treated as a commodity to be sold, not an aid to maturity. Education also encouraged over-competition, and ended producing students who were either over aggressive, or lacking in self-confidence, and thus passive.<sup>15</sup>

American politics was also designed to protect the status quo. The politicians tended to be selfish men concerned with short term gains and narrow provincial interest. To gain and hold power, they were willing to use and encourage all sorts of immaturity in the electorate, including racism. The electorate, due to its immature up-bringing, was basically ignorant. Few adults understood the domestic or foreign issues they were supposed to vote on. Instead, most citizens passively accepted political, economic, social and religious platitudes.

In truth, they would rather not be confronted with difficult decisions. Overstreet claimed most Americans pushed unpleasant issues, like the A-bomb, out of their consciousness.<sup>16</sup>

No previous best-seller had been as explicit or impassioned in attacking capitalism as Overstreet. In fact only two earlier writers had been at all critical, Liebman, almost in passing, and Alexis Carrel in a vague, inconclusive fashion. But Overstreet's criticism of capitalism did not mean that he had soured on democracy. "Thus far," he wrote, "every democracy on earth has been only a partial success because it has had only a partially mature citizenship through which to be realized." But a partial success was better than nothing. Besides, Overstreet was optimistic about America's future. The concepts and ideals of maturity had been known for a long time, but, unfortunately, they had remained the possession of a few isolated men. Now 20th century psychology had given man the tools to make this wisdom the possession of the average man. It was at last possible to shape a nation of mature people, if we would only use the knowledge we possessed. Freud and Pavlov had made the major contributions. From Freud we learned to understand the maturation process of human beings. Ideally, a person went through a number of clearly defined stages until he reached psychological maturity. But unfortunately, a person could be fixated at or regress to one of the earlier stages; these people continued to attempt to solve adult problems in an

infantile manner. Freud labeled such people neurotic. Pavlov developed the concept of the conditioned reflex. Man's nature was not fixed or unalterable. A human being could be taught almost any behavior pattern if the proper stimuli were used. Thus we were conditioned to behave maturely or immaturely.<sup>17</sup>

A writer's view of man's adaptability proved to be one of the fundamental dividing-lines between best-selling guides. Religious writers, Freudians, and neo-Marxists tended to freeze man's nature. According to them, unhappiness resulted from acting in a manner contrary to man's predetermined nature. Of course these different schools never agreed on defining that nature. The Pavlovians, on the other hand, tended to see man as a more adaptable creature who could adjust to changing circumstances. Overstreet seemed to seek some sort of middle ground.

Unlike Liebman, who tried to blend Freud with religion while maintaining the concept of free will, Overstreet pushed the findings of modern psychology to their logical conclusion. He insisted that the discoveries of Freud and Pavlov should encourage man to change his concept of morality. People were not good or evil. All men were constellations of traits. The misbehaving individual did not have "an unadulterated will-to-evil, but a circumscribed and fumbling mind." Thus the offender was not an evil person, just immature. Overstreet's discussion of good and evil introduced a philosophical and

ethical problem he shared with Walter Lippmann. Lippmann tried to combine a Stoic ethic with Epicurean metaphysics; but he never explained why an individual living in a godless universe was bound to act ethically if he could gain pleasure through exploiting his fellow men. Overstreet also concluded that men must develop a sense of "creative participation" since all human experience was a shared experience. It was immature to see yourself as an exception to the lot of the human race; we were all "debtors to life," and "must pay back even a little for value received." Actually Overstreet never gave a logical explanation of why a man should not act selfishly. He never proved that men were "debtors to life." It was an assumption. How would Overstreet answer someone like Nietzsche who said all was permissible? But it was easier to pin-point the contradiction between Lippmann's ethics and his metaphysics because he was an avowed agnostic. Overstreet left the reader in doubt about his religion and metaphysics. Was man commanded by God or nature to help his fellow man, or did Overstreet choose brotherhood strictly on pragmatic grounds?<sup>18</sup>

But whatever his metaphysics Overstreet agreed with Henry Link that psychology encompassed much more than just the contributions of Freud and Pavlov. Psychology had also developed tests to describe a person's psychological age and his aptitudes. Thus those who needed help in maturing could be discovered; also mature people could be encouraged to enter

occupations which corresponded to their natural abilities, thus reducing hostility and self-blame. Of course, there was still a great deal we did not understand about human behavior, and it was vital we undertook extensive research. For example

up to this date in human history, we have no accurate way of estimating the psychological maturity of a congressman, say, or a judge, or of a superintendent of schools, or of a teacher, or of the head of a corporation. Psychologically, in brief, we have flown blind. Precisely because the motives that carry individuals to positions of influence may range all the way from the infantile to the finely mature, we have had power exerted on the adult level by individuals of almost every conceivable psychological age.<sup>19</sup>

To create a mature nation, we must learn to see how society shapes peoples' lives. We must give up the myths of a laissez faire economics and rugged individualism. We must face reality. In America it was perfectly acceptable for a man to plan "a research project, a machine, a business, an industry: but he must not plan a society." It was time Americans matured, and did what rationally must be done, design a sensible society. Overstreet wrote approvingly of people like J. A. Hobson, Thorstein Veblen, Jane Addams and Robert Owen, and of such organizations as the Fabian Socialists, which "tried to work out a rational marriage of individualism and collectivism."<sup>20</sup>

It was also vital to employ the insights of modern psychology in educating children both at home and in school:

All children, Diderot once observed, are essentially criminal. It is merely our good luck that their physical powers are still too limited to permit them to carry out their destructiveness.



Had he lived today, Diderot might have expanded his remarks. He might have said that all childish minds are dangerous, but particularly when these minds are housed in adult bodies; for then they have the power to put their immaturities fully and disastrously into effect.

Parents must be made aware of the new psychological knowledge so they can encourage their children to develop wisely. And the schools must be made into mature institutions. It was not enough to teach facts. We must confront children with problems to solve. They must learn to find and evaluate evidence, to come to conclusions, and to test these conclusions, thus proving or disproving their validity. Children must also be made to understand that they are the heirs to a great cultural tradition, a gift of their forefathers, which included philosophy, science, religion, poetry, fiction and drama. They must investigate their heritage. The school should also encourage students to cooperate with their fellow pupils, and to fulfill their civic duties. And education must not end when a person graduates from high school or college. We must develop a great system of adult education which will encourage people to grow, not stultify, as most adults now do. Adults should continuously be exposed to the best minds in psychology, medicine, anthropology and the social sciences. Self-understanding was a life time undertaking, not something that ended at eighteen or twenty-two.<sup>21</sup>

Overstreet put more emphasis on education than any other best-selling guide except A. S. Neill who was to have a best-

seller in 1965. We shall see that Neill agreed with Overstreet that society was immature, but diametrically opposed his approach to educating children.

The Mature Mind was a Book of the Month Club selection, and finished eighth on the best-seller list in 1950. What audience did Overstreet appeal to? Charles J. Rolo in the Atlantic emphasized that Overstreet's approach was very different from Peale's, Liebman's, Sheen's, or Carnegie's. Overstreet never promised the solace of faith, and never stated simple rules which guaranteed self improvement. Rolo found The Mature Mind a literate book written by an obviously literate man. One could have said the same about Walter Lippmann's A Preface to Morals, and in tone, Overstreet was reminiscent of Lippmann. Overstreet was also the first best-selling guide since Lippmann and Dimnet who attempted to place modern man's problems in a broad social and historical context. He tried to explain how society shaped an individual's psyche, emphasizing the destructive role of capitalism and organized religion. His treatment was detailed and fairly sophisticated. He assumed his readers were interested; he also assumed they would recognize the names of intellectuals like Thorstein Veblen, Karen Horney, Freud, Pavlov, Nietzsche, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Diderot. And again like Lippmann, Overstreet was more interested in strategy than tactics. He wanted to chart the drift of a whole society, and illuminate the goals mankind must move

toward if it were ever to achieve sanity. But where Lippmann believed that man would be driven to maturity by the inevitable push of industrialization, Overstreet was vague about how the needed changes might be brought about. Overstreet made it clear that he favored a planned economy and a school system which inculcated maturity, but he was less definite about how these goals were to be achieved. In his concluding chapter, "What We Ourselves Can Do," he advised people to teach maturity to their children in the home, to become involved in adult education, and to join voluntary associations like the League of Women Voters and Americans for Democratic Action; these organizations had mature ideals, and an interest in political issues, good citizenship, and economic and racial justice. Overstreet believed that it was in the area of voluntary organizations that the great battle between maturity and immaturity would be fought. The implication, never stated, was that the move toward maturity would be a slow, evolutionary process. Both Richard M. Brickner, in the Saturday Review of Literature, and Albert Hofstadter, in the New York Herald Tribune, liked Overstreet's book, but both also wished he had been more specific in recommending tactics for actually changing our society. Hofstadter said

The rub is that the problem of achieving it /maturity/ for more than a few involves not only changes in individuals but also changes in all the forces, particularly the social,

affecting them. Preaching or advice alone won't suffice nor will "practicing the enjoyment of maturity" on the part of occasional persons or groups. What then, in the concrete, will?

Hofstadter himself offered no answers, and, as has been previously noted, neither would any of the other best-selling guides until the 1960's.<sup>22</sup>

## NOTES

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## Chapter 17

John A. Schindler

Like Overstreet, John A. Schindler was convinced that few Americans were happy. The majority were emotionally immature and tortured themselves unnecessarily. Furthermore, Schindler, a physician and chairman of the Department of Medicine at the Monroe Clinic in Wisconsin, believed that emotional stress induced over fifty percent of all the physical illnesses that doctors treated.<sup>1</sup>

Emotional stress had two main causes; one, the prolonged frustration of man's basic fundamental emotional needs for love, security, recognition, self-esteem and sex; and two, the frustration caused by the relatively minor irritations of daily living. Ironically, the second category caused the most damage:

Most cases of emotionally induced illness are the result of a monotonous drip, drip of seemingly unimportant yet nevertheless, unpleasant emotions, the everyday run of anxieties, fears, discouragements and longings.

Constant fear or worry stimulated the overproduction of hormones, or the undesirable tightening of certain muscles which leads eventually to sickness. Time magazine claimed that the message of Dr. Schindler's book How to Live 365 Days a Year (1954) was succinctly summed up in one of his many paragraph headings, "The Colon is the Mirror of the Mind." But, unlike Time, Schindler did not consider the situation

humorous. Too many people were suffering. "But there is one way," he advised his readers "you have of achieving optimal hormone balance. That is to provide your body with the stimulus of the pleasant and cheerful group of emotions." Pleasant emotions had two general effects. "First, they replace the bad emotions which were producing stress effects; and secondly they produce their own pituitary effect which is an optimal balance of endocrine function." Unfortunately most people were dominated by negative emotions, and seldom experienced a sustained feeling of satisfaction. Thus they could not provide their bodies "with the stimulus of the pleasant and cheerful group of emotions." Few Americans were taught how to develop a cheerful, optimistic approach to life. In this respect, their families and schools failed to educate them intelligently. Thus, unhappy people were the victims of circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, traditional therapists, especially those influenced by Freud, had not been very successful at rectifying matters. Traditional therapists put too much emphasis on digging up the past. They were guided

by the concept that emotional stress is conditioned early in life by an unacceptable experience that is relegated to the dusky murkiness by the subconscious, where it preys on the host forevermore.

Conversation was useful and interesting but limited. It gave "the therapist an excellent idea of the particular variety



of immaturity a patient has," but this can be determined fairly easily "without hours spent on a psychiatric couch." Moreover, because of his interest in the past, "the traditional psychiatrist often prefers to do very little about the present or the future." They believed the repressed and buried complexes tended "to disappear as soon as the patient knows of their presence and significance." But in actuality this seldom happened. People needed active re-education. Besides, the traditional approach required too much of the doctor's time. He could never treat all the people who wanted help. Freud had also overrated the importance of sex. Sexual problems were not the root cause of emotional stress. In fact, they merely reflected the true source of difficulty, which was the existence of immature personality traits.<sup>3</sup>

But luckily there was another approach to therapy. "For the first time in history, modern psychology and psychiatry had developed the know-how for living." In fact, science had "cut-and-dried" directions for controlling the thoughts and attitudes which caused "the everyday run of anxieties, fear, discouragements and longings" which in turn created the daily emotional stress which made up approximately eighty percent of all emotional stress. This effective method of therapy was based on Pavlov's concept of the conditioned reflex. It was "the direct antithesis of Freudian psychiatry." Schindler believed in showing the patient how he could produce

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pleasant emotions by changing his conscious ideas. More than any writer since Lippmann, Schindler stressed the adaptability and flexibility of human beings; earlier Dale Carnegie had shown some interest in the concept, and Maxwell Maltz would employ a similar approach in his 1965 best-seller.<sup>4</sup>

According to Schindler, the patient learns, through "conscious thought control," to substitute "equanimity, courage, determination, and cheerfulness, whenever anxiety, apprehension, and so on, begin to make their appearances." For example, if the patient was a salesman, and consistently got angry or depressed whenever he lost a potential sale, he was taught to see that he was the victim of negative thought patterns. Once he became aware of what was happening, he was encouraged to work at avoiding the negative reactions by learning to substitute positive ideas for the negative ones; that is, he developed the habit of consciously reminding himself that he did not have to get depressed just because he lost a sale, that he only felt negative emotions because he habitually told himself that a lost sale was a catastrophe, something worth getting emotional about. He then learned to say "so what?" when he lost a sale. He was taught to realize that a lost sale was not a life or death matter. It would be nice to make the sale but it was not a necessity of life. A mature person was never too competitive. The patient was encouraged to practice this positive approach until it became

habitual. Then, instead of brooding about a lost sale, he told himself that it is good to be alive, it's good to be healthy and to feel happy, and that the lost sale was not a truly vital issue. He thus substitutes the habit of feeling happy for the habit of feeling discontented.

Schindler insisted that

regardless of the omissions and commissions of the past, a person has to start in the present to acquire some maturity so that the future may be better than the past.

Moreover

The underlying emotional problem has the same common denominator in every patient. This common denominator is that the patient has forgotten how, or probably never learned how, to control his present thinking to produce enjoyment... Emotional stress can be helped only by learning to react to situations right now with equanimity, courage, determination and cheerfulness.<sup>5</sup>

Schindler was positive that people could be taught to produce or trigger an optimistic attitude by repeating certain rules, formulas, or philosophical axioms to themselves. To handle the small, everyday irritations which caused most of man's emotional stress, a person must first remember that "the only moment we ever live is the present moment. It is the only time we ever have to be happy." Repeat over and over to yourself the pledge that "I am going to keep my thinking and my attitude calm and cheerful - right now." Prayer can be helpful, but only if people pray in a "calm and cheerful" manner. Never say, Lord, I feel miserable, help me. Say Lord, give

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me the courage "to enjoy this wonderful life." In general, speak cheerfully to yourself and other people. And when you get up in the morning actually sing, "Oh What a Beautiful Morning," even if it is raining. "Sounds a bit silly, of course, but it pays off." And learn to like your work. We all need some energy absorbing activity. Moreover, sufficient work leaves a person no time to worry. The specific kind of work a man did was not important. People can learn to like any job. Our likes and dislikes were suggested to us; we were not born with them. Thus you can unlearn old habits concerning work, and develop new ones. With practice, you can even develop a positive attitude toward work you presently dislike.<sup>6</sup>

And when faced with a decision, don't stall. Decide, and then live with your decision. Don't brood. Make plans for the future, and don't worry too much about whether you could have made a wiser choice. Decide to make the best of it. You may make mistakes, but there was no perfection in life; and it was better to act than to do nothing. And never brood about misfortune, or pity yourself. Schindler admired Pollyanna's system of finding four good things hidden away in every bad thing that happened. Friendships were especially rewarding, so work at meeting and liking people. Don't expect it to happen automatically. And develop a hobby. In general, keep active. And most important of all, don't want what you cannot have. (Here Schindler's attitude was reminiscent of Lippmann's dis-

interestedness.) Learn to be satisfied if a situation cannot be altered. Schindler spoke admiringly of both a man who stayed married to a sour woman, and a woman who remained with a chronic alcoholic husband. And most important, don't get in the habit of requiring the unusual for your pleasure. Respond to simple things that are always near at hand. Americans tend to want fine houses, automobiles, television sets, cameras, ad infinitum. Advertising was an industry dedicated to creating discontent and frustration. Moreover, the techniques of installment buying, by its very nature, induced unnecessary fear in people. In general, a mature person learned to get the "maximum enjoyment" with the "minimum of trouble." Schindler was obviously no exception to the best-seller tradition which preached the wisdom of seeking pleasure within safe, traditional bounds.<sup>7</sup>

It was also a good idea to have a physical examination once a year. Schindler said nothing else about exercise, diet or drugs. But he did advise people not to "worry about dying. Everyone who lived before you stood it."<sup>8</sup> It was just another reality of life like the fact that the sun rose each morning.

Since "the underlying emotional problem has the same common denominator in every patient," Schindler used exactly the same approach with every patient. It was standardized. There were three distinct steps; one, his concepts were explained to the patient; two, the patient was given audio-visual mat-

erial which, like Schindler's book, presented

the chief situational and personality factors that produce emotional stress. He has time to compare his own situation with the hypothetical ones presented during the sessions.

The doctor saw the patient for five minutes before and after each session to make sure the patient understood the procedure. This audio-visual experience replaced the ventilation used by traditional therapists. When the patient was ready the doctor began the third step of the program. He discussed with the patient ways and means of eliminating the patient's difficulties by changing his thought processes. This last step, the educational phase, was the part of the treatment Schindler stressed.<sup>9</sup>

The standardization of treatment enabled the doctor to treat a much greater number of people. But despite standardization, and the increased patient load, the technique helped practically one hundred percent of Schindler's patients.<sup>10</sup>

Although Schindler concentrated on the daily irritations of life which caused most of man's emotional stress, he did advise people about handling the fundamental emotions connected with their need for love, security, recognition, self-esteem and sex. His basic approach was the same as with the minor irritations. It was a matter of developing new thought patterns. If no one loved you, then love those about you. It was truly better to give than receive. A mature person was not egotistical or competitive. He was gentle, cheerful and kind. If

you lacked recognition, give it to others. As for self-esteem, learn to accept yourself as just an ordinary, everyday person. There was no need to strive for more.<sup>11</sup>

Schindler treated sex in more detail than any best-selling guide before him. In Schindler's opinion, sex was very important, but it was not the main spring of human personality as Freud and psychoanalysis claimed. Food and security were stronger drives. Of course, sex could enrich a human being's life when it was properly used, but "the social and economic consequences of complete sexual promiscuity would be simply catastrophic." Men would be unable to cooperate with one another in economic undertakings, and their rivalries would destroy society. A mature person recognized and accepted the social restrictions which limited sex to marriage. And within marriage, mature people had no trouble enjoying sex. Unfortunately, most people were conditioned to be sexually immature. Our culture simply had not learned to teach people how to shackle their sex instincts intelligently. It stressed suppression which created anxiety and rebellion. Thus people were unnecessarily inhibited and fearful about sex, or they resorted to "the liberation of 'sophistication'" which produced "equally severe anxiety states." Schindler told how several adulterers committed suicide because of their guilt.<sup>12</sup>

Women seemed to suffer the most because of our irrational

sexual mores. Over forty percent of the married women Schindler saw got no sexual pleasure from marriage. And "frigidity is most often the husband's fault." He was usually selfishly immature because of his faulty upbringing. Schindler advised married couples to learn something of the anatomy and physiology of sex, and recommended reading a good sex manual. But more important, they must learn that sex was mature only when kindness, sympathy and mutual cooperation entered into it. It was also important to understand that men usually wanted sex more frequently than women. Thus both partners must compromise or create conflict.<sup>13</sup>

Schindler also discussed the sexual problems of single people. Fornication, like adultery, caused emotional stress and must be avoided. And masturbation was no solution. It

causes the individual to withdraw into himself and into a dream world of his own making. He develops introvert tendencies, lives in social isolation, and prefers to live in his world of dreams and fantasies...He staggers through life, unproductive, unhappy, and alone...

To put it simply, masturbation is immaturity. It is a childish way of satisfying one of the basic needs.

Sex perversions, such as homosexuality, were "evidence of deeply-seated personality difficulties that required individualized treatment." Schindler concluded that there was no satisfactory solution to the sex problems of unmarried people. We must simply admit that it was a difficult period for young people. We can only "tide them over." We should



tell young people the truth, encourage them to accept mature standards, and keep them busy intellectually and physically.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately the difficulties connected with sex were compounded by the fact that American business used sex to sell products:

Many commercial enterprises capitalize on shaking up the fizz in the charged bottle. These efforts to shake up the fizz have never been as prevalent as they have been in the last fifty years, and one of the chief reasons why one out of three marriages is ending in divorce.

Commercial advertising, newspapers, magazines, movies, and television were all exploiting man's sexuality for profit. In general, Schindler had little good to say about American business. It was childish and immature because it was too competitive. It ruined more lives and caused more unhappiness than it was worth:

Anyone who follows such mature principles as noncompetitive cooperation, a desire to be of benefit to human beings as human beings, a feeling for helping people out of difficulties, can be a financial success only by a most miraculous series of accidents.

A mature person in the business world must avoid being trapped by the competitive spirit. He must "play it as a game" or treat it as "a big lark." Probably he'll never get rich, but he'll be a happier human being. Another liability of our economic system was the extra pressure it put on older people. One-third of those over 65 had no income whatever of their own. And 75 percent of those with an income had

less than \$1,000 a year. Both federal and private pensions were inadequate. And a man over fifty had a very difficult time finding a job because America worshipped youth.<sup>15</sup>

Schindler was not widely reviewed, and the reviews he did receive, while favorable, were short and perfunctory. But his book did find an audience. It was on the best-seller list two years, finishing fifth in 1955, and ninth in 1956. It was also condensed in the Reader's Digest of May 1956. What explained his popularity? For one thing, Schindler wrote the first best-selling guide to emphasize the curing of physical illness through the application of psychology. Schindler also put more emphasis on sex than any other guide. And yet he was not a sexual radical. He rejected the Freudian view of sex and praised the institution of marriage. He even condemned masturbation, not on religious but on psychological grounds. Thus, while he asked Americans to question the established wisdom of the day concerning business and competition, he uncritically accepted the traditional middle-class view of sex.<sup>16</sup>

Even Schindler's attack on the competitiveness and unscrupulousness of American business probably pleased many middle-class Americans who felt the pressure of competition, and did not approve of the aggressive and garish approach to most advertisers. Besides, as with sex, Schindler remained comfortably within the bounds of middle-class tradition. His

criticism of business was more in the form of a gripe than a well thought out critique. Moreover, Schindler attacked business without offering any radical alternatives. As with sex, he was no revolutionary. Business was destructive, but Schindler never even hinted that it might be wise to instigate drastic reforms, or develop a new economic system. He said nothing about business which would have disturbed a progressive Republican, or a liberal Democrat. Instead people were advised to treat business as a game, and not to become greedy. Otherwise Schindler was willing to accept the economic system as it was. In one instance he even expressed admiration for a man who, although ruined by the Depression, not only "adjusted" to poverty, but still spoke well of the banker who originally foreclosed on his property. This was defined as mature conduct. And unlike Overstreet, Schindler did not even envision a new educational system, although he repeatedly said that the present system was geared to produce immature adults. Schindler was also safely anti-communist. He considered their promise to create an economic paradise a fantasy; their reliability was on a par with people who claimed to receive messages from God, but who inevitably turned out to be schizophrenic.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike Overstreet Schindler was either unaware or uninterested in how society formed human beings. He approached the problem of emotional stress in a patch-work fashion. He

never speculated about the ultimate purpose of life, nor did he systematically discuss theology, philosophy, economics, or government. They didn't seem to interest him. He simply assumed that pain was undesirable, and, having noticed that happy people had certain personality traits, he concluded that these were desirable traits for everyone to acquire. He did not include religion in his system because "religion, per se, neither increases nor decreases the individual's chance of getting E. I. I. [emotional induced illness]." If it made a person feel better to pray, then he should pray, but Schindler found that clergymen and strongly religious people had just as much E. I. I. as non-religious people, with the exception of Quakers and Christian Scientists who showed an appreciable lack of E. I. I. Schindler made no attempt to explain this phenomenon.<sup>18</sup>

Earlier best-selling writers had made use of the concept of conscious thought control--Lippmann, Young, Brande, Link, Carnegie and Peale--but no one had defined and developed the idea as clearly or as systematically as Schindler. Nor would the earlier writers have necessarily agreed with the philosophical implications of some of the signals or conditioned reflexes he wanted formed. For instance, Lippmann wanted a person to tell himself that it did not matter that there was no heavenly father to protect him, while Peale advised people to tell themselves just the opposite, that everything

would work out for the best if they believed that God was guiding their lives. Thus Lippmann and Peale seem diametrically opposed. But a man like Schindler might describe both of them as trying to control emotional reactions by changing a person's conscious ideas. In Schindler's terms, each man recommended setting up a signal, either a belief in God or a belief in disinterestedness, which could trigger a positive conditioned reflex, such as confidence or optimism, whenever another signal began triggering a reaction of doubt or fear. Schindler did not involve himself with the ethical or philosophical implications of the signals, or their logical validity. Schindler merely advised using those signals which worked. Of course, Schindler never admitted the basic philosophical neutrality of his approach. But because of his pragmatic, piece-meal approach, Schindler avoided the philosophical difficulties of Lippmann and Overstreet. A reader did not expect him to give a metaphysical justification for brotherhood, tenderness or civic responsibility. Schindler was a pragmatist. Experience had taught him that people with these traits were happier than people without them, and that fact alone was sufficient justification for recommending their adoption.

Schindler believed that human beings were extremely plastic and adaptable. They could learn to like almost any job, and could learn not to want what they could not have.

Men could even learn to improvise if they were denied the love, affection and attention which were fundamental human needs. These emotional needs were the closest Schindler came to setting up a fixed or frozen human nature. In a sense, he denied that man had a "human nature" which could be betrayed. Of course, religious writers, Freudians and neo-Marxists would reject his description of man.

Schindler's ideal human being was somewhat reminiscent of Henry Link's ideal. Schindler admired the wives of Wisconsin farmers who had families of nine or ten and also worked so hard at the chores around the farm that they were constantly busy. As a consequence they had the lowest rate of emotionally induced illness of any group Schindler ever met.<sup>19</sup>

## NOTES

1. John A. Schindler, How to Live 365 Days a Year (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1954) pp. XIII-XVI, XIX.
2. Ibid., pp. XXIV, 13, 53-54, 61, 67, 84; Anon., Review of How to Live 365 Days a Year, Time, March 25, 1957, p. 116.
3. Schindler, pp. 206-207, 212-217.
4. Ibid., pp. XV, 89, 206, 213.
5. Ibid., pp. 72-74, 207-208, 212-217.
6. Ibid., pp. 87-88, 105, 114-115, 120.
7. Ibid., pp. 81-82, 89-90, 97, 106, 111-112, 117-120, 135, 145.
8. Ibid., pp. 103, 180.
9. Ibid., p. 212.
10. Ibid., pp. 208-210.
11. Ibid., pp. 72-74, 77, 83, 198-199.
12. Ibid., pp. 77, 83, 143-144, 146-148, 155.
13. Ibid., pp. 76, 153-154, 159-160.
14. Ibid., pp. 55-56, 150-151.
15. Ibid., pp. 75, 144, 166-167, 172-176.
16. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1967), pp. 198-199, 201; Anon., "The Best Seller of 1956," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 21, 1957, p. 45.
17. Schindler, pp. 80, 92-93.
18. Ibid., pp. 69, 123.
19. Ibid., p. 9.

## Chapter 18

### Billy Graham

Billy Graham was America's best known evangelist. A Baptist fundamentalist, Graham expressed his unhappiness over the steady decay of modern civilization in two best-selling guides, The Secret of Happiness (1955) and World Aflame (1965). Ours was a sadly superficial age:

Many think that so long as we have sleek automobiles to ride leisurely in, T. V. and movies to entertain us, luxurious homes to serve us that what happens to our souls does not matter.<sup>1</sup>

But people were not happy, despite the general affluence. They were bored and desperate for distractions. They gorged themselves with alcohol and drugs, and were obsessed with sex. Pornographers like D. H. Lawrence, Norman Mailer and Henry Miller poisoned America with "the drippings from a broken sewer." The greatest communications system known to man had been used to corrupt man. Movies, television, books and comics dramatized man's greed, lust and hatred in such a way as to contribute "to our moral chaos." Illegitimate births were at an all time high, and venereal disease raged at epidemic proportions. Street crime was rampant, and organized crime and the Mafia had grown so powerful that they almost controlled "some of the world's major cities." Dishonesty flourished even in government and business. Yet, while crime soared, the courts had actually become more lenient. Moreover

there is an organized attempt to downgrade



the policeman, to make fun of him and despise him. All this is part of a general disrespect for law and order.<sup>2</sup>

But Americans were not enjoying their license and lawlessness. Modern man was anxious and loveless. Eight million suffered from some form of mental illness, and over half the hospital beds were for mental patients. In fact, one out of ten Americans could expect to be confined to a hospital for mental illness at some time during his life. The situation was so desperate that many scientists were frantically searching for drugs that would restore man's sanity. B. F. Skinner, the psychologist, had faith that science would eventually develop drugs which would make it much easier for man to organize a peaceful society. But Graham deprecatingly compared Skinner's ideal to the use of soma in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World. Even leaving moral considerations aside, Graham was less optimistic than Skinner; at best drugs gave only temporary relief, and ultimately they caused brain damage.<sup>3</sup>

Not only America, but the whole West, was drifting toward spiritual nihilism. Graham cited a number of famous writers whose pessimism mirrored the despair and corruption of the modern age - William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Eugene O'Neill, Jean Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus. They were joyless and obsessed with death. "There is no remedy for anything in life," Hemingway wrote, "...death is a sovereign remedy for all mis-

fortunes." And O'Neill, the playwright, echoed his thoughts, "Life's only meaning is death, so face it with courage and even love of the inevitable. Death becomes like a blanket on a cold night." These writers spoke for too many Americans. As individuals and as a nation we were in great danger for "when America ceases to be good, it will cease to be great."<sup>4</sup>

Some critics traced the roots of our moral crisis to economic and sociological problems, others to an inadequate educational system. But they were wrong. The crisis was due to the acceptance of moral relativism. We have deserted God. "We talk of God but we often act as though we are atheists." "The earth is a planet in rebellion." To be happy, we must turn to Christ. We must learn to depend on God like children. Then and only then would we find peace for a true Christian was always hopeful and happy.<sup>5</sup>

Graham, a Baptist fundamentalist, believed that the Bible meant exactly what it said. Christ was God. Graham accepted the incarnation, the resurrection, the Trinity, the miracles, the devil, hell, and all the other pronouncements of the Bible, including Original Sin. "Human nature is radically bad... ." And sin was the cause of man's unrest. Man was in revolt against God's law. Graham agreed with Fulton Sheen; a man could sin just by desiring an adulterous relationship. And a woman could sin through her style of dress; "if you women purposely desire

to entice a man to sin, then you are guilty whether the act is committed or not." Nor did Graham dismiss perversions or homosexuality as mere immature acts. They too were grievous sins.<sup>6</sup>

God gave each person a conscience. We all knew right from wrong. Thus sinners were completely responsible and will be justly punished in hell. Graham was the only best-selling writer, besides Sheen, to stress hell. But there was a bright side to immortality; the good would be rewarded in heaven. But heaven would not be all rest. Man would also labor, and have adventures. He would be God's "servant" while the angels would serve him. Man would even have special "food peculiarly adopted to the bodies of those who will live in heaven... ."7

Graham was completely opposed to those liberal churchmen who wanted to recast the Christian message in order to make it acceptable to modern man. He specifically attacked Bishop John A. T. Robinson whose Honest to God, dealing with liberal theology, was a best-selling paperback in 1963. The liberals could not accept certain traditional beliefs which they considered merely "the envelope in which the message was sent, rather than the message itself." But the liberals could never agree on which sections of the Bible were to be thrown out and which kept. They usually denied Jesus's divinity. To

them, Christ was merely a man who was so good and unselfish that God's love shone through him. They tended to define God as some vague "ground of being" instead of our heavenly father. But Graham agreed with Karl Barth: "We may accept or refuse the message, but we may not change it." Graham was especially annoyed at the growing acceptance of "situational ethics," and he thought it was sinful that "many pastors and university chaplains now condoned premarital sex."<sup>8</sup>

Graham's own theology was traditional. God began the human drama because "God desired the fellowship of a creature like man....Man was to be God's closest friend, His partner in cultivation and development of the earth." Graham never discussed why an all-powerful God felt a need for a friend or partner, or even an earth to cultivate. Nevertheless God gave man free will. God's aim was

not only to glorify Himself but also to make a happy relationship with His crowning creation - man. Never will He make any demands which encroach upon man's freedom to choose.<sup>9</sup>

"Thus from the very beginning God proceeded to test man's love and friendship. That was why He put the tree in the garden." But man chose the devil of his own free will. Graham never explained how a man could have free will if God did not consult him about whether or not he wanted to appear in God's drama and about the conditions of his existence. A hint of the philosophical problems involved in reconciling the concept of

free will with God's omnipotence did creep into Graham's book. At one point, he told an anecdote to illustrate the wisdom of trusting God's judgment. But unwittingly the story also brought Graham's concept of free will into question. Oliver Cromwell sent his secretary to negotiate with a foreign power. The secretary was worried about the success of his mission. His servant asked him if God had ruled the world before he, Cromwell's secretary, was born, and whether or not God would rule the world after he was dead. The secretary answered, yes, he did and would and the servant said, "Then, Master, why not let Him rule the present too?" The secretary saw the logic in his argument, stopped worrying, and went to sleep.<sup>10</sup>

Graham ignored other philosophical and psychological problems. Like Fulton Sheen, he never explained why some men had the wisdom to accept God's grace while others foolishly choose to condemn themselves to eternal punishment for the pleasures of sin. Nor did he explain why the faith of a fundamentalist Protestant was superior to, or more trustworthy than that of a liberal Protestant, a Catholic, a Jew, a Buddhist or a Nazi for that matter.

Graham admitted that ultimately he did not understand why God allowed sin and suffering to exist. It was a mystery and a riddle, and man would never have more than a glimpse of the solution. But obviously the main purpose of suffering was to test our faith. As for sin

for some reason it has not pleased God to reveal

the full answer to the mystery of where iniquity began. It is enough for us to know that it is in the world and that man has fallen under its power.

But it was not really important that man could not intellectually understand all the mysteries of Christianity. Graham agreed with Fulton Sheen that "Christianity can never be reduced to reason alone." We must have a "simple childish faith," and become completely dependent on God. Those who question Christianity intellectually like the Deist, Pantheist, Humanist and Naturalist, were only trying to "pollute and adulterate" the truth.<sup>11</sup>

Unlike Norman Vincent Peale or Dale Carnegie, Graham offered little in the way of special techniques which would help us lead the good life. Graham was not particularly interested in inspirational poems, lists of character traits, or formulas which insured business success. Nor did he say much about modern psychology as had Fosdick and Liebman. Graham casually mentioned that psychology might help the mind, but added that it could do nothing for the soul which needed Christ. Actually the Bible contained all the guidance a man really needed. Thus Graham offered a simple formula for happiness; believe in God, read the Bible, pray daily, join a church, and associate only with God-fearing people.<sup>12</sup>

Graham's view of the church's role in society caused a good deal of controversy. Graham clearly stated that a Christian was his brother's keeper, but disagreement arose over Graham's

interpretation of how brotherhood should be expressed. His attitude toward Communism spotlighted the problem. Graham was aware that over half the world's population was hungry, poor and wretched. Many were no better than slaves to big landlords. Graham understood that Communism had a strong appeal to these unfortunates. But Communism was Godless and evil. It was a judgment on a sinful, pleasure-mad West. Still Communism could never succeed unless Christianity failed.

"We must ~~not~~ only outpropagandize and outfight Communism, we must outlive it." "We have a responsibility to the downtrodden people of the world." But just what sacrifices did this responsibility entail? Did it mean sending our surplus wealth on a massive scale to foreign lands? Not at all. An organized massive effort was never considered. Graham did not think in those terms. Each individual had to make his own decision. "Perhaps you cannot go to these faraway lands, but you can give to missionary and charitable causes that will help... ."13

Graham had a similar attitude toward domestic problems. He thought it was important to work with the poor, especially the urban poor who lacked jobs and decent housing, and were morally disorganized. But again, his suggested solutions were very limited. He spoke in terms of visiting the sick, the prisons, and the lonely, and of giving money to charity. It was definitely not the Church's mission to settle economic problems through political action or to set up Utopias. To a certain

interpretation of how brotherhood should be expressed. His attitude toward Communism spotlighted the problem. Graham was aware that over half the world's population was hungry, poor and wretched. Many were no better than slaves to big landlords. Graham understood that Communism had a strong appeal to these unfortunates. But Communism was Godless and evil. It was a judgment on a sinful, pleasure-mad West. Still Communism could never succeed unless Christianity failed. "We must not only outpropagandize and outfight Communism, we must outlive it." "We have a responsibility to the downtrodden people of the world." But just what sacrifices did this entail? Did it mean sending our surplus wealth on a massive scale to foreign lands? Not at all. An organized massive effort was never considered. Graham did not think in those terms. Each individual had to make his own decision. "Perhaps you cannot go to these faraway lands, but you can give to missionary and charitable causes that will help... .."<sup>13</sup>

Graham had a similar attitude toward domestic problems. He thought it was important to work with the poor, especially the urban poor who lacked jobs and decent housing, and were morally disorganized. But again, his suggested solutions were very limited. He spoke in terms of visiting the sick, the prisons, and the lonely, and of giving money to charity. It was definitely not the Church's mission to settle economic problems through political action or to set up Utopias. To a certain



degree, Graham seemed to consider economic and social problems insoluble. At one point, he linked economic depressions and disease, saying, "no exemption is granted the Christian from the common lot of the human race." He seemed to view man-made economic dislocations as a natural phenomenon like sickness and death or the changing of the seasons. He described how one man lost his job, fortune and wife because of the Great Depression, and said it was God's way of testing the man and preparing him for heaven. Men should learn to be content "in whatever state they find themselves." St. Paul was content in a Roman jail. He learned to be satisfied "with any condition in life in which it pleased God to place him." Jesus warned man against forever wanting more. It made him discontented. Besides, Graham knew many poor families who had joy, radiance and peace because they were religious, while many millionaires were close to suicide. Not that Christ was against rich people. Christ had no "special pet whether on account of riches or of poverty. Rank and social distinction meant nothing to Him." "There is nothing wrong with being wealthy if the wealth was acquired honestly. However, neglect of the stewardship of one's resources is a sin in the sight of God." We are all Christ's children. There must be no class struggle. Each man must give his due; the employer must pay a proper wage, and the employee must give an honest days work.<sup>14</sup>

Graham demanded no heroic efforts or monumental dreams in behalf of social reform. No one was asked to give all to the poor and follow Christ in poverty. It was interesting to note that while Graham quoted the Bible frequently he ignored those sections which questioned the value of wealth, such as Christ's statement that it was harder for a rich man to enter heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.

Actually, Graham believed that most Protestant denominations were too involved in politics and social issues. It was correct to be against racial injustice, crime, gambling, dishonesty, and pornography, but it was not the Church's mission to make political decisions, although Graham did want legislation against pornography. "Does freedom of speech and the press," he asked, "imply the freedom to corrupt the minds of the people... ." "We have laws in our cities forbidding open sewers and cesspools, why shouldn't we have laws forbidding pornography and obscenity?" Graham defined pornography as "anything that depicts lewdness in such a way as to create impure thoughts and lusts." Graham also wanted God and the Bible included in all school curriculums. But that should be the limit of the Church's direct political involvement.<sup>15</sup>

But a non-political church did not mean a church which accepted society just as it was. Christians could not be content until Christ's principles were applied to all men. Did

this sound paradoxical, Graham asked? It wasn't. Christianity had two responsibilities. One to proclaim the Gospel, the other to apply as best it could the principles of Christianity to the social conditions around it. But the Church's primary mission was not social but redemptive. You could not establish the Christian order through legislation and social engineering. Thus the liberal Christian social reformers were misleading people. Contemporary man was too corrupt for a Christian Utopia. There would never be a perfect society until Christ's Second Coming. And Christ's Kingdom would not come about peacefully. Graham supported the United Nations in general as man's best attempt at creating peace; but the United Nations, he said, would ultimately fail, for the world would have to pass through a brutal world war in which the Anti-Christ, an evil leader, a superman, the incarnation of Satan himself, would lead the forces of evil. He would be worshipped by the whole world, and rule until Christ came with "His dazzling warriors from heaven" to destroy all evil. This war would be devastating, but out of the ruins Christ would establish a Utopia. "Disease will be arrested. Death will be modified. War will be abolished."<sup>16</sup> Until then, man must be content with an imperfect world.

The Secret of Happiness was the seventh best-seller in 1955 with a hard cover sale of 115,697; World Aflame finished fourth in 1965 with a sale of 198,000. Donald Meyer, in the New Republic, was of the opinion that Graham did not appeal to

the same audience as Norman Vincent Peale. Graham was opposed to Peale's emphasis on self-help, individual will and competition. "Peale throws his converts back into the battle, Graham pulls them out." Graham preached stability, not competition. He emphasized the rewards of heaven and the Second Coming, not success. Meyer saw Graham's audience as predominantly non-urban. They were people who wanted "their simple Bible-identity reaffirmed."<sup>17</sup>

It was true that Graham made few intellectual demands on his readers. For the most part, he skirted or ignored philosophical and theological difficulties, asking his readers to accept Christ with "the faith of children." But it was interesting to note that he did mention writers and intellectuals like Aldous Huxley, B. F. Skinner, Ernest Hemingway, D. H. Lawrence, Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Norman Mailer and Eugene O'Neill. One cannot imagine earlier religious writers like Vash Young or Henry Link bothering. Graham must have assumed that in this era of mass communications even these non-believers had some significance for his readers, if only as well-publicized tempters, and were therefore worth discrediting.

Reinhold Niebuhr and the editors of the Christian Century both complained that Graham did not challenge the materialism of America strongly enough. Niebuhr granted that Graham

has incorporated many of the social gospel's concerns for social justice into his pietism.

And though a southerner, he has been rigorous on the race issue.

Nevertheless Graham still thinks within the framework of pietistic moralism.

For instance, Graham "does not condone racial prejudice. But neither does he incorporate the demand of love transcending racial boundaries into his evangelistic appeal." His individualistic approach to religion was correct enough, but too limited. Graham obscured "the highly complex tasks of justice in the community." Martin E. Marty, in the New York Herald Tribune, agreed. Graham offered very little concrete advice or hope for people caught up in the problems of population, race, crime or war. Graham never specifically criticized real-estate lobbies, school boards or the military. According to Marty, Graham feared losing the backing of businessmen and the Christian individualist quietists. Marty even linked Graham's somewhat unusual emphasis on the Anti-Christ and the Second Coming to his limited social and political interest. His view of the Second Coming justified his lack of social interest since only Christ's direct leadership could create a decent society. Even when judged by his own standards, Graham was found wanting by Marty. Graham criticized modern America for accepting sin, sex and materialism, and then appeared in public as the friend of the high priests of affluence, the very people who encouraged this decadent style of life. "Graham, at home in the White House and the jet set,

the World's Fair and the ladies magazines," concluded Marty,  
"is an implausible doom-sayer."<sup>18</sup>

## NOTES

1. Billy Graham, The Secret of Happiness (New York, Pocket Books, Inc., 1963), p. 23; The original hardcover edition was published by Doubleday Company, New York, in 1955.
2. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, pp. 20, 40, 51-52; World Aflame (New York: Doubleday Company, 1965), pp. 3-4, 19-20, 24-25.
3. Graham, World Aflame, pp. 31, 33, 138-139.
4. Ibid., pp. 29, 59-60.
5. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, pp. 18, 33-34, 97; World Aflame, XIII, XIV, 4, 27, 42.
6. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, pp. 5, 49, 59, 82, 98-99, 101; World Aflame, pp. 22, 65-67, 105, 118.
7. Graham, World Aflame, pp. 75, 98, 232, 237, 255-257.
8. Alice Payne Hackett, "Best Sellers of 1963," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 20, 1964, p. 78; Graham, World Aflame, pp. 24, 83, 172.
9. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, p. 37; World Aflame, pp. 62-63.
10. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, p. 108; World Aflame, pp. 62-63, 200.
11. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, pp. 5, 32; World Aflame pp. 56, 66.
12. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, pp. 27, 100; World Aflame p. 173.
13. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, pp. 65, 76-77; World Aflame, pp. 5-12, 223-224.
14. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, pp. 16, 78, 104-105, 118, 129; World Aflame, 175, 177, 177-180, 183-186, 223, 260.
15. Graham, The Secret of Happiness, p. 116; World Aflame, pp. 20, 180-181.
16. Graham, World Aflame, pp. 14, 178, 180, 187, 193, 195-198, 203-206, 210, 227.

17. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1967), pp. 198-199, 227; Alice Payne Hackett, "Hardcover Best Sellers of 1965," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 17, 1966, p. 60; Donald Meyer, The Positive Thinkers (New York: Anchor Books 1966), p. 256; Donald Meyer, "Billy Graham and Success," New Republic, Aug. 22, 1955, p. 8.
18. Reinhold Niebuhr, "Literalism, Individualism and Billy Graham," Christian Century, May 24, 1956, p. 640; Reinhold Niebuhr, "Proposal to Billy Graham," Christian Century, Aug. 8, 1956, p. 921; Unsigned editorial, Christian Century, Nov. 21, 1956, p. 1351; Martin Marty, "Armageddon or Bust," New York Herald Tribune, Sept. 12, 1965, p. 2.



## Chapter 19

### Smiley Blanton

The title of Smiley Blanton's best-selling book, Love or Perish, succinctly summed up his theme: the absence of love breeds fear, hate and guilt which led to spiritual and psychological death:

Fear paralyzes our natural impulses to explore and investigate while resentment causes us to misinterpret what we see...Guilt...forces us to punish ourselves with accidents and faulty actions that lead to unnecessary frustration and defeat.

In their turn, these negative emotions generated corruption, economic exploitation, social injustice, war, revolution and dictatorships. Furthermore, Blanton agreed with Schindler that stress could produce almost any disease by its effects on the body's hormonal output. Without love some people actually died. Other loveless people went through life with low levels of vitality which Blanton saw as a form of spiritual death. They tended to be depressed, anxious and without zest for living.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, loving people were alive, vital and constructive. They were blessed with understanding, confidence and inspiration:

On the deepest level, love is an instinctive force present in every person from birth to death. It is a profound urge to preserve and extend life by means of union with another living force, and it expresses itself through an exchange of energy that mutually strengthens and rejuvenates.

Love is born when the child rests in its mother's

arms...love grows until it includes the love of family and friends, of school and country, and ultimately the world. Love also means love of self ...Love also means love of God...

It is present, too, in the laborer's devotion to his work...

"All that heals, cultivates, protects and inspires--all this is a part of love." And whether they were aware of it or not all people want love. Blanton based his view of love on the findings of modern depth psychology. He had studied with Sigmund Freud in the late twenties and early thirties, and then practiced psychiatry, and psychoanalysis in New York City. He collaborated with Norman Vincent Peale in a therapeutic clinic which sought to combine religion and psychology. In fact his book was dedicated to Peale. But their approaches were really quite different. Peale's books stressed religious faith and positive thinking, with just a perfunctory dash of modern psychology. Blanton reversed the equation, and devoted his major efforts to popularizing his version of Freud's theory. In fact, Blanton went into more detail about depth psychology than any other best-selling guide.<sup>2</sup>

To be happy, men must understand that they are motivated by two basic instinctive drives--love or Eros, aggression or hate. (Blanton never used the Freudian term Thanatos). But Blanton claimed that

Freud has often been quoted erroneously, as saying that all neuroses are caused by sexual conflicts. Actually, as he himself said, they are caused by one's inability to love and be loved.

Blanton cited no sources for his controversial claim, nor did he discuss Freud's rather unique definition of the word "sexual." But he did explain why love, an instinctive force like hunger and thirst, was so easily perverted and overcome by negative emotions. Eros had to compete with man's darker instincts, which were selfish and aggressive. "We are all kings and conquerors in the silent empire of our fantasies." Furthermore, "human beings are born with a basic indifference to the needs and sufferings of others." "Children have to be taught through love to identify with their fellows, and develop mutual consideration through the reaction - formation of sympathy." But part of a child's nature resisted this growth process for to grow a child must restrict its sexual and aggressive instincts which was a difficult and painful task. "Man alone among earth's creatures is burdened with the tasks of inhibiting, and modifying his own fundamental drives." Ultimately the sacrifice will earn the child greater security, but the child knew nothing of these ultimate gains. He felt only the immediate pain and frustration. Part of him thus resisted the process doggedly, and few children grew into truly mature adults. As a consequence, most adults were largely ruled by ugly passions.<sup>3</sup>

There was another obstacle to the development of a loving attitude. As infants and children most human beings experienced tremendous frustration. Denied love and attention,

they set up defensive behavior patterns to protect themselves from painful situations; they either become aggressive or withdraw. Later these negative patterns dominate their adult lives.<sup>4</sup>

As yet man knew little about the human psyche and its development. But much of man's early frustration was obviously connected to his biological makeup. In the womb, the infant received everything it needed without making a correspondent effort. But with birth the situation changed drastically. The infant still craved food and love "but no longer does fulfillment come automatically with desire." He thus suffered frustration, and sensed a threat to his very existence. He screamed in rage and was fed. Then he was happy with his benefactor. But later, he again felt hungry, and the painful cycle was repeated. "Out of this cataclysmic upheaval is born humanity's twin heritage of love and hate." "To his [the infant's] primitive comprehension, it is because he loves--because he needs and desires--that he also suffers!" He begins to build stratagems to defend himself against the "dangers" of love, and the arbitrariness of the "giants" who control his destiny. The "Christian's concept of the Virgin Mother has so powerful an appeal" because "it fulfills the universal desire for a mother whose love knows no bounds and never falters."<sup>5</sup>

Childhood, "by its very nature, compels all of us to misinterpret reality and to store up grievances that have no foundation in fact." We are therefore left with an insatiable

demand for love and attention. We hate all denial and frustration. And this hate leads to guilt because much of it was directed against just those people who care for us, and protect us. Given the dangers of childhood, how best can "the primitive and even savage" child be converted into a tolerant, cooperative and loving adult? Parents can limit the damage by treating the child in a calm, relaxed manner, mixing love and casualness in equal proportions. Thus a child should receive the emotional support it needs without being spoiled and encouraged to think that it will always receive everything it wants. But parents should not expect too much. Even when the parents are wise, the child inevitably develops some destructive habits. And unfortunately most parents are not wise. But luckily, negative behavior patterns in adults, whether severe or mild, can be modified. The unconscious mind has "resources of power, strength and courage hardly imagined." We must utilize these resources. The real power of the unconscious was frequently demonstrated in emergencies. Blanton related how one schizophrenic man developed pneumonia, and regained his sanity, only to lapse back into his psychotic state once he recovered from the physical illness. "Our unconscious mind," Blanton explained, "if it is confronted with a real danger in the objective world, gives up its fantasies in order to fight the actual threat to one's life." Thus Blanton credited the unconscious with a shrewd ability to reason logically. He never

considered the possibility that chemical changes caused by the body's temporary effort to fight pneumonia might have accidentally restored a damaged brain to normality.<sup>6</sup>

According to Blanton, to tap the resources of the unconscious the suffering person must have a deep, even if unconscious, desire to change. Blanton was vague as to why one person developed such a desire while others continue to allow themselves to suffer. His vagueness was reminiscent of the philosophical difficulties religious writers encountered in trying to explain why one person accepts God's grace while others condemn themselves to hell by rejecting it. Sometimes, said Blanton, a pastor, friend, priest, or psychotherapist could start the process. Sometimes just associating with a loving person could break the circle of hatred, suffering and rejection. But once a person had the urge to become more loving his "first step is to recognize the infantile period of travel as the true source of those distortions" which cause his unhappiness. Love goes astray in childhood. In a sense, it was no one's fault. Thus we must forgive our parents for real and imagined injustices. Next, we must realize that

love and hate, in their original biological form, are essentially quantities of energy generated within the organism...

Strictly speaking, the energy itself is indifferent to the path it is allowed to take. Nature requires only that the energy be converted into action, whether internal or external ...It will accept substitute objects and alternate paths as long as it is allowed eventually to expend itself.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, "life...may be described...as a ceaseless searching for new substitutes to replace love's original object." The same was true concerning our aggressive energies. At no time will love stifle our aggressive drives. It can merely employ them in the proper service of mankind. We actually need aggressive energy to protect ourselves, and to do work such as cooking, hunting and practicing the law. But we must be careful how we re-direct aggressive energy. Misdirected hate can lead to religious bigotry, minority prejudice, class antagonisms, and even barbarous persecutions. Suppression also leads to undesirable consequences. Some children form over-severe consciences, while others rebel and become anti-social. Peeping Toms and obsessive snoopers were also the result of suppression. Parents sometimes encouraged children to suppress sexual and aggressive emotions because "the parent becomes frightened as much by his own secret residue of primitive desires as he is by the child's open expression of them."<sup>8</sup>

Instead of suppressing primitive drives, people should sublimate them, that is "deflect" them to "substitute paths whenever their original goal may prove socially disruptive." A socially acceptable goal was substituted for the originally unacceptable goal. Our ability to sublimate was again based on our childhood experiences. All infants kill the "bad" frustrating mother in their fantasies. But because they need her, they also re-create the "destroyed" mother. Work was

linked to the fantasy of destroying and recreating the lost mother. All work becomes essentially a search for love. Thus to be happy, a person must do work which allows him or her to feel that they were creating something new and good as a replacement for the lost mother. But

under modern industrial conditions more and more people find that they have little genuine interest in what they do. They are but tiny cogs, as a rule, in a huge machine directed by remote corporate management. Work has become specialized and fragmented...He [the worker] simply puts in his "time" on the job, almost like a prisoner, his only reward, the weekly paycheck which is dangled over his head like a whip to keep him in line.<sup>9</sup>

The frustrated worker frequently had a sense of futility, or depression. He was emotionally starved:

We are all oppressed, far more than we realize, by this enforced concealment of our hopes and desires. Its unspoken betrayal of human integrity evokes deep resentments that emerge to plague us in disguised forms, of which brutal cynicism so often encountered in modern life is but one example.

An open avowal of the need for love in every aspect of life can therefore serve as an emotional release and a rallying point for a new approach to our personal, social and economic problems. It will enable us to focus our attention on the real source of disturbance in contemporary life - which is the collective pressure constantly exerted upon us to use our aggressive drives at the expense of our love impulses.<sup>10</sup>

But business will not allow men to be honest and open. Like Overstreet and Schindler, Elanton attacked capitalism. It was "a jungle ruled by the law of 'kill or be killed.'" There was no place for sentiment. During World War II production was spectacular because people "were united in a loving



purpose...the love and preservation of their mother country." But in peacetime there was no unity. In labor disputes "the workers play the role of resentful children and the employers are the tyrannical parents." The non-workers and the unemployed were looking to be cared for as children.<sup>11</sup>

Salesmen in particular suffered under capitalism. Business emphasized the sale rather than the quality of the product sold. The product was frequently shoddy or overpriced or served no real need. Thus the salesman saw his work primarily as an act of aggression in which he robbed and injured the customer. Guilt and depression were common reactions. Donald Meyer, in The Positive Thinkers, pointed out that Blanton criticized "precisely the behavior encouraged by Dale Carnegie." Meyer might have added that Blanton was also criticizing his associate, Norman Vincent Peale, who praised the capitalist system and salesmen, although he never advocated open exploitation as Carnegie had.<sup>12</sup>

But after condemning the business community as selfish, brutal and de-humanizing, Blanton offered no suggestions for reforming or changing the system. As Meyer pointed out, "Blanton had no politics, not even a social gospel to suggest." In fact, he had less to say about reform than Overstreet, who wanted some economic planning and improved schools, or Liebman who recommended a cooperative economy and government-sponsored psychologists, or Schindler who at

least suggested "dropping out" of the system. Blanton did not seem interested in the social and economic realities of America. In general his book had a very detached, abstract quality. From reading it one got no idea of what was happening in the United States in 1956. There was no mention of the Cold War, politics, race relations or economic problems.<sup>13</sup>

Still, despite our de-humanizing environment and the destructiveness of our child-rearing techniques, Blanton had faith that the average American could construct a good life for himself. "Eternal Eros" was a powerful force and could defeat hatred and resentment. But we must not give our love to people who would or could not return it. People frequently deluded Eros and defeated themselves by following "ancient patterns as if they were present fact." They gave their love for reasons that were "no longer valid." For instance, they fell in love because someone resembled their mother or father. Then later they felt cheated and betrayed because the "loved one" did not act like their parents or did not furnish the uncritical acceptance they unconsciously wanted. Others unconsciously chose mates whose weakness made them "deserving" targets for hate. Married couples could settle differences over relatives, children, money or even infidelity, if that was actually what they were differing about; but there would never be a settlement if they unconsciously saw their mates as a convenient outlet for unresolved hatred, and were only using the

children or money or infidelity as an excuse to attack. "Our constant purpose as adults must therefore be to make sure that we do not confuse our hate substitutes with our love choices." Such confusion was a fundamental source of disturbance in most unsuccessful marriages. It was equally dangerous for one mate to assume the role of parent while the other played the child. Adults must be able to both receive and give love. They must combine the "qualities of both a good child and a good parent!"<sup>14</sup>

Another danger to marriage was overexpectation. "The paradise of perfect love is only in the womb, and he who seeks to recapture that bliss does so at the peril of losing life itself." A mature adult realized that "the flux of love - the oscillation between attraction and repulsion is a normal part of every marriage." There should be no attempt to be completely absorbed in the marriage partner. We all need time to be alone; and also time to work off accumulated aggressions in sports, and hobbies.<sup>15</sup>

And we must never deceive ourselves that marriage will cure our psychological problems. Marriage cures no one's emotional difficulties. This must be done elsewhere.<sup>16</sup>

It was also dangerous to separate the "sensual currents of love from the tender or ideal aspects of marriage" for "it makes normal love in marriage between men and women an utter impossibility." This unhealthy schism leads to "psychic impotency" in men. These men divide women in general into two dis-

tinct categories, the good and the bad. They respect good women but feel desire only for the bad. They cannot enjoy sex with their wives. Blanton suspected that this unhealthy schism was the cause of one-fourth of all divorces. These unfortunate men confused their wives with their mothers to whom they could not possibly express erotic love.<sup>17</sup>

Growing old was another major problem which human beings must learn to cope with if they were to find peace. The terror of aging was directly connected with the fear of losing sexual potency. It can come as a profound shock and precipitate a period of intense anxiety and possibly morbid depression. Usually people try to rationalize their fears. They tell themselves that they still have useful decades before them, but

in the deepest levels of the mind we view it as an assault upon the one great power which has always given us our sense of immortality. We feel we have lost our partnership with love; hence, also our blind assurance of eternal victory. Stripped of this protection, we imagine ourselves left like helpless or mutilated children who no longer possess the magic armor that will ward off the mortal blows of fate.

Here is the special problem, the central anxiety behind the crisis of middle age.

This fear can lead to withdrawal, loneliness and even physical illness. Frequently we try to cover up our anxiety. We become over active in business, or social life. But the only solution was to face the problem, and realize that the chance to express "love in its characteristically human aspects may actually increase as we grow older." Man was not

restricted to just physical expressions of love. Many people--chemists, writers, explorers, naturalists and jurists etc.--do their best work between the ages of forty and sixty. Thus it was wise to stay active. Blanton approvingly told how a widow of sixty-five opened a boarding house for college students, and showed her love through cooking, cleaning and friendship.<sup>18</sup>

Near the end of his book Blanton discussed religion and linked it to love. He too was part of the post-war trend which wanted to blend religion and psychology; to sustain our confidence "we must have faith in a universal power greater than man's --the source of life and love":

Moreover mankind as a whole feels the need to ally itself with a beloved object, and it is here that we can all join together to hold a common faith in that force called God, or the power which regulates the unfathomable workings of the universe.

Blanton hoped that all modern religions would ultimately realize that they shared a common faith in a power greater than man which can anchor man.<sup>19</sup>

Blanton's theology was never clearly stated. Early in the book he made two casual but favorable references to Christianity, but otherwise the reader was given no indication of which particular religion, if any, he favored. Blanton was certainly no fundamentalist Christian like Billy Graham or Fulton Sheen. He rejected the concept of evil, Original Sin and eternal punishment. "Modern depth psychology has

taught us this: man's elemental drives do not vanish by themselves simply because we may ban them as 'vicious' or 'immoral.'" There was no inherently evil side to human nature. A destructive man had simply not learned how to give and receive love. By relegating these impulses [aggressive drives] to a criminal underworld of 'sin' it [religion] has caused men to turn aside from their contemplation in shame and fright."<sup>20</sup>

Blanton, like the other religiously-oriented best-sellers, did not discuss God's personal reasons for wanting to create a world in the first place, or why God populated it with human beings who had so much difficulty learning to love. Nor did he mention the possibility of eternal rewards. As Donald Meyer noted in The Positive Thinkers, "Blanton offered no justification for such faith beyond the nakedly psycho-pragmatic plaint that men needed it." Perhaps Blanton was a pragmatist as Meyer thought. Earlier in his book, before he discussed religion in detail, he seemed to view religion as a purely man-made phenomenon. He linked a belief in God with infantile needs; the idealization of great men was the "normal development of the child's attitude of trust and admiration toward his parents...Without it, we should have no civilization, no faith in a Divine Being... ." And Blanton never idealized religion. He was aware that men have frequently persecuted people and waged war in the name of God and religious truth. In the end, a reader had to guess if Blanton was a "true believer" or a

pragmatist; he never clarified the issue.<sup>21</sup>

After Blanton's death his wife wrote that she herself was not sure what his attitude had been toward religion. She knew that he had become "connected" with the Episcopal Church when he was about sixty years old but she never explained what she meant by the word "connected." Moreover she revealed that Blanton told his friends that he had no religion. He felt it was enough to "love thy neighbor as thyself," for "this covered it all." He also made it clear that he "did not care for and never could be persuaded to accept any rigid man-made creed which he referred to as 'the quibbles.'" Blanton himself, in a section of his diary dated August 1, 1937 and published posthumously in 1971, related part of an analytic session with Freud dealing with religion. Freud asked if he belonged to a particular church and Blanton answered

No, I am nothing...My religion is about like yours, as expressed in The Future of an Illusion. But I feel that average people cannot have such a bleak religion. Their minds are not well enough furnished. They must have an idealized father to depend on.

Had Blanton changed his mind and sincerely accepted religion by 1956 when Love or Perish was published, or had he simply calculated that the mention of God and religion would make it a little easier for the "average people" of America to accept the book's Freudian message?<sup>22</sup>

Blanton did not discuss techniques involving inspirational

poems, diaries, prayer, or sex manuals. He also ignored nutrition, exercise and drugs. He concentrated on explaining how depth psychology could help a person experience love. His explanation was descriptive rather than analytic but it did assume a readership which was interested in a long and fairly detailed narrative. One would freely recommend the book to readers who had liked Lippmann, Liebman or Overstreet but hesitate with fans of Peale. It was hard to imagine anyone who had been satisfied with Peale's version of positive thinking wanting to wade through his colleague's popularization of Freud. But like most popularizers, Elanton modified Freud's theories drastically without informing the reader that he had taken liberties with the original. Elanton de-emphasized the importance of sex, and ignored Freud's rather pessimistic conclusions regarding man's ability to strike a balance between his instinctual drives and the demands of civilization. Moreover Elanton never mentioned Freud's attack on religion.

Elanton received only a few short, perfunctory reviews. They were basically favorable except for Time magazine which described his book as "a hodge-podge of marital, parental and occupational anecdotes." But Elanton found an audience despite the reviewers lack of interest. Love or Perish was the seventh best-selling non-fiction book of 1956 with a sale of 148,000.<sup>23</sup>



## NOTES

1. Smiley Blanton, Love or Perish (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), pp. 2, 14, 15, 39, 41, 53.
2. Ibid., pp. 3-4, 11, 14, 50-51, 218.
3. Ibid., pp. 13, 38, 89, 123, 129.
4. Ibid., pp. 43-44.
5. Ibid., pp. 56-60, 62, 91.
6. Ibid., pp. 7-8, 32, 60, 90, 94-96, 101, 204.
7. Ibid., pp. 8, 18, 62, 65.
8. Ibid., pp. 20, 46, 66, 105, 153.
9. Ibid., pp. 121, 134-139, 216.
10. Ibid., pp. 33, 194-195.
11. Ibid., pp. 145-147, 169, 198-199.
12. Ibid., pp. 143-144; Donald Meyer, The Positive Thinkers (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 252.
13. Meyer, p. 253.
14. Blanton, pp. 10, 69-70, 73, 160-161, 165, 199.
15. Ibid., pp. 1, 70, 79.
16. Ibid., p. 74.
17. Ibid., pp. 80-81, 84.
18. Ibid., pp. 171-172, 178, 180-181, 185-186, 188, 190.
19. Ibid., pp. 207-208.
20. Ibid., pp. 42, 154, 210-211.
21. Meyer, pp. 166, 257.
22. Smiley Blanton, Diary of My Analysis with Sigmund Freud (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1971), pp. 84, 122, 126-128.

23. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers 1895-1965  
(New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1967), p. 201;  
Anon., "The Best Sellers of 1956," Publisher's Weekly,  
Jan. 21, 1957, p. 41; Time, March 25, 1951, p. 116.

## Chapter 20

## Pat Boone

Pat Boone, a young movie, recording and television star, wrote two best-selling guides for teenagers, Twixt Twelve and Twenty (1958) and Between You, Me and the Gatepost (1960). They were the first best-sellers written especially for teenagers, indicating the growing affluence of American youth. Boone sympathized with teenagers who went through disconcertingly rapid physical, mental and emotional changes. Under the best conditions, it was a difficult period; but to make matters worse, the present era was morally lax and preoccupied with money and sex. Teenagers were almost always plagued by insecurity, restlessness, inconsistency and indecision. A mature teenager was "the one who is least distorted by those four teen-age symptoms." He could "live comfortably and harmoniously with himself and the world." It was Boone's goal to help teenagers mature.<sup>1</sup>

To begin, a teenager must ask himself certain vital questions: "Who am I? Where did I come from? Where was I going? Why was I born? Did life have a meaning?" These were difficult questions. They created confusion, but the questions had to be answered, or teenagers would waste a good deal of time and energy on foolishness, as he himself had. Boone recalled how shallow his own teenage values had been. He had judged people by the size of their car or house. With shame, he remembered

how desperately he wanted his family to buy a fashionable car, and get rid of their shabby house. He had been obsessed with drawing attention to himself and impressing people. He had judged his own worth by comparing himself with others. Later he learned that if you yearned to sound like Perry Como, a popular singer, or look like Clark Gable, the movie star, you never learned to accept yourself. As a teenager, Boone had been discontented, confused, and unsettled. But then he found the key to happiness. He discovered Jesus Christ, and with God's help he re-thought his values; he discovered that what really mattered was God, love, people, fun, kindness, laughter and "creating things." Thus with Christ's help all the major questions were answered. He decided to devote all his energies to pursuing these meaningful goals. He realized it would take discipline. He made a list of the goals he wanted to achieve and decided to check his performance at least once a month. The list had six headings: spiritual, social, mental, physical, financial, and work.<sup>2</sup>

The spiritual life, the basis of everything else, required the greatest attention. God could be found through the intellect, the heart, prayer, and good acts. Man's intellect enabled him to realize that the very existence and order of the earth, the planets and life proved the existence of God. Like Fulton Sheen, Boone used the analogy which compared God to a watchmaker. But God was not only intelligent, he was

good. His tenderness, love and wisdom were evident in his good works. Just look at a smiling child or the beauties of nature. Even suffering and pain were part of God's goodness. They were a test, and brought out our best qualities by providing hurdles we had to overcome through spiritual struggle. Helen Keller's life illustrated this principle brilliantly.<sup>3</sup>

We could be sure that the Christian Church was the vehicle of God's wisdom because the Bible so informs us; and the Bible was the word of God. Even the study of history and archaeology confirmed the truth and accuracy of the Bible. Boone was a member of the Church of Christ. It was their aim to "continue the church with its faith and practice exactly as it was in the days of the Apostles." There was no official priesthood, and the goal was to be simple, sincere and relatively informal, though reverent. Like most religiously-oriented best-sellers, Boone never discussed the conflicting claims of the various Christian sects. Nor did he discuss Original Sin or hell. One gets the feeling that theology mattered very little to Boone. He was sure that intuition and faith would lead teenagers to the right path. "A part of every person seems to be irresistibly drawn toward God." There were no exceptions. "In a tight spot, the confirmed non-believer will pray as quickly as the devout church-goer." This was especially obvious during war; "there are no atheists in the trenches." Boone assured teenagers that even many famous scientists believed in God. But if a

teenager felt doubt about God's existence, and God's goodness, he should face these doubts immediately, and "weed them out root and all." To strengthen your faith, study the Bible, say grace before meals, pray daily, honor your father and mother, and never take God's name in vain. Have faith. Just cooperate with God, and he'll take care of you. Unlike Liebman, Peale and Blanton, Boone made no attempt to blend religion with modern psychology. Simple religious faith was sufficient.<sup>4</sup>

Boone had a number of suggestions on how teenagers could get along better with people. The key to good personal relationships was the Golden Rule; treat people as you would like to be treated. To make friends, take an interest in people, listen to them, and be a good Christian--honest, sincere, loyal, trustworthy, cheerful and consistent. If you found it difficult to be friendly and outgoing, remember most unfriendly people don't like themselves; improve yourself so you can accept yourself, and ultimately others. And be especially charitable to outsiders; don't mock or make fun of unpopular people, or people with physical or personality defects. Be courteous to everyone, including waitresses and waiters. Develop patience. Don't grab everything you want immediately. And don't try to be the life of the party; relax and let events take their natural course. And show some consideration for your parents. Learn to talk to them, tell them how you feel about any difficulties you may have, and try to see their side of the issue. Treat them as people,

not institutions. And try a little empathy. Imagine how your parents see you.<sup>5</sup>

Teenagers must also learn that they have a responsibility to the community. They can not let other people do all the work. They should work for their church, and take an interest in school and local government. They might begin by helping voters get to the polls. Teenagers should also read a good newspaper daily to keep up with world affairs.<sup>6</sup>

Dealing with the opposite sex was a delicate affair, and there were definite rules. Don't rush into dating. Of course, the proper age to start depends on your maturity, but, in the beginning, all dating should be done in groups. And be careful about kissing. Keep it limited:

A kiss is a beautiful expression of love - real love. Kissing for fun is like playing with a beautiful candle in a roomful of dynamite! And it's like any other beautiful thing - when it ceases to be rare, it loses its value and much of its beauty.

Boone never made any direct reference to sexual intercourse. All references were indirect. For example, he told of being on a double date where the couples were kissing and talking in a car. "It could have become a very dangerous situation," but the girl with the other boy "kept the atmosphere light and clean by chatting and avoiding clinches." Boone said he always felt "sort of sneaky and cheap with a date who kissed easily, and he asked teenagers to remember that "making out" in all its forms spells danger. He also advised against reading

men's magazines and true confession stories. He himself would not record a song if it had suggestive lyrics. Boone, writing for teenagers, never mentioned masturbation. This conservative attitude about sex was typical of best-selling guides.<sup>7</sup>

Boone had mixed feelings about "going steady." It was good to feel needed, wanted and special to someone, but "going steady" had drawbacks. You missed the experience of dating a variety of people, and it left you little time to see your other friends. Moreover, it tended to breed possessiveness between the boy and girl. So, if you did go steady, Boone advised, give each other time to be alone occasionally.

Boone and his wife were both nineteen when they eloped, but he did not recommend teenage marriage or elopements. Marriage required a mature love, which meant you were going to take good care of someone, and see that they were "properly treated and safe and that no matter what happens" to you "all is well" with them forever. But few teenagers were emotionally mature enough for this sort of responsibility. Moreover, making a living left a couple too little time to be together. So Boone advised taking time to mature, and to get to know your prospective mate before marriage. And make sure you truly "like" as well as "love" your intended. It was very difficult to live with someone you did not like, no matter how deeply you were infatuated with their physical appeal or certain aspects of their personality. Moreover, be sure you



can trust your prospective mate; ask yourself if he or she was someone who will "flirt or mess around."<sup>9</sup>

Boone also had advice for teenagers who disregarded his warnings and married. Don't expect perfection either from your mate, or the institution of marriage. And remember, you must constantly work at creating a good marriage. It did not happen automatically. Apply the Golden Rule, and communicate freely. It also helped if you learned to laugh at yourself. Don't live with your in-laws; you need more freedom. Don't choose single teenagers as your friends. Single teenagers frequently lack maturity, and give a bad example, especially in their casual attitude toward work. If you have a baby, don't neglect one another for the infant. Don't be afraid to spank a child. Boone compared training a child to training animals. Children, like animals, begin "to associate certain misdeeds with an immediate unpleasant sensation." But above all, to create a successful marriage, practice religion. Ask Jesus to guide you. Boone did not recommend reading a sex manual as Fosdick had. In fact, he made no direct reference to the sexual side of marriage.<sup>10</sup>

Boone's wife, Shirley, originally thought marriage "should be a fifty-fifty deal with first one, then the other, having the final say." But Boone disagreed. He believed that the man should have the final say. What woman could respect him otherwise? After all, if a woman can "walk all over him," he "isn't a man." Shirley finally saw the wisdom of Boone's position.

And in the end she actually liked the solution "because she is a normal female," which eventually enabled her to understand that men were the natural leaders of a marriage. Girls should learn to be good homemakers because that was their "business." And they should dress like girls, not boys or hoboes.<sup>11</sup>

Work, of course, was a vital issue. A teenager could not reasonably expect to like working at the start. If he did, he was fortunate. But it usually took time to discover work you liked and were competent at. You must explore various possibilities, and that took time and effort. Explore your hobby and see if it can lead to a good occupation; read about other possibilities, and talk to people in different fields. And don't be afraid to actually try new fields. If you fail, it was all right, that's how you learn. Just remain confident that ultimately you will find what you want. But confidence must not be confused with foolhardiness. Boone warned against unrealistic aspirations. You can not hope to become a song writer if you are tone deaf, or an opera singer if you have no voice. And don't model yourself after movie and recording stars. Look up to really important people like Presidents, doctors, lawyers, ministers and writers.<sup>12</sup>

Once working, a teenager should get in the habit of saving money. Money in the bank meant greater freedom of mind and action. Debt should be avoided. Debt, whether to a finance

company, a friend or an installment plan, was a form of slavery. Pay your bills and be responsible.<sup>13</sup>

A teenager could improve the "mental" aspect of his personality by learning to think maturely. To think maturely, you needed information which meant taking education seriously. But Boone never over-rated education:

Let's get this straight. I'm no great cheer leader for a lot of education - just - for education's sake. I don't discourage that, but most of us will have our hands full just learning the things we need to know to be happy and successful.

But all people needed a certain number of facts so it was necessary for a teenager to do his school work. It was best to set up a schedule, and set aside a definite amount of time for each subject. But the acquisition of facts by themselves was not of much use unless we learn to reflect on them, and to come to conclusions. For that you must use your "God given intelligence." Boone did not recommend any particular technique for testing the validity of the conclusions a teenager might draw.<sup>14</sup>

Teenagers must also learn to take proper care of themselves physically. They should eat a balanced diet, take a daily bath or shower, shampoo their hair once a week, visit a barber regularly, clean their teeth, wear clean clothes, and get sufficient sleep and exercise. Alcohol and cigarettes should be avoided. Boone said he would not work for a cigarette sponsor because cigarettes contained fifteen deadly poisons.

In his second book, Boone added narcotics to the list of items to be avoided.<sup>15</sup>

Boone received only a few short, perfunctory reviews which were favorable, except for the New Republic which gently mocked what they obviously considered Boone's naive optimism. But Boone's books were not aimed at the readers of the New Republic. He was a teenage idol whose handsome, clean cut features, pleasant manner and white bucks symbolized all that was best in America to millions of people. And his books sold very well. Twist Twelve and Twenty was the number two best-seller in 1958, and number one in 1959, with an eventual total sale of over a million copies in all editions. Between You, Me and the Gatepost was the tenth best-selling non-fiction book in 1960.<sup>16</sup>

Boone was part of the post-war interest in religion. In fact, one reviewer compared his book to Norman Vincent Peale's The Art of Positive Thinking for Young People.<sup>17</sup> In a sense Boone was a weak echo of Peale. Both employed a folksy, anecdotal style and both were religious without being particularly interested in theology, philosophy or modern psychology. (Boone never even mentioned the advisability of seeking professional help if a teenager was deeply disturbed emotionally.) And neither Peale nor Boone wrote very much or very explicitly about sex. And like Peale, Boone enthusiastically approved of America's economic and social system. He saw nothing mor-

ally wrong or dangerous with wealth, not if it was acquired honestly, and tempered with a little Christian charity. And like Peale, Boone too ignored the plight of America's and the world's poor. He did not even recommend the limited form of charity espoused by Billy Graham. Both Peale and Boone viewed salvation as a strictly private matter. Neither wanted a new society or a reformed education system. God offered his grace to all. It was up to the teenagers and the adults to seize the opportunity. But unlike Fulton Sheen or Billy Graham neither Peale nor Boone threatened an obstinate sinner with hell and damnation. The eternal consequences of sin, if any, were ignored. Hell was just not good public relations.

Boone was the last writer to have a best-selling guide in the 1950's. It was a symbolic ending for what followed contrasted sharply with Boone's image. The optimistic, cheerful, white-buckled Christian would not have felt at ease with the best-sellers of the early 1960's; one woman advocated free love; another attacked the image of women as mothers, homemakers, and housewives; a socialist condemned capitalism; and an educator argued that children should be brought up freely, without any religious training, masturbating whenever they pleased.

## NOTES

1. Pat Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty (New York: Dell Publishers, 1960) pp. 31-32, 44; The original hardcover edition was published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, in 1958; Between You, Me and the Gatepost (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1960), pp. 19-20.
2. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 16, 28-30, 35, 38-39, 44.
3. Ibid., pp. 168, 170, 172, 178-180.
4. Ibid., pp. 27-28, 45-46, 143, 167, 169-170, 173.
5. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 48, 70, 94-96, 102, 105, 116; Between You, Me and the Gatepost, pp. 52, 58-61 69-70.
6. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 48-49.
7. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 66-67, 98; Between You, Me and the Gatepost, pp. 19, 80, 135-136.
8. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 71-74.
9. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 84-85; Between You, Me and the Gatepost, pp. 75-76, 95-96, 98.
10. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 20, 89; Between You, Me and the Gatepost, pp. 104-105.
11. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 75-76, 86-87, 89; Between You, Me and the Gatepost, pp. 47-48.
12. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 129, 135-138; Between You, Me and the Gatepost, pp. 39-40, 137.
13. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 62-63, 142.
14. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
15. Boone, Twixt Twelve and Twenty, pp. 57, 156-158, 161; Between You, Me and the Gatepost, pp. 127-129.
16. Janet Winn, "Oracles for Teenagers," New Republic, Dec. 28, 1959, p. 19; Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers 1895-1965 (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1967), pp. 30, 206, 208, 210, 212.
17. Therese C. Kelley, Review of Twixt Twelve and Twenty, Library Journal, Jan. 15, 1959, p. 242.

## Chapter 21

### Conclusion 1946 - 1959

Unlike the pre-war period, the best-selling guides published between 1945 and 1960 had a common theme; no author rejected or ignored religion. God's "stock" had risen. Neo-Stoicism, Social Darwinism and an understanding of physiology were no longer considered keys to happiness. And, while bourgeois hedonism was still popular, it too was always tempered with a plea for brotherly love. Betty Friedan, who wrote a best-selling guide in the sixties, saw the so-called "religious revival" of the forties and fifties as part of America's general desire for stability, security and "privatism." The American people had been overwhelmed and frightened by a series of public crises - the Atomic Bomb, the Cold War and the McCarthy Era. They had lost their confidence and complacency. Religion promised to make sense of the confusion, and they grasped at it.

But, while religion was more popular than ever, it was not always the same religion which had flourished in the pre-war best-sellers. There was a broader spectrum of opinion expressed in the post-war period. For instance, not all the religiously-oriented writers were willing to ignore or underplay the orthodox doctrines of Original Sin and hell. Nor were they all willing to ignore the shortcomings of capitalism. In fact, several now blamed capitalism for a good deal of America's

unhappiness. The religious writers were also more interested in psychology and its relation to religion than the pre-war writers.

Of course some pre-war trends continued. Liebman, Overstreet, Peale, Blanton and Boone were not dogmatic or exclusive about religion. They stressed tolerance. They also portrayed a merciful God who did not threaten man with hell and damnation. And like the pre-war writers they either rejected or ignored Original Sin and hell; in fact Blanton and Overstreet openly rejected the very concept of sin itself. Men were ignorant and misinformed, not sinful. Several critics complained that the liberals had deprived religion of all its meaningful content. Peale in particular irked orthodox critics, some of whom compared him to a Madison Avenue pitch-man aiming at the lowest common denominator in an effort to reach a mass audience.

Of the liberals, Liebman was unique. He was the sole rabbi to have a best-seller and by far the most unorthodox of the clerical writers. He saw religion as an evolving phenomenon. (Another best-seller of this era, Lecomte du Nouy's Human Destiny (1947) gave evolution itself a religious interpretation.) Every culture created its own idea of God. And a democratic culture called for a democratic God who was man's co-worker, not a substitute father figure. Moreover, God's power was limited. He could not change his own creation at



will. Nor were men as free as traditional religion believed. In reality, man's freedom of choice was restricted by unconscious compulsions. (On this point Overstreet and Blanton agreed.) Freud was right; the conscience cultivated by traditional religion was frequently sadistic, cruel and wasteful. Although Liebman was not consistent about free will and guilt, he was the first religious writer to attack what he considered the morbid harshness of Augustine, Paul, Luther and Calvin. On this point too, Overstreet agreed, and went so far as to dismiss Augustine's view of man as the projection of a distorted mind. Liebman (and Peale) denied that "evil thoughts" were sinful. But the fundamentalists, Sheen and Graham, disagreed, equating the thought with the deed. In best-selling guides a religious writer's attitude toward "evil thoughts" was frequently a barometer of his general philosophy.

Of the liberal religious writers, Peale and Boone were the only ones who still depicted God as a traditional father figure and man as a suppliant. For them, God continued to dispense favors. He even befriended sincere businessmen, as had the God of Young, Link and Carnegie. On the other hand, the God of Liebman, Overstreet and Blanton was not interested in man's mundane affairs; and he certainly did not dispense favors.

Of the best-selling authors Schindler showed the least interest in religion. It was superfluous to his approach; but

even he was willing to accept the use of prayer if it helped the patient.

Sheen and Graham were fundamentalists, highly critical of liberal religion and moral relativism. The liberals had a shallow view of man. Original sin was a fact of life. Man was corrupt. He must kneel before his heavenly father and beg forgiveness. Sheen and Graham believed in free will, Satan, heaven and hell. Their emphasis on eternal punishment was unique. No other writer, before or after, stressed this feature of traditional Christianity. Significantly, no critic or reviewer commented on their fondness for hell, including those critics who praised Sheen and Graham for their orthodoxy and seriousness. Yet hell was obviously a key theological issue, and one that almost always evoked extreme reactions once it was introduced. In fact most non-religious people openly branded the concept a barbarism. Typically, Arthur Koestler, a noted novelist and social critic, was amazed

that even in our day many approve of the idea that ninety percent of their contemporaries are designated for an eternal super-Auschwitz by their loving Father in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Sheen nor Graham explained why some men chose grace and others sin, knowing the eternal consequences. Significantly, both fundamentalists de-emphasized the importance of life on earth. This earthly world was only a test for

heaven. They were also less tolerant of other religions than the liberals. Non-Christian churches were bluntly called inadequate. Christ had fulfilled mankind's every need. Sheen even insisted that the Pope should be the ultimate arbitrator of all religious disputes.

All the ordained religious writers, both liberals and fundamentalists--Liebman, Peale, Sheen and Graham--were particularly anxious to define the relationship of religion to psychology. They all accepted psychology as a potentially useful tool, but only if it remained clearly within its own domain, as defined by them. Religion must not be subverted. Psychologists were not to speak of the nature of God, or decide questions of guilt or sin, or express philosophical values. Morality was to be exclusively the sphere of religion.

Liebman was the religious writer most willing to accept a modified form of Freud's psychoanalysis; he saw it as a magnificent tool which enabled men to understand the mind and thus to accept themselves, and others. But the depth and spirit of Liebman's revisionism could be seen by the fact that he totally reversed Freud's judgment of religion. To Liebman, agnosticism and atheism, not religion, were symptoms of psychological immaturity and neurosis. Blanton too accepted a modified version of Freud's theory, although he de-emphasized Freud's belief in the inevitable clash between man's instincts and the needs of civilization. Overstreet, more eclectic, blended

Freud, Pavlov and the Behaviorists. Of course, Sheen rejected Freud because of Freud's atheism, his determinism, and his theory of sexuality. Besides, even at its best, stripped of any anti-Christian philosophy, Sheen felt psychology was basically inferior to the Catholic confessional. Peale said very little about psychology. He never discussed Freud, Pavlov or behaviorism. In fact, he preferred quick "conversions" to long, drawn out therapy. Boone ignored modern psychology all together. Schindler, like Sheen, dismissed Freud, but on scientific, not philosophical grounds. He did not accept Freud's theory of sex or the unconscious and considered psychoanalysis needlessly time-consuming. Schindler's approach stressed the conscious elimination of negative emotions and the creation of optimism and happiness through the formation of new conditioned reflexes.

Another pre-war trend which survived in the post-war era was the cavalier treatment accorded proof and evidence. No author--liberal, or orthodox, ordained or lay--was particularly interested in giving theological, philosophical or empirical explanations of his position. Overstreet was reminiscent of Lippmann in his attempt to bring some scope to his book. He traced the historical roots of man's plight and listed the virtues he considered mature. But unlike Lippmann he never provided any evidence--philosophical or empirical--to prove that these virtues actually made man happier. Instead he made

assumptions. Blanton used the same technique. He spoke of a Deity but never offered any proof of God's existence. In fact, he told his readers very little about his religious beliefs. He seemed to accept a belief in God on pragmatic grounds; faith made men feel better. He approached Freud's work in the same casual spirit. He never discussed Freud's theory critically. Moreover, he pruned it of those features which displeased him, such as Freud's atheism and his stress on sexuality, without documenting his reasons.

Liebman, Sheen and Boone were equally unconcerned with philosophical and theological proofs. Liebman was content to merely inform the reader that he agreed with Kant that the very process of human reason demanded a belief in God, immortality and a final judgment. Liebman never explained just what attributes of human reason made this particular conclusion inevitable. Sheen and Boone both limited their philosophical discussions to repeating the traditional ontological argument that the very existence of life logically presupposes a creator, just as the presence of a watch proves the existence of a watchmaker. Peale and Graham offered no philosophical proofs of any kind for God's existence or for the validity of Christian dogma.

Evil and the purpose of pain presented special difficulties to all the religious writers. Why had God allowed human weakness and suffering? Liebman, Sheen and Graham all said

that the problem was ultimately unanswerable. It was basically a mystery, but somehow connected with God's desire to grant men free will. Liebman was obviously confused on the issue of free will. On some occasions he described man as the victim of circumstances, on others as a being responsible for his own destiny. Liebman seemed unaware of the contradiction. None of the other religious authors so openly contradicted themselves; but then they never tried to explain how man could logically be held responsible for his destiny if he had been created by a God who neither asked his permission nor consulted him about his nature. Moreover, all the religious writers blithely ignored the most fundamental religious question of all; no one inquired into God's private motives for creating both the universe and weak sinful human beings. Had God been bored or lonely? No writer discussed this issue.

While most religious writers simply ignored the intricacies of theology, Sheen and Graham bluntly said that the human mind was too feeble to understand certain concepts like God, evil, suffering, the Second Coming and angels. Christianity was beyond reason and beyond science. A believer needed faith. But as with the pre-war writers, they did not explain why the Christian's faith was more reliable than the faith of a Buddhist, Hindu or a Nazi.

Schindler was unique among post-war writers. He was a pragmatist. He saw happiness as a state of mind which enabled

people to achieve a feeling of contentment. His clinical practice taught him that some people had personality traits which enabled them to maintain the desired state of mind. Therefore he developed a technique which enabled his patients to cultivate those favorable traits without concerning himself with their philosophical or ethical consequences. Instead Schindler restricted himself to explaining why his approach was technically superior to Freud's psychoanalysis.

Still, despite the indifference of the post-war writers to theological, philosophical and empirical evidence and proofs, they did tend to feel a much greater need than the pre-war writers to buttress their various beliefs with discussions of philosophy, psychology, theology and history and quotes from famous thinkers like Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Kant. In general, the post-war writers were more sophisticated; and while none made the intellectual demands that Lippmann had, only Peale and Boone were as blatantly indifferent to the West's cultural tradition as had been the majority of pre-war writers like Young, Pitkin, Brande, Hillis, Jacobson, Carnegie and Link.

Peale and Boone also closely resembled pre-war writers like Vash Young, Henry Link and Dale Carnegie in their unqualified enthusiasm for capitalism. Thus Peale and Boone opposed changing the structure of society or the capitalist economy, despite the fact that both men deplored the moral state of

society. Moral reform was a matter of individuals reforming themselves with God's help. This was the same attitude expressed by all the pre-war religiously-oriented writers, except Carrel. Peale and Boone even believed that God took a personal interest in helping a sincere, devout Christian succeed in business. Donald Meyer depicted Peale as clinging to the 19th century gospel of success. Peale showed as little understanding of America's intricate corporate structure as most pre-war writers. He appealed primarily to salesmen, small businessmen, and middle-level executives. Some critics were angered by what they considered Peale's alliance with Madison Avenue values.

Sheen and Graham were not quite so enthusiastic about American business. They denied that God helped men with their mundane business interests. God was interested in spiritual matters. Moreover, Sheen's and Graham's attack on the moral decline of America was more vigorous than Peale's or Boone's. Society was decaying. Americans were too addicted to soft living and materialism; they were obsessed with the flesh and sex. Both men saw Communism as God's judgment on the West's greed and materialism.

And yet they both agreed with Peale and Boone concerning reform. Neither opposed the structure of society or capitalism. They did not advocate changing society to change man. The environment and the social institutions did not create the decline in morals, they merely reflected it. Individual men had



given in to temptation, and then put social institutions to corrupt uses. Reform began with the individual. Americans wanted too much. They were greedy. The phrases "too much" and "greedy" seemed to apply to a man's attitude, and not the actual quantity of goods or money he controlled, for both Sheen and Graham said private property, and even wealth, were perfectly acceptable to God if honestly acquired. Still, despite God's acceptance of property and wealth, men must not become over-interested in economics and politics. Neither Graham nor Sheen ever explained exactly what constituted "over-interest." In any case, men must return to God, and learn to be content in whatever state they found themselves. This attitude clearly clashed with the Gospel of Success. Donald Meyer contrasted Graham with Peale, and concluded that Graham wanted to lead his followers out of the economic race while Peale repaired psychologically damaged people to re-enter the battle with new energy. But, of course, leaving the race did not oblige a person to sell what he had and follow Christ in poverty. No religious writer, including Sheen and Graham, demanded this kind of sacrifice.

Liebman, Overstreet, Schindler and Blanton were much more critical of America than Sheen and Graham. They all attacked capitalism. Liebman and Blanton both believed that men could be happy only in a society which encouraged love and maturity, and provided meaningful work which could give

people a sense of security and an outlet for their hostile emotions. Liebman considered capitalism too selfish and competitive. Blanton called it a jungle, comparing it to a prison in which men were over specialized and fragmented and became cynical and listless. And, while salesmen had been heroes to Carnegie and Peale, Blanton labeled them the prime symbols of America's emotional disaster. Schindler thought capitalism childishly competitive, and especially damaging to the sex lives of those who lived under it. Overstreet made the most detailed attack. He saw the system as a mass of contradictions. Capitalism preached brotherhood but actually encouraged hate and cynicism. It praised free enterprise in glowing terms, but whenever possible, set up monopolies, cartels, subsidies and tariffs, flagrantly ignoring many of the nations most pressing needs, including the need for public housing and a decent medical system. Overstreet saw the Great Depression as a symbol of capitalism's failure. It proved conclusively that business could not function without government support. (Significantly, Overstreet was the only best-seller who used the Depression to attack the American economic system.) But the truth about America was systematically hidden from the public who were treated as children. Politics, advertising and the school system were all tools for maintaining the status quo.

But despite their dissatisfaction with the system, no

critic, not even Overstreet, offered a concrete plan to change society, although Overstreet and Liebman did set up some economic and social goals. Liebman wanted a cooperative economy to balance political democracy. But he never suggested how it could be achieved. In fact his only concrete proposal was for a government-sponsored program which would make more clinical psychologists and psychiatrists available to the people. Overstreet was almost as limited. He wanted some economic planning, and a school system which inculcated maturity, but his suggestions were vague, and he never offered a political plan for achieving the desired goals. He did recommend joining voluntary associations like Americans for Democratic Action, but he never explained exactly what kind of society he wanted to create, or how he would force the capitalists to relinquish some of their power.

Blanton and Schindler did not even offer new social goals. They were "privatists." Blanton merely advised people to develop their psychological insight and cultivate mature traits. Schindler believed that human beings were extremely plastic and adaptable: it was unfortunate that America was not a more mature society, but, in his opinion, a wise man could adjust to its irrationalities and still lead a satisfying life. For instance, Schindler recommended treating business as a lark in order to reduce nervous tension.

The basically conservative attitude of the best-selling guides of this period was especially evident when they discussed sex and marriage, Liebman, Blanton, Peale, Boone, Sheen and Graham all agreed that sex was acceptable only within marriage. Moreover, marriage, even an unhappy one, was not to be dissolved lightly, although only Sheen denied the validity of divorce. Overstreet was oddly silent on the question of extra-marital sex, although he did agree with Schindler that capitalism had made sex a commodity, and that this commercial attitude hindered the development of mature sexual standards. To improve matters, they recommended that people become kinder and more considerate in sexual matters. But Schindler, for pragmatic reasons, advised that sex be restricted to marriage. In this instance he did not question the accepted wisdom of society as he had on economic matters. Nor did he apply his main thesis - man's ability to adapt, and control his emotional responses by changing his conscious ideas. About sex, Schindler was traditional and inflexible; he was convinced that sex outside of marriage led to unhappiness. Thus he was against adultery, fornication, masturbation and perversions.

Most writers were equally conservative regarding the roles to be played by men and women. Overstreet was the only writer to recommend equality between the sexes, but he never

explained what equality actually entailed. Sheen and Boone were adamant about maintaining man's traditional dominance.

Most writers said little or nothing about race relations in America. Graham attacked racism, but, as Reinhold Niebuhr pointed out, he did not make it a central part of his program. Peale thought race relations had considerably improved and believed that blacks could succeed economically and socially in modern America. Peale was equally "positive" about narcotics. Actually he was the first post-war best-selling writer to mention drugs, although in his optimistic fashion he denied that a problem really existed. Graham and Boone were aware of the real danger and warned against the use of narcotics. No writer stressed diet or exercise as keys to happiness, although Peale and Boone mentioned them in passing and Schindler advised having a yearly physical examination.

All in all the tone of the post-war best-selling guides was still predominately conservative, despite the growing dissatisfaction with capitalism. Large numbers of Americans might be unhappy but no one saw the solution to the problem in a radical reorganization of society. Nor did anyone call for a Nietzschean or Rabelaisian assault on life. Moderation was still the ideal. Even in an era dominated by religion no writer encouraged his readers to lead the life of a saint. America was still very much a sensible, bourgeois, consumer

culture; extremists of any kind, including saints, were unwelcome. Thus it was fitting that the only utopia depicted in this era was Billy Graham's vision of the Second Coming; drastic change was safely postponed.

But the mood was to change in the next decade. The 1960's would be much less interested in religion and much more radical, with writers demanding complete sexual freedom, true equality for women and an end to capitalism.

## NOTES

1. Arthur Koestler, Arrow in the Blue (New York: MacMillan Company, 1952), p. 288.

**Part Three 1960-1965**



## Chapter 22

### Helen Gurley Brown

Helen Gurley Brown was the first woman to have a best-selling guide since Marjorie Hillis in 1937. Both wrote exclusively for single women, and both believed that a single woman could enjoy a much richer life than was popularly believed. But more interesting than the similarities were the differences. A comparison reveals that a social revolution had taken place in the intervening twenty-five years. Brown's ideas on sex, hedonism and exploitation in Sex and the Single Girl (1962) would have been unthinkable in earlier best-selling guides. In fact, she was the first best-selling author to denounce America's traditional middle-class sexual and ethical mores; the world Brown described was definitely not the world of Marjorie Hillis, Vash Young or Pat Boone.

Society encouraged single girls to idealize marriage. Many women could not conceive of a happy life without a husband. But Helen Gurley Brown considered them misled by myths and conventions. Sex and the Single Girl was designed to enlighten them.

Women had first to understand that marriage was no guarantee of happiness. In fact few marriages were truly happy. They were usually marred by fights, struggle, boredom, illness, financial problems and worry over children. Besides, few men were as interesting and lovable to their wives as they appeared

to outsiders. Brown had married for the first time at 37, only a few years before the publication of her book. Before that she had worked in advertising. She considered marriage an

insurance for the worst years of your life. During your best years you don't need a husband. You do need a man of course every step of the way, and they are often cheaper emotionally and a lot more fun by the dozen.

Besides

how much saner and sweeter to marry when you have both jelled. And how much safer to marry with part of the play out of his system and yours.

Brown considered it "complete lunacy" not to sleep with a man before you married him. Otherwise you may make a bad choice.<sup>1</sup>

Brown stressed that a single woman was no longer to be pitied and patronized. She was actually "emerging as the newest glamor girl of our time." (Glamor was especially important to Brown.) A single girl had to remember that she had definite advantages. She was alive and engaging because she lived by her wits in the business world, supported herself, and had the time to develop her intellect. How many married women had the leisure to read Proust, the Wall Street Journal or study Spanish? And how many married women had their own source of income?

Economically she /the single woman/ is a dream. She is not a parasite, a dependent, a scrounger,

a sponger or a bum. She is a giver, not a taker, a winner and not a loser.

Later in the book, Brown appreciatively modified the concept of the single girl as a financial "giver." In any case, she was convinced that a single woman was definitely in a better position than married women to achieve her full potential and get the "most out of life." Brown conceived the "most" primarily, although not exclusively, in terms of sexual pleasure and glamorous consumption.<sup>2</sup>

Brown was emphatic and radical on one point. She insisted that a single woman deserved a rich sex life. She should not allow herself to be misled by the mass media. Brown pointed out that most popular magazines, such as the Reader's Digest and the Ladies Home Journal, took the attitude that a single woman confronted by a man who "insists" can do one of two things, "she can marry him, or she can say 'no.'" But Brown insisted that conditions had changed. Many single women said "yes" and had satisfying affairs. These women had made the right decision. It was important to have a good sex life. It tended to make a woman feel alive and vital. Brown had never encountered a happy virgin. Virgins usually felt that life was passing them by. And, contrary to popular opinion, virginity was seldom the result of lofty moral standards; more likely the poor girl was severely inhibited. True, an affair introduced a whole new set of problems, but they were healthy problems,

worth solving.<sup>3</sup>

Actually an emancipated single girl could have

a better sex life than most of her married friends. She need never be bored with one man per lifetime. Her choice of partners is endless and they seek her. They never come to her bed duty-bound....friends refer to her pursuers as wolves, but actually many of them turn out to be lambs - to be shorn and worn by her.

(As will be brought out later, the image of men as shorn lambs was extremely significant to Brown.) Among her other advantages, a single woman could expect to be courted in a more romantic atmosphere. She had "the luxury of taking long, gossamer, attenuated, pulsating trips before finally arriving in bed." And, if she was emotionally stable enough, she could "sleep with two men at once." Brown obviously referred to concurrent affairs, but she gave the overall impression that she would condone any pleasurable sexual combination.<sup>4</sup>

But a single woman had to be psychologically mature to enjoy her advantages. Unfortunately, few American women were. They had been crippled by their parents and society, and were frequently puritanical and anti-sexual. Brown quoted Kinsey to the effect that only one-third of American women achieve orgasm most of the time, while another one-third rarely achieve orgasm at all. Brown concluded that most women were damaged by a faulty upbringing. Future American women would have a healthier attitude toward sex if their parents allowed children to masturbate freely and answered all questions concerning sex openly and honestly. Parents should also stop inferring

that defecation was a dirty and repulsive act, for it was somehow linked to sexuality.<sup>5</sup>

Brown concluded that a "sexy woman" was simply a woman who enjoyed sex, and accepted herself and all the parts of her body as worthy and lovable, including her reproductive organs. "You [the sexy woman] even welcome menstruation as the abiding proof of your fertility." If a woman accepted her own sexuality she would "attract like a magnet. We are not talking about men to marry you but men...as many as you want in this capacity [sexual partners]." "The physiologically sexy woman, be she drop-shouldered, flat-chested, horse-faced or bone-headed, will find somebody to be sexy with. She's got it. He'll find it." But to truly accept her sexuality a woman must also accept her fantasies. Psychiatrists emphasized this point. Women must not feel guilty over their secret desires whether they involved homosexuality or making love to an African lion. It was important that women understood that all people had sexual fantasies. You are "cuckoo" only when you do something about them. Not that Brown actually considered homosexuals "cuckoo." She accepted the Freudian interpretation of homosexuality as an example of arrested development, but she was not offended by the "perversion." In fact, she encouraged lesbians to ignore the animosity of society; "it's your business and I think it's a shame you have to be so surreptitious about your choice of a way of life."<sup>6</sup>

If a single woman could not enjoy sex, or had a personality problem which consistently interfered with good personal relationships, she should seek professional help. "The most practical 'cures' are effected through psychiatry." And never deceive yourself that marriage or an affair will solve neurotic problems. They won't. It was merely wishful thinking. (It is interesting to note that Hillis in the pre-war era had not even considered the possibility that a woman might need therapy to enable her to enjoy life.) Brown warned that professional treatment was expensive, but she thought it was worth it. Besides, as we shall see shortly, Brown believed that a clever woman could get a man to pay for almost anything.<sup>7</sup>

If a single girl was lucky enough to be uninhibited and psychologically sound, sex was easy to find. But there were still problems. For while willing partners were numerous, really desirable men were scarce. As Kinsey pointed out many women went months, even years, without sex because of the lack of suitable men. And the more discriminating the woman, the fewer the acceptable candidates. A single girl had to make up her mind that it required work to find suitable men. She had to get her friends to arrange meetings; and she had to go where men gathered - sporting events, conventions, schools, political clubs. She should even change jobs if it would help. Brown did not recommend get-acquainted clubs or bars. With

one the men tended to be too desperate, with the other too frantic. In any case, wherever she found herself, a smart woman made it easy for men to approach and talk to her. She flirted freely. And she used attention-getting devices which provoked conversation. For example, paint your car orange; wear pins with a message like, "Fight that will power," or "I have gray hair, brown eyes and a black heart"; and carry a controversial book wherever you go. Karl Marx's Das Kapital and D. H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover were good attention-getters.<sup>8</sup>

Should a girl include married men among the eligibles? Brown had mixed feelings. An affair with a married man was risky. They usually had little time with you, and they frequently demanded secrecy. Moreover, you might fall in love and be hurt because the man's main interest was still his wife and family. But a woman could protect herself; just don't let any particular married man become too important in your life. Keep your perspective. Use them "to add spice to your life." Remember if "one married man is dangerous a pot-pourri can be fun." On the other hand, Brown did not advise married women to have lovers. It might be very exciting, but "the dangers of being found out and the guilt if you aren't would spoil most of the fun... ." <sup>9</sup>

Brown devoted one chapter to work;

A job is one way of getting to them [Men]. It also provides the money with which to dress for them and dress up your apartment for them.... Most importantly, a job gives a single woman something to be.

A married woman already is something.

Brown had definite rules for getting to the top in business. You must work hard, and be willing to learn so that you became an asset to a company. You should also work for a company which was fair to women, and for a talented boss from whom you could learn. And you must not be afraid to switch jobs or even fields to advance yourself. And use your feminine charm to win the favor of your superior. Brown was not against having sex with the boss if it could advance a woman's career, but she believed it was wiser and safer to learn useful skills like the ability to read a statistical report. "After all, girls to go to bed with he can always find...but where is a boss going to get a girl who can read statistical reports?"<sup>10</sup>

In general Brown did not object to using sex for material gain, despite the following disclaimer:

I'm inclined to agree with my pureminded psychiatrist friend who says, "Sex is too precious and valuable a commodity to be sold or traded. It can only be successfully shared."

But on the same page, Brown stated that a married man should give a woman "fairly handsome presents...they can help ease the pain of inequity that exists in an affair between an unmarried woman and a married man." And if he isn't generous,



a girl should "explain the economic facts of life." But it was not only married men who were to be manipulated. "A single woman who doesn't deny her body regularly and often to get what she wants, i.e., married or more equitable treatment from her boy friend, is an idiot."<sup>11</sup>

In general single women should "expect and encourage gifts from men. They are part of the spoils of being single." And the more expensive the gift, the better:

...a desirable woman is usually more favorably disposed toward a man who is solvent and successful than someone without status. She prefers a tycoon to a truck driver no matter how sexy the latter looks peering down from the cab of his chrome chariot.

Brown boasted of her ability

to sink into the consciousness and subconsciousness of an advertising tycoon, a motivational research wizard, two generals, a brewer, a publisher, a millionaire real estate developer and two extremely attractive men who were younger than I.

A girl might even look for men at a Chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous if it were a wealthy chapter. If you could not find a tycoon, a man with a good expense account would do. "He will take you to the best restaurants, the best night clubs, order the best champagne."<sup>12</sup>

Brown never explained why she considered the "best" restaurants and night clubs so desirable. But whatever her reasons she equated consuming the "best" in sex, entertainment, food and clothes with happiness. And she always equated the best

with the most expensive. Brown admired wealth and the symbols of wealth. She was proud that her husband was a motion picture producer who had two Mercedes-Benzes, one hundred acres of virgin forest near San Francisco, a Mediterranean house overlooking the Pacific, and a full-time maid. Her ideal was to be treated like a princess, "pampered, petted and adored."<sup>13</sup>

Brown had definite advice for those unfortunate women forced by circumstances to deal with the run of the mill wage earner:

Never go Dutch treat with a date unless he can't even pay his rent, (and are you sure you want him?), or it's a project you promoted that he hates, like the ballet.

And when "you vacation with a man you aren't engaged to (I assume you're having an affair) he pays." Why else go? "If the whole excursion is going to cost as much as if he weren't along, why take him? You might meet someone who isn't so stingy."<sup>14</sup>

But while Brown never hesitated to advise accepting expensive gifts, trips and meals, she was a bit reluctant to admit that she approved of out and out prostitution, although she obviously did:

The situation of the kept girl is not under discussion - we are talking of "love affairs" - but let's not be stuffy. Who's to say how long any of us would decline an offer of emeralds, chinchillas, and a portfolio of A.T.&T.?...Any lesser offer...well, that would be like trying to buy a Picasso on postcard money.<sup>15</sup>

Thus it was simply a matter of getting a good price. Moreover, a woman had no obligation to be ethical, fair, considerate, or humane in dealing with men, or in competing with other women. For instance, it was perfectly acceptable to let a man think you were interested in sex even if you weren't. It gave a woman time to see how she felt about him. It also got her dates:

She [the single woman] can promise with a look, a touch, a letter or a kiss - and she doesn't have to deliver. She can be maddeningly hypocritical and, after arousing desire, insist that it be shut off by stating she wants to be chaste for the man she marries...A flirtatious married woman is expected to Go Through With Things.

It was perfectly correct to use jealousy as a weapon. Purposely provoke your lover. "A little healthy anxiety is good for him!" And if a man turned out to be an unsatisfying lover, or had a potency problem, get rid of him. He "is doing you out of" a good sex life. "Him you don't need." A wife might have a vested interest in getting him back to normal, but a single woman didn't. Brown could be harsh in describing and dismissing any human being who was of no use to her. She advised her readers not to bother with "weirdies, the creepies, the dullies, the snobs, the hopeless neurotics, and mamas' darlings." She referred to plumbers as Neanderthal types.<sup>16</sup>

And be competitive. Brown advised women traveling alone to sit next to a man who looked like a good prospect. If you

were early and the seats were empty, protect the open seat next to you, and wait for the right man to ask for it. Otherwise don't give the seat up, "...be ruthless. Pile your hat-box, coat and newspaper in the seat next to you and go to sleep immediately. Remove everything and wake up smiling when a man appears." If the man turns out to be a bore tell him you have an infectious disease. He may move. Brown also recommended lying to get a decorator's license so you could buy merchandise cheaply. And never feel guilty about being a guest at other people's parties without ever reciprocating. They need single girls.<sup>17</sup>

But of course be charming and considerate to anyone who might possibly be helpful to you, even if you didn't like them. "Light up when a guy calls." Act like you're fascinated. "A lively interest in people and things (even if you aren't that interested) is why bosses trust...[and] why men talk to you at parties... ." <sup>18</sup>

Brown gave numerous tips on how to develop traits and habits which would help a woman succeed with both men and their careers. It was very important to look your best. Eat a balanced diet which contained sufficient minerals, vitamins and proteins. And don't over-eat. Keep your weight at an attractive figure. She gave twelve pages of recipes. Also exercise regularly; people "with beautiful bodies usually have more fun in bed because they're proud of themselves and

the way they look in the buff." But it was also important to dress stylishly. So read the fashion magazines like Vogue, Harper's Bazaar and Glamour. And pay proper attention to the "sexy details" like sheer stockings, perfume, hair styling and make up. Buy wigs; they're glamorous. And get rid of any excessive hair on your legs and arms. Also use contact lenses. Brown was the first best-selling guide to advise plastic surgery. She had had her nose re-done. You might even work at changing the timbre of your voice.<sup>19</sup>

Avoid room-mates. Search for a cheap apartment instead. If you can afford it, use a professional decorator. It adds chic to your surroundings. But don't be foolish with money. Don't borrow from a bank or a loan company. The interest was too high. Also avoid instalment buying for the same reason. And if you are on a very limited budget, spend as little as you can for food, except when you are cooking for a "good prospect." It helps to get as many dinner dates as you can; so what if you are bored for an hour with a "drag"; remember how much money you're saving.<sup>20</sup>

Sex and the Single Girl was the number nine best-selling book of 1962, and eventually sold over 1,388,320 copies in all editions. Brown's book was unique in at least five ways. It was the first post-war best-seller to advocate sex outside of marriage. Marjorie Hillis had cautiously, almost, timidly, sanctioned certain "illegitimate" sexual unions in her 1936

best-seller. But there was nothing timid about Brown's advocacy.

Bill Manville, in the New York Herald Tribune, noted that

what is remarkable about this book is that it has been written for a mass audience....She [Brown] has measured our age, and has decided that even with the enormous cultural lag between writers and readers, this book will not cause her to be picketed by the League of Women Voters, and other lobbies with vested interest in Home and Hearth.<sup>21</sup>

Besides offering a unique view of sex, Brown was also the first writer in the post-war era to truly ignore religion. Schindler at least took the trouble to explain his lack of interest in religion; and he did sanction the use of prayer if it helped. But Brown merely stated that she was aware that her attitude toward adultery and fornication was "against the precepts of all conventional religions," and let it go at that. She never bothered to explain whether or not she believed in a god or religion.<sup>22</sup>

Brown was unique in yet another way. She openly accepted the materialism and the "consumer culture" of America. Peale and Boone had tempered their acceptance with a plea for Christian charity. Liebman, Overstreet, Schindler, Sheen, Graham and Blanton had all rejected the most blatant aspects of America's materialism and competitiveness. But Brown embraced them. She was an open hedonist. She admired wealth and was all for expensive cars, restaurants, vacations and clothes. She also recommended exploiting people to get them. It is revealing to compare Brown with Hillis. Both wrote for

single women, and both saw life primarily in terms of consuming material goods. Neither was concerned with heaven, brotherhood or disinterestedness. But Brown, writing in an affluent era and after Kinsey, aspired to much richer rewards, both materially and sexually.

Brown also recommended much more ruthless tactics. Hillis had been part of a more genteel tradition. In keeping with her winner-take-all attitude Brown was satisfied with capitalism. She was aware that America was in a "boom economy," and this seemed sufficient justification of capitalism. She simply ignored the problems of the poor and America's racial tension. Her open competitiveness and her disdain for "unsuccessful" people recalled Walter Pitkin. As with Pitkin, Brown's Social Darwinism did not disturb her reviewers. While one critic, Irene Stokvis in Library Journal, took offense at Brown's sexual mores, no critic was disturbed by her fierce competitiveness, or her lack of charity or regard for the unusable "creeps" of the world. In fact Jeannette Bruce in the San Francisco Chronicle thought Sex and the Single Girl a "sensible book," presenting such an appetizing view of the opportunities open to single girls that the divorce rate would go up if married women took to reading the book.<sup>23</sup>

Was Brown serious about the ideas she presented? Irene Stokvis in the Library Journal warned her readers that they had to "sift the worth from the mirth." At times, Brown did read

as if she were writing tongue in cheek. But this was due more to her strained attempts to achieve humor than to any lack of conviction. Basically Brown seemed quite earnest in preaching her version of the Gospel of Success.<sup>24</sup>

Brown was unique in yet a fifth way. She introduced language which had never previously appeared in a best-selling guide. She repeated a story told by a cosmetic manufacturer addressing a luncheon. According to the manufacturer a woman putting on her make-up to go out for the evening was thinking of just one thing: "Tonight, boy, I'm going to get laid!"<sup>25</sup>

Brown based her view of life on her own and her friends' experience. "They were all working girls [almost exclusively in offices]. They all live in a big city. They are above average in brain power." Brown offered no other justification for her position. Her own and her friends' experiences were sufficient. She ignored philosophical and psychological arguments. Except for Kinsey, she cited no scientific studies.<sup>26</sup>

Partly because of the success of Sex and the Single Girl Brown became the editor of Cosmopolitan magazine in March 1965. Under her guidance the magazine popularized her view of sex and materialism. Then in 1970 Brown published Sex and the New Single Girl. Her point of view had not changed. In fact, the new book was basically the 1962 book with a few minor additions and a new introduction. In the introduction, Brown described how women had changed in the intervening eight years. It was



now accepted that a single girl had a sex life. "Indeed people expect her to...every single girl is now supposed to be a near nymphomaniac." And because of the public's new tolerance, the single woman was more open about her sex life, even "to those improbable people, her parents." Moreover, the single girl was

more demanding of him [the man or men in her life]. A girl has considerably more to say about when, where, how often, and whether sex will occur...She's also rating men sexually the way they used to rate her ("tense," "needs to work on the basics," "rather gifted with breasts," "selfish," "can only manage once," etc., etc.). The best men now enjoy having an equal partner and are as happy to be rated as a girl is because they know they're good...

The pill had also helped single girls feel more secure about sex. But not all pills were beneficial. Brown was very much against the increased use of drugs for non-medical purposes. This was one aspect of life which had not improved in the intervening eight years. But Brown was glad the abortion laws had been liberalized in New York State. And she favored the Women's Liberation Movement "in principle," although she was against "the hostile-to-men aspects of it." She never explained what these "aspects" were. She also found that single women worried less about economizing because America was experiencing such tremendous prosperity. This was written before the Nixon recession began. Looking back, Brown was pleased that "some people think Sex and the Single Girl helped change our mores and bring about the sexual

freedom that exists for young women today." But she doubted that her book had been quite that significant; instead, she suspected that she had just encouraged a trend which had already begun.<sup>27</sup>

The next best-selling author agreed that there was indeed a trend developing in America which would encourage promiscuity and glamorous living, but he was not as optimistic about the development as Brown. In fact, he saw it as a symptom of decay and capitalist exploitation.

#### NOTES

1. Helen Gurley Brown, Sex and the Single Girl (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1963), pp. 2-3, 24, 232-233; The original hardcover edition was published by Bernard Geis Associates, New York, in 1962.
2. Ibid., p. 3.
3. Ibid., pp. 206-207.
4. Ibid., pp. 4-5, 214-215.
5. Ibid., pp. 59-60.
6. Ibid., pp. 26, 58-59, 65, 215.
7. Ibid., pp. 64, 215, 233.
8. Ibid., pp. 38, 42-44, 55-56, 74-75, 209.
9. Ibid., pp. 18-23, 207, 217-219.
10. Ibid., pp. 80, 84-93.
11. Ibid., pp. 18-23, 63, 220.
12. Ibid., pp. 9-10, 45, 104, 208.
13. Ibid., pp. 1, 20-21, 27.
14. Ibid., p. 101.
15. Ibid., p. 219.
16. Ibid., pp. 5, 14, 28, 37, 78-79, 214-215.
17. Ibid., pp. 50, 120, 126.
18. Ibid., p. 72.
19. Ibid., pp. 36, 68-69, 72, 135, 141-142, 153-154, 165, 169, 176, 189-190, 193-194, 203-204, 241.
20. Ibid., pp. 7, 37, 98-101, 110-113, 116.
21. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers 1895-1965 (New York and London: Bowker Company, 1967) pp. 23, 218; Bill Manville, Review of Sex and the Single Girl, New York Herald Tribune, June 17, 1962, p. 6.

22. Brown, p. 223.
23. Jeannette Bruce, Review of Sex and the Single Girl, San Francisco Chronicle, May 24, 1963, p. 39.
24. Irene Stokvis, Review of Sex and the Single Girl, Library Journal, June 1, 1962, p. 2146.
25. Brown, p. 209.
26. Ibid., p. 62.
27. Helen Gurley Brown, Sex and the New Single Girl (New York: Bernard Geis Associates, 1970), pp. 3-7.

## Chapter 23

Erich Fromm

Man was a unique animal. Erich Fromm defined him as "life being aware of itself." But this awareness was a source of great suffering. Man knew he would die. His time was short. And even as he lived, he was a separate entity, painfully aware of being cut off from other human beings. This isolation frequently became "an unbearable prison." It was the source of all man's anxiety, shame and guilt. Fromm wrote The Art of Loving (1956) to show men how to overcome their isolation, and thus end their emotional suffering. The key to happiness was to develop a "productive orientation," which meant being actively and creatively related to oneself, to mankind, and to nature.<sup>1</sup>

In a sense Fromm, a noted psychoanalyst and a socialist, wrote the most demanding and idealistic book among the best-selling guides. A "productive orientation" was not easy to acquire. One had to develop the potential of his total personality, which meant overcoming the infantile tendencies which encouraged dependence, narcissistic self-absorption, illusions of omnipotence, the wish to exploit others and the desire to hoard. Thus a human being had to stop looking to outsiders for the unconditional acceptance he expected and probably received as an infant from his mother. And he must not allow outsiders to set his moral and ethical standards as his

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father once had. Instead, he must synthesize the qualities of the mother and the father, and, in a sense, become his own parent. This meant blending the male characteristics of "penetration, guidance, activity, discipline, and adventurousness" with the female characteristics of "productive receptiveness, protection, realism, endurance" and motherliness to become a full human being. If a person could not blend the male and female traits and thus become his own parent, he was neurotic. But, unlike a neurotic, a mature human being was realistic and objective. He was not fixated on his family, clan or nation. He had learned to respect and understand all human beings whether or not they were his friends or fellow countrymen.<sup>2</sup>

A mature human being also had faith in his own powers to attain his goals. It took faith to move ahead, to view setbacks, sorrow and disappointments as challenges to be overcome, and not as unjust punishments which should never have been inflicted on us in the first place. But faith must not be irrational or infantile. It must not be a "belief [In a person or an idea] which is based on one's submission to irrational authority." A rational, mature faith was "rooted in one's own experience of thought or feeling."<sup>3</sup>

To develop one's total personality required effort, intuition and dedication. "One's whole life must be devoted to this aim." But the task was worth the effort. For a mature person was not afraid of giving himself and of being a loving person.

And this trait was immensely important for a human being who could not love was isolated, and thus anxious, guilty and ashamed.<sup>4</sup>

Fromm was careful to clarify his definition of love:

love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one "object" of love. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment or an enlarged egotism.

Furthermore

if I truly love one person I love all persons, I love the world, I love life. If I can say to somebody else, "I love you," I must be able to say "I love in you everybody, I love through you the world, I love in you also myself."

"In essence, all human beings are identical. We are all part of One: we are One." This means that every human being must care for the helpless, the poor, and all strangers. Only a person without the bare necessities of life was incapable of enjoying the act of giving material things. A mature person experienced a feeling of strength when he gave. Giving heightened his "vitality and potency." It filled him with joy and became an expression of his aliveness.<sup>5</sup>

Fromm explained that Freud had been wrong about love. Freud saw men as naturally competitive, full of hostility, and driven by limitless desire for the sexual conquest of all women. Only society in Freud's view prevented men from acting on

their desires. But according to Fromm, "Freud's concept of love is a description of the experience of the patriarchal male in terms of nineteenth-century capitalism... ." Freud misunderstood the roots of love. He believed that love was a sublimation of man's sexual desire. Freud considered love itself an irrational phenomenon, "a transference from love objects of childhood." Freud also misunderstood the concept of Oneness. He saw the feeling of fusion, of oneness, the "oceanic feeling," which was the root of the most intense sense of union with another person or with one's fellow men "as a pathological phenomenon, as a regression to a state of an early 'limitless narcissism.'" Unlike Liebman and Blanton, Fromm informed the reader how and why he disagreed with Freud. He concluded that Marx was closer to the truth about man than Freud; for Marx saw the key to understanding human beings in man's total life process, and not one or two isolated instincts.<sup>6</sup>

But Fromm conceded that, unfortunately, most people never matured past the stage of human development Freud mistakenly labeled love. Thus it was true that most human beings did transfer to a loved person feelings, expectations and fears they once felt toward their parents. Still Freud's basic theory was distorted. Fromm claimed Freud reversed the order of priorities. Sexual desire was only one manifestation of a human being's need for love and union. Brotherly love was



"the most fundamental kind of love, which underlies all types of love." It was what the Bible meant when it said love your neighbor as yourself. Other types of love - paternal and erotic - were related to brotherly love and valid, but they were impossible to achieve unless built on a foundation of brotherly love. With motherly love, a woman transcended herself in her child. Her love for her child gave her life meaning and significance. The male cannot transcend his life by giving birth, but he can satisfy his need for transcendence by creating man-made things and ideas. Erotic love fulfilled man's need for complete fusion, for a direct union with another person. It was thus exclusive and not universal.<sup>7</sup>

But erotic love was deceptive and dangerous. Real erotic love was easily confused with "falling in love" which was a sudden collapse of the barriers which existed between people. But "falling in love" did not give a person a true sense of union. Thus he kept searching for new people and new loves, hoping eventually to feel a true sense of union. (But not all promiscuous people were looking for union. Some were seeking substitute parents.) Our modern civilization encouraged people to believe that the "trick" was to find the right person. "Romantic love" had become more and more the universally accepted standard in the Western world. But without a foundation of brotherly love, the romantic search was doomed to failure. Success came only when people learned to blend

erotic and brotherly love. Then they had a full-blown sexual love which would nourish, and sustain a couple. When mature love exists "between man and woman, each of them is reborn." But if brotherly love was lacking, dissatisfaction and even hatred developed between partners. Thus

there is only one proof for the presence of love: the depths of the relationship and the aliveness and strength in each person concerned: this is the fruit by which love is recognized.

At present few heterosexuals experienced true erotic love; and by definition, no homosexuals. Homosexuality was a failure to be reborn, to re-establish the male-female polarity. It led to the "pain of never-resolved separateness."<sup>8</sup>

Since brotherly love underlies erotic love, and since all human beings are one, it would seem that it should make no difference which member of the opposite sex we loved. "Love should be essentially an act of will, of decision to commit my life completely to that of one other person." This concept was the ideal of those who believed that marriage was insoluble, and also of those who believed in arranged marriages.

But

this view seems to neglect the paradoxical character of human nature and of erotic love. We are all One - yet everyone of us is a unique, unduplicated entity...Inasmuch as we are all one, we can love everybody in the same way in the sense of brotherly love. But inasmuch as we are all different, erotic love requires certain specific, highly individual elements which exist between some people but not between all.

Both views then, that of erotic love as completely individual attraction, unique between two specific persons, as well as the other view, that erotic love is nothing but an act of will, are true - or, as it may be put more aptly, the truth is neither this nor that. Hence the idea of a relationship which can be easily dissolved if one is not successful with it is as erroneous as the idea that under no circumstances must the relationship be dissolved.<sup>9</sup>

This material was quoted at length for two reasons. One, it helps to clarify Fromm's thesis; and, two, it indicates how his acceptance of paradoxical solutions caused certain logical and stylistic difficulties for his readers. It was not always easy to pin-point exactly what Fromm meant. The confusion was further compounded by the fact that he did not explain the philosophical or empirical foundations of his system. He never told the reader if he thought existence had any ultimate purpose, or whether or not he based his conclusions on empirical evidence. Just how had he concluded that human beings could not lead satisfying lives unless they had a "productive orientation" and practiced brotherly love? Had he made a pragmatic choice like Schindler? Had he concluded from his clinical experience that these traits were the keys to happiness? Or had he merely deduced their importance? That the point was never clarified was also in keeping with the tradition of best-selling guides.

Actually Fromm gave no proof that human beings could not find happiness or satisfaction outside his approach. For instance,

he never considered Lippmann's solution of disinterestedness. Why couldn't a man find happiness by only wanting what he could have? The concept certainly gave human beings a great deal more flexibility. A strict Freudian would have dismissed disinterestedness by pointing to the inevitable clash which developed between man's instincts, his superego and the outside world; Sheen and Graham would have spoken of Original Sin, and the need to attain heaven; Brown would have simply ignored Lippmann's position. She saw happiness in terms of consumption and sensual pleasure, and assumed that it was possible for a modern woman to get most of what she wanted. Fromm never tells us enough to predict his answer.

Fromm also ignored other difficulties. For instance, suppose a man knew he had terminal cancer. Why should he feel brotherly love for his fellow man? What did he gain? Or did he lack options? Were brotherly love and a "productive orientation" instinctual needs like man's need for food and water? Fromm never adequately clarified his position. Nor did he adequately explain why so many men reject brotherly love if it was so vital to their happiness. Smiley Blanton, a Freudian, who also considered love essential, solved this seeming paradox by admitting that man, besides needing love, also had dark, aggressive instincts which constantly battled Eros. But Fromm made no such admission. Reading Fromm was like listening to a very bright, interesting lecturer ramble along without ever

quite tying all his ideas into a logical pattern. This lack of tight organization was a fairly consistent failing of best-selling guides to happiness.

Having established the importance of a "productive orientation" and brotherly love, Fromm explained how a person went about developing these traits. It was not easy. And it did not happen automatically. To live productively was an art, and, like all art, demanding. A wise man accepted the fact that "one's whole life must be devoted to this aim." We must resolve to strip away everything which prevents us from being actively and creatively related to our fellow human beings, nature and to ourselves. We must learn to recognize the mood we are entering at any given moment; we must become conscious of the onset of boredom, fear, anger, depression and anxiety. Then we must immediately ask why. Don't rationalize. Learn what actually triggered the undesirable mood. Schindler had emphasized a similar technique, but with a very different philosophical bias.<sup>10</sup>

To fulfill their potential humans also needed discipline, concentration and patience. These skills could be developed with practice. It helped to get up at a set hour, to devote a regular amount of time to meditation, reading, listening to music and walking. Escapist activities should be kept to a minimum; conscientiously limit the time spent with mystery stories and movies. Avoid trivial conversations, and people

who are destructive or depressing. Also proper self-education to what you are doing at the moment. Don't let your mind wander. And don't take on too many activities at one time. Also avoid over eating or excessive drinking.

Living in a capitalistic society, production of goods and obstacles to achieving a "productive civilization" is the main criticism of capitalism was the most common and detailed to appear in a best-seller. Capitalism was dominated by large corporations and large unions, both run by representatives; bureaucracies. To function, the system needed people who were obedient, outer directed, and willing to obey passively the directives of the bureaucracy. It also needed consumers who were malleable and easily influenced. Under capitalism, personality and culture had both become "routinized and prefabricated." Equality had come to mean "the equality of abasement." Men who had lost their individuality. In the western democracies most people

are not even aware of their need to conform. They live under the illusion that they follow their own ideas and inclinations... The consensus of all serves as a proof for the correctness of "their" ideas.

But they are wrong. Under capitalism, man became just another commodity, a thing to be dispensed with or fired if the company had no further use for him. Moreover, under capitalism, most jobs were unsatisfactory because they did not produce

anything really useful. And even in those isolated instances when something useful was produced, most workers were bored because they had nothing to say about the actual planning and directing of the work. Under capitalism, man was "alienated from himself and from his fellow men." Thus he was alone, anxious, insecure and guilty.<sup>12</sup>

Even the relationships of men and women were guided by commercial standards. There was little or no brotherly love between them. In a culture built on buying and selling, men and women viewed each other as "prizes." Each tried to get a "nice package of qualities which are popular and sought after on the personality market." "Two persons thus fall in love when they feel they have found the best object available on the market, considering the limitations of their own exchange values." People saw love in terms of "being loved," and tried to attract love by being successful, attractive, interesting, modest and helpful. This foolish misconception provided a market for exploiters like Dale Carnegie who taught the dupes of capitalism how "to win friends and influence people."<sup>13</sup>

Marriage too was just another business deal. At best, the partners treated each other with courtesy and tried to make each other feel better. They strove for the proper "team spirit" and mutual tolerance. If the married couple were ignorant of sexual techniques it was recommended that they read

a modern sex manual, as if sex was just another machine which could always be repaired if one just had clear, concise instructions. Unfortunately this limited view of love was even accepted by most psychoanalysts. But then most analysts were conformists and never really questioned the values of contemporary society. Even a therapist as insightful as Harry Stack Sullivan mistakenly described as true love, this egotism of two, who stood against a hostile world, corroborating and validating each other. But this approach was hopeless; for

love as mutual sexual satisfaction, and love as "team-work" and as a haven from aloneness, are the two "normal" forms of the disintegration of love in modern Western society, the socially patterned pathology of love.

But real sexual satisfaction evaded egotistical people, while a "giving," "productively oriented" person always enjoyed sex.<sup>14</sup>

Capitalism tried to keep people unaware of their aloneness; it dulled man's consciousness with routine work, amusements, and passive consumption of material goods, food, sights, drink, cigarettes, people, lectures, books and movies. Many modern men were

actually close to the picture Huxley describes in his Brave New World; well fed, well clad, satisfied sexually, yet without self, without any except the most superficial contact with his fellow men...

But this approach would not work; it did not lead to a "productive orientation" and brotherly love. "The incidence



of alcoholism, drug addiction, compulsive sexualism, and suicide in contemporary Western society are symptoms of this relative failure of herd conformity."<sup>15</sup>

Traditional religion, for the most part, cooperated with the deceptions of capitalism. Fromm also denied that the United States had witnessed a religious renaissance in the 1950's.

"Nothing could be further from the truth." America was actually involved in "a regression to an idolatric concept of God... ."

People were reacting childishly. They wanted a father or mother figure to guide them. Moreover, their daily lives had little if anything to do with any kind of religion, mature or immature.

For, despite claims to the contrary, Americans were devoted to material comforts, and success in the personality market.

They only used a belief in God as a device to improve their

chances in the competitive struggle. In contemporary America,

"religion allies itself with auto-suggestion and psychotherapy to help man in his business activities." Fromm named Norman

Vincent Peale's The Power of Positive Thinking as a blatant

example of how religious leaders deceived modern man by in-

sisting that it was possible to "make God your partner" in the

race for success. God had "been transformed into a remote

General Director of Universe, Inc."<sup>16</sup>

If it was to help human beings, religion must outgrow man's infantile desire for a protective mother and father.

In a mature religion "God ceases to be an outside power...man

has incorporated the principles of love and justice into himself, where he has become one with God, and eventually... he speaks of God only in a poetic, symbolic sense." Man then ceases to pray for anything. Nor does he expect God to help him. In fact, by then, man was aware that "he knows nothing about God." In mature religion

God...becomes a symbol in which man, at an earlier stage of his evolution, has expressed the totality of that which man is striving for, the realm of the spiritual world, of love, truth and justice. He has faith in the principles which "God" represents: he thinks truth, lives love and justice, and considers all his life only valuable inasmuch as it gives him the chance to arrive at an even fuller unfolding of his human powers...eventually, he does not speak about God.

A maturely religious person was not satisfied with an ethic which stressed mere fairness and the Golden Rule. He treated his fellow man as his brother. Unfortunately most people were still trapped in the "infantile stage" of religion.<sup>17</sup>

Fromm himself did not believe in a theistic concept of any sort. To him, "the concept of God is only a historically conditioned one, in which man has expressed...his longing for truth and for unity at a given historical period." But Fromm had no quarrel with mature religion for it too aimed at a truly "loving" society. It was only immature religion he attacked.<sup>18</sup>

Fromm realized that, when brotherhood was suggested as

a way of life, the average person complained that he would starve if he practiced brotherly love in this greedy society. Fromm admitted that difficulties existed. But he claimed that a person could live a good life and practice love even in a capitalistic society if he chose his job carefully. For example, physicians and teachers could be non-conformist; they did not have to produce junk or use deceptive sales tactics. But Fromm was aware that non-conformity was a limited tactic. Ultimately man must change society. Capitalism was just not conducive to love and happiness.<sup>19</sup>

But Fromm never said how a truly productive and loving society could be built. He merely referred the reader to another of his books, The Sane Society where he gave his prescription. The first condition for creating a good society was "the abolishment of the war threat hanging over all of us." It paralyzed faith and hope. Peace required a world government, complete disarmament, and a truly international economy which functioned without exploitation of the weak nations. Domestically "we must retain the industrial method," but the plant must be decentralized as much as possible; and the workers must truly manage the enterprise they work for. "In the political sphere, return to the town meeting" was a must. "Changes in ownership must be made to the extent to which they are necessary to create a community of work, and to prevent the profit motive from directing production into socially harmful

directions." Income did not have to be equalized, but it should be made more equitable. And all the economic, political and cultural changes must take place simultaneously if they were to be effective. But "no change must be brought about by force . . . ." This was one point all the best-selling critics of capitalism agreed on.<sup>20</sup>

Fromm was content to blame man's lack of brotherly love on capitalism, but he never explained why man created and accepted capitalism if he needed love and a "productive orientation" so desperately. And, even if the reader accepted Fromm's standards, there were problems involved in the concept of brotherhood which he never fully probed. Just what obligations did brotherly love and a "productive orientation" impose on human beings, especially those still living in a capitalist society? Suppose a man had only a few dollars and another man was hungry? Should he give him the money? Even if the man was an alcoholic or a drug addict, or a criminal? Suppose his act endangered the health of his own children? And was he obligated to risk his life in a fire to save a stranger? A Christian might say that it was ultimately wise to sacrifice your life since this world was only a test for heaven. (Although if he did, it's unlikely that he would ever have a best-selling guide.) But how did Fromm feel about a choice like this? And were individuals and nations required to live on a subsistence level to help the poor of India, South America or the United States?

And was a therapist required to work for subsistence wages if he believed in brotherhood? Just what concrete obligations did brotherhood entail? What sacrifices was a man expected to make?

Like the other non-religious best-selling guides, Fromm never discussed the ethics or wisdom of suicide, although he gave no reason for not terminating life voluntarily. He just assumed that life was worth living or enduring, even in an alienated, prefabricated, exploitative capitalistic society.

Walker Percy, in America, said Fromm questioned "the fundamental concepts of psychiatry." Most conventional therapists considered a man healthy if he had established a favorable balance between pleasure and pain. But Fromm set up different criteria. A man did not have to feel pain to be sick. He had only to be alienated from his true nature. Percy labeled Fromm's concept "normative humanism." In Percy's opinion Fromm had asked the right question. He wanted to know what was the proper life for a human being. Fromm denied that man could adapt to any set of circumstances. Man had a human nature, and a "destiny" he could betray. But while agreeing with Fromm that Western man was sick, Percy thought there was "something curiously vague about Fromm's normative goal." Fromm went astray because he insisted on giving his definition of alienation "a Marxist reading." Western man was troubled, true, but "tinkering with economics will not cure the disease." In fact, "however ser-

ious the situation of the mass man of the West, it seems hopeful in comparison with that of the Soviet consumer." Fromm's Freudian-Marxist solution was inadequate. Men needed God. (Rabbi Jakob J. Petuchowski, writing in Commentary, agreed.) But if Percy concluded that Fromm's analysis was distorted because of his radical orientation, Lawrence Lipton in The Erotic Revolution, came to just the opposite conclusion. Lipton thought that Fromm lacked a real radical spirit, which explained his popularity with liberal religious people, especially liberal Jews, despite the fact that Fromm was an agnostic. For one thing, Fromm stated that he had no argument with non-authoritarian religion. He was not interested in the "total eclipse of the Judeo-Christian moral system." Moreover, a religious person who wanted to make use of certain aspects of modern depth psychology, could cite Fromm as a psychoanalyst who refuted Freud's view of religion and sex. "The key word in Fromm's thinking about religion and sex is love." He was against promiscuity and casual affairs. His approach would "limit sexual experience and make experiments in new sex ways...more difficult and confusing." Fromm encouraged people to have sex only with a loved one. This approach supported conventional morality, and marriage, and, in Lipton's opinion, unhappiness.<sup>21</sup>

Whether one considered Fromm a radical or a conservative he was certainly an intellectual which made him a rarity among best-selling authors. Fromm presumed that his readers were

willig to grapple with some quite difficult psychological and philosophical concepts. In the past, only Lippmann, Overstreet and Blanton made comparable demands. The next best-selling author also assumed a fairly sophisticated readership; and again like Fromm, she emphasized the destructive elements in the American culture; but she added one new twist. She claimed that the psychic damage inflicted by our culture was unequally distributed; America had fashioned a unique conspiracy especially designed to exploit one particular segment of society--women.

## NOTES

1. Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving (New York, Toronto and London: Bantam Books, 1963), pp. 6-8; The original hardcover edition was published by Harper and Row, New York, in 1956; The hardcover edition received only a few reviews, and its sales were not impressive until it appeared as a paperback. Then it had a phenomenal success, becoming the second best-selling paperback in 1962, the fourth in 1963 and the second again in 1964, eventually selling over 1,354,347 copies in all editions.
2. Ibid., pp. 30-38.
3. Ibid., pp. 102-103, 107.
4. Ibid., pp. 21-22, 101-102.
5. Ibid., pp. 19-20, 22, 38-40, 47, 76.
6. Ibid., pp. 75-79.
7. Ibid., pp. 30, 39, 43, 79.
8. Ibid., pp. 3, 27-27, 43, 45-46, 80-81.
9. Ibid., pp. 47-48.
10. Ibid., pp. 97, 101.
11. Ibid., pp. 4-5, 93-97.
12. Ibid., pp. 11-12, 14, 71-72.
13. Ibid., pp. 1, 88-89.
14. Ibid., pp. 14, 31, 74-75, 78-79.
15. Ibid., pp. 8-10, 13, 72-73.
16. Ibid., pp. 87-89.
17. Ibid., pp. 59-60, 68-69, 109.
18. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
19. Ibid., pp. 105, 110-111.
20. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1969), pp. 313-314; The original hardcover edition was published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York in 1955.



21. Walker Percy, "The Coming Crisis in Psychiatry," a two part article, America, Jan. 5, 1957 p. 391, and Jan. 12, 1957 p. 415; Jakob J. Petuchowski, "Erich Fromm's Midrash on Love," Commentary, Dec. 1956, p. 543; Lawrence Lipton, The Erotic Revolution (Los Angeles, California: Sherbourne Press, 1965), p. 157.
22. Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers 1895-1965 (New York and London: Bowker Company, 1967), p. 24; Anon., "1962 Paperback Best Sellers," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 21, 1963, p. 50; Anon., "1963 Paperback Best Sellers," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 20, 1964, p. 70; Anon., "1964 Paperback Best Sellers," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 18, 1965, p. 72.

## Chapter 24

## Betty Friedan

In the mid-nineteen fifties Betty Friedan, a reporter, graduate of Smith College and married mother of three children, gradually came to believe that something was "very wrong with the way American women were trying to live their lives." She then began to investigate the problem systematically. She interviewed women, read reports, and consulted experts. Her research culminated in The Feminine Mystique (1963) which became the number one non-fiction paperback best-seller in 1964.<sup>1</sup>

Friedan came to the conclusion that women were not happy just being wives and mothers. Housewives of all educational levels suffered the same feeling of desperation. They complained of feeling incomplete and empty. They tended to be dependent and to lack confidence. And yet women clung stubbornly to the narrow world of the home, ignoring the world outside. New developments in science, education and business bored them; so did Castro's revolution in Cuba, the black movement in the South, and the Cold War.<sup>2</sup>

Friedan warned that woman's discontent would eventually effect the whole culture, disrupting the lives of the men and boys who came into contact with these unhappy women. Already the American culture had been damaged as the result of breeding children who were infected with their mother's "apathetic, dependent, infantile" purposelessness. The decay manifested it-

self in an increase in mental breakdowns, psychosomatic illnesses, alcoholism, suicide, the growing obsession with sex, crime, vandalism, the growth of school drop outs, and the "dehumanizing aspects of modern mass culture." Friedan predicted it would get worse unless something were done to help women.<sup>3</sup>

Helen Gurley Brown had blamed outmoded customs and traditions for depriving single women of deserved happiness. But Friedan was the first best-seller to explain unhappiness in terms of a plot aimed at all women. Women had been emotionally crippled because they believed a deceitful myth which Friedan labeled the feminine mystique. The mystique insisted that a woman's destiny could only be fulfilled as a wife and mother. Business, the mass media, the social sciences and even higher education combined to discourage women from looking outside the home for a career. They defined happiness as having five children and living in the suburbs. The vital question, "who am I?" was to be answered simply, "Tom's wife...Mary's mother." But the mystique was a deception. No matter how hard she tried the American woman could not find contentment in the role assigned her:

She may spend years on the analyst's couch, working out her "adjustment to the feminine role," her blocks to "fulfillment as a wife and mother." And still the voice inside her may say, "that's not it."<sup>4</sup>

And the voice was right:

Scientists of human behavior have become increasingly interested in the basic human need to grow, man's will to be all that is in him to be. Thinkers in many fields - from Bergson to Kurt Goldstein, Heinz Hartmann, Allport, Rogers, Jung, Adler, Rank, Horney, Maslow, Bettelheim, Riesman, Tillich and the existentialists - all postulate some positive growth tendency within the organism, which, from within, drives it to fuller development, to self-realization.... Moreover, many of these thinkers have advanced a new concept of the psychologically healthy man.... Normality is considered to be the "highest excellence of which we are capable." The premise is that man is happy, self-accepting, healthy, without guilt, only when he is fulfilling himself and becoming what he can be.

It is not enough for an individual to be loved and accepted by others, to be "adjusted" to his culture.

There was a hierarchy of needs in man ranging from the needs we share with animals to the needs which are unique with man. "These later needs, the needs for knowledge, for self-realization are as instinctive in a human sense, as the needs shared with other animals of food, sex, survival." Friedan suspected that the most fundamental human drive was the need to grow and realize one's full potential. She actually considered this drive more pressing than the need for pleasure or the satisfaction of biological needs. Friedan's "need to grow and be fulfilled" was vaguely reminiscent of Fromm's "productive orientation." Friedan saw work as the key to happiness. Work was important "not merely as the means of biological survival, but as the giver of self, and the transcender of self, as the creator of human identity and human evolution."<sup>5</sup>

But housework "can hardly use the abilities of a woman of average or normal human intelligence, much less the fifty percent of the female population whose intelligence, in childhood, was above average." To remain a housewife was self-destructive:

A woman today who has no goal, no purpose, no ambition patterning her days into the future, making her stretch and grow beyond that small score of years in which her body can fill its biological function, is committing a kind of suicide.

She will be plagued with anxiety and terror if she does not learn to grow. But "our culture does not permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfill their potentialities as human beings, a need which is not solely defined by their sexual role." Thus millions of women have been buried in "their comfortable concentration camps." They "have forfeited their own being." She quoted Rollo May, the existential psychologist, to the effect that this surrender will generate "a submerged despair, a resentment which will later burst out in self-destructiveness... ." Friedan compared the segregation and stunting of American women to the plight of American blacks.<sup>6</sup>

But a woman cannot save herself by embracing any available job. It must be creative work, equal to her capacity, requiring serious education and training, and providing a lifetime of interest. Thus it would not do to become a salesgirl. Women

must enter the arts, sciences, politics or a profession. Such work will satisfy a woman emotionally, and blend nicely with marriage and children because the woman can work part time, or keep up with her studies at home when her children are young.<sup>7</sup>

The Times Literary Supplement introduced a problem Friedan ignored. It wondered if there was really enough suitable part-time employment available for career women who were raising young children. One might extend the query and ask if there was enough creative work within the present system for even full-time workers if all the potentially qualified men and women suddenly became trained. At one point, Friedan verged on discussing the problem. She noted that both Erik Erikson and David Riesman believed that many American men never solved their "identity crisis" because a solution required creative work, while many men were merely involved in busy-work, punching a time clock, working by formula, or "finding a secure spot as an organization man." But Friedan never asked the next logical question. If the non-creative work was eliminated how many meaningful jobs would actually remain? And would future automation make matters worse, leaving even more men and women out in the cold?<sup>8</sup>

In any case, Friedan was convinced that women needed careers; but to combine marriage, motherhood and a lifetime

career required that the average woman embrace a new life plan. The first step was to see housework for what it was, not a career, but a necessary task that must be done as quickly as possible. The second step was to understand the limitations of marriage; marriage can enrich a woman's life, but, by itself, it cannot lead to self-realization. At first most husbands will oppose the woman's new life style; but most men eventually accept the change, especially when they understand how it will benefit them. They quickly learn to appreciate an expanded family income, the improved relations with the children and a wife with a saner attitude toward sex. Friedan cited Erich Fromm to the effect that only a truly productive woman enjoyed sex to its fullest. She also cited the Kinsey Report which indicated that women educated beyond college for professional careers showed a far greater capacity for complete sexual enjoyment than less educated women. And contrary to the feminine mystique better educated women also had lower divorce rates. To illustrate that children also benefited, Friedan cited Dr. Benjamin Spock, the famous child expert, who

confessed, a bit uneasily, that Russian children, whose mothers usually have some purpose in their lives besides motherhood--they work in medicine, science, education, industry, government, art - seemed somehow more stable, adjusted, mature, than American children, whose full-time mothers do nothing but worry about them.<sup>9</sup>

But, if the consequences of the feminine mystique were

so disastrous, why had American women allowed themselves to be misled? To explain the phenomenon, Friedan gave a more detailed account than any other best-selling guide of how a culture shapes the ideas and thus the conduct of human beings.

First, Friedan traced the historical roots of the problem:

The identity crisis of American women began a century ago as more and more of the work important to the world, more and more of the work that used their human abilities and through which they were able to find self-realization, was taken from them.

The "fire and strength and ability of the pioneer women were no longer needed, no longer used, in the middle-class homes of the Eastern and Midwestern cities... ." Then the women's rights movement of the Progressive Era stimulated women to achieve their rightful place in society, but the movement slackened after the vote was won. Still, women's position did not deteriorate immediately. It was not until after World War II that the feminine mystique became "the cherished and self-perpetuating core of contemporary American culture." The Great Depression, World War II, and the atom bomb had diluted the spirit of adventure in America. People wanted security. There was a move toward "privatism." Novelists emphasized personal, not social, problems; painting was dominated by abstractionists; and psychoanalysis became very popular. The religious revival was yet another symptom of the search for security, stability and personal salvation. Even the "Beatniks" repre-



sented a retreat from public life. Unfortunately, this desire for "privatism" and security merged with the ancient cultural prejudice against women.<sup>10</sup>

Of course the ancient prejudices were seldom openly stated. Instead, they were rationalized and disguised. Freud became one of the mainstays of the feminine mystique. He gave the trend a veneer of scientific authority. Freud claimed woman's destiny was determined by biology. Women were crippled by penis envy. They were passive, receptive and lacking the highest intellectual skills. Thus for a woman to want to compete in a man's world was neurotic and dangerous. Marynia Farnham and Ferdinand Lundberg wrote an influential popularization of Freud's views, Modern Woman: The Lost Sex (1942). They warned that careers and higher education for women were leading to the "masculinization of women" which would damage sexual relations between men and women and impede the emotional growth of American children. The early, incomplete reports on the Kinsey study seemed to indicate that the Freudians were right. Better educated women did seem to experience much less sexual satisfaction than women with little or no education. At the time, these findings received a great deal of publicity. A decade later the full study indicated that the better educated women were actually the most likely to enjoy sex, but the damage was already done. Another reason for Freud's popularity was the fact that "it was easier,

safer, to think about love and sex than about Communism, McCarthy and the uncontrolled bomb." It was simpler to look for Freudian sexual roots to explain man's irrational behavior, ideals and wars "than to look critically at his society and act constructively to right its wrongs."<sup>11</sup>

Of course, Freud was wrong about women. Freud mistook the characteristics of certain middle-class European women for universals. Moreover, Freud was also wrong to speak of human beings' basic needs in sexual terms. "Today biologists, social scientists and increasing numbers of psychoanalysts see the need or impulse to human growth as a primary human need, as basic as sex."<sup>12</sup>

Friedan saw Margaret Mead as the most significant contemporary social scientist to perpetuate the feminine mystique. Mead was very popular in college courses and with the mass media. She was the symbol of the woman thinker in America. But her influence was ambivalent at best. From Mead women could have learned that human nature was enormously plastic, with different cultures assigning women very different roles. Also, Mead's own life could have served as an example of how a woman can be dedicated and interested in a challenging career:

But this is not the vision the mystique took from Margaret Mead; nor is it the vision that she continues to offer. Increasingly, in her own pages, her interpretation blurs, is subtly transformed into a glorification of women in the female role - as defined by their sexual biological

function. At times she seems to lose her own anthropological awareness of the malleability of human personality, and to look at anthropological data from the Freudian point of view--sexual biology determines all, anatomy is destiny. At times she seems to be arguing in functional terms that while woman's potential is as great and various as the unlimited human potential, it is better to preserve the sexual biological limitations established by a culture. At times she says both things in the same page...even...warning of the dangers a woman faces in trying to realize a human potential which her society has defined as masculine.<sup>13</sup>

But, if thinkers like Freud and Mead provided the rationale for the feminine mystique, business generated the raw power. When the war ended in 1945, business saw clearly that it would have to make consumer sales take the place of war contracts if a depression was to be avoided. It was vital that people spend money. It did not matter whether the goods they purchased were really needed or not. Business decided to use modern psychology to stimulate the greed of American women. Advertisers clearly understood how the feminine mystique could be used to exploit housewives. Thus the science of human behavior was systematically subverted to manipulate women. To prove her point, Friedan relied heavily on studies prepared by psychologists for the advertising industry concerning female motivation. These studies advised business to manipulate a woman's feelings of guilt. They were to make her feel like a bad mother and wife if she did not provide a high level of comfort and service for her family. They were also to play on her fear of growing old, and her feeling of

emptiness. She was to be convinced that consumer goods would make her feel fulfilled. She was to be kept restless, and hungry for "things." Her role in the economy was to consume. She was to be discouraged from wanting to be anything but a "good housewife." Advertising was to emphasize how secure she felt in her snug, comfortable home. Further they were to make her feel that a housewife did creative work, comparable to an engineer or household expert. It was particularly important to influence teenage girls who were very susceptible and if properly molded could be manipulated for a life time. Advertisers discovered that teenage girls and young married couples responded especially well to a "keep-up-with-the-Joneses" advertising campaign. Clearly science had been subverted for profit.<sup>14</sup>

The success of advertisers and the growing popularity of the feminine mystique could be traced in the changes that took place between the nineteen thirties, forties and sixties in the four leading women's magazines - Ladies' Home Journal, McCall's, Good Housekeeping, and Woman's Home Companion. In the thirties and early forties, the ideal of the magazines was still an active woman who wanted a career as well as a husband and children. A worthwhile man accepted and respected her values; a man who didn't was just not worth marrying. Further the magazines still assumed that women were interested in the world outside their homes, and printed numerous articles

on politics and world affairs. But by 1949 the image of the active, career minded woman was passé. The magazines had developed a new heroine - the simple housewife who wanted nothing more than to care for her family and home. The woman's magazines began glorifying the feminine mystique. In 1954 McCall's coined the label "togetherness," stressing the value and psychological satisfaction of the close knit family. (During this period the Ladies' Home Journal hired Pat Boone as a regular counselor for teenagers.) And while the concept of togetherness was frequently criticized for restricting men to menial domestic tasks when they should be doing the world's work, no one complained that it condemned women to the role of housewife. In fact any other ambition was considered unhealthy. The magazines blamed everything that went wrong with American men and children on women who strove to be independent. A career woman was pictured as frustrated and masculinized. She was a poor wife because she inevitably tried to "castrate" her husband. She needed psychiatric help.<sup>15</sup>

In her critique of business and advertising, Friedan did more than complain that women were manipulated and discriminated against. She questioned the wisdom of our economic goals. Our economy was unhealthy since it could not function without a threat of war or without encouraging housewives to waste resources, and consume an ever increasing flow of useless goods. We had lost our perspective. "The way our economy is organized

to serve man's needs efficiently - began to be confused with the purpose of our nation, the end of life itself." Unfortunately our leaders really believed that "the real business of America is business." Casually, almost as an afterthought, Friedan wondered if perhaps we have "a sick or immature society."<sup>16</sup>

Contrary to what one might expect, professional educators never came to the American women's aid. They did not attack the feminine mystique. Instead they defended it. Between 1945 and 1960, educators began emphasizing adjustment, marriage, and the family as the proper goals for women. They spoke as if the feminine mystique had the sanction of a scientific law. In a college course, a typical "discussion of premarital intercourse usually leads to the scientific conclusion that it is wrong." Why? Because it hindered a woman's psychological growth, and made satisfactory sex in marriage more difficult to achieve. And marriage was always assumed to be a woman's main preoccupation. Fewer and fewer women were encouraged to expand their intellectual horizons. In fact they were discouraged from taking traditional education seriously.<sup>17</sup>

Since neither business, the mass media or the social sciences saw it as their task to awaken in women a desire for true maturity, American women must free themselves from the illusions fostered by our culture. The first step was to become aware of their personal potential. Friedan accepted as

a model to work toward a personality type described by Professor A. H. Maslow as the high-dominance woman. The high-dominance woman felt self-confident and self-assured. She was not shy, timid or embarrassed, and she could express anger when she felt it. She was also more concerned with other people and the problems of the world than with her own small problems. She had a sense of mission, and "a frame of reference beyond privatism and preoccupation with the petty details of daily life." She also enjoyed sex more than the average woman, yet she was not obsessed with it. She could take sex for granted as she did food. And she could love others without giving up her own standards or interests. Moreover, high-dominance women felt free to be themselves in the presence of other people:

They could let their faults, weaknesses, physical and psychological shortcomings be freely seen. They did not always have to put their best foot forward, to hide false teeth, grey hair, signs of age; they did not have to "work" continually at their relationships; there was much less mystery and glamour, much less reserve and concealment and secrecy. In such people, there did not seem to be hostility between the sexes. In fact, he [Dr. Maslow] found that such people "made no really sharp differentiation between the roles and personalities of the two sexes."

High-dominance women did not assume that the female was passive and the male active, whether in sex or love or anything else. These people were so sure of themselves "that they did not mind taking on some of the cultural aspects of the opposite sex role."<sup>18</sup>

Once aware of her potential, a woman must then break the old pattern of her life, and begin a serious career. It was seldom easy. Frequently she needed further education but lacked funds. Friedan wanted a G. I. Bill for women which would help with tuition, books, travel, baby sitters and household help. But in the end it took more than money, it took courage to leave the old, safe routines and friends. Friedan warned women that freedom brought a lonely, frightened feeling. But the fear had to be faced for it was necessary to give up present security for the sake of the future. Anxiety occurred at just that point where the individual faced some emerging potentiality or possibility of fulfilling his existence. To aid women in their struggle, and to encourage their self-realization, Friedan wanted ministers, magazines, the advertising industry and guidance counselors to undertake a massive propaganda campaign to destroy the feminine mystique.<sup>19</sup>

But Sylvia Fleis Fava, in the American Sociological Review, complained that Friedan tended

to set up a counter-mystique; that all women must have creative interests outside the home to realize themselves. This can be just as confining and tension-producing as any other mold.

For the most part Friedan did write as if a creative career was a panacea. "The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative



work of her own. There is no other way." At one point, Friedan modified her position, and admitted that "surely there are many women in America who are happy at the moment as housewives, and some whose abilities are fully used in the housewife role." But she immediately qualified her retreat: "But happiness is not the same thing as the aliveness of being fully used...Housework...can hardly use the abilities of a woman of average or normal human intelligence... ." The implication was clear; if you were happy as a housewife, you must be well below normal intelligence.<sup>20</sup>

The term self-realization was central to Friedan's thesis. Unfortunately she never clearly defined the word. She was aware of the difficulty and admitted that the term "cannot be clearly defined." But she insisted that the quality

can be recognized by the human mind even though it cannot be clearly defined....Men from varying disciplines have used different words for this mysterious process from which comes the sense of self. The religious mystics, the philosophers, Marx, Freud - all had different names for it; man finds himself by losing himself; man is defined by his relation to the means of production; the ego, the self, grows through understanding and mastering reality - through work and love.

But Friedan did not linger over the complexity of the term, nor did she consider the obstacles to "self-realization" which were discussed by men like Freud or Marx, or great religious teachers like Buddha, Christ and Mohammed. After all none of these men equated self-realization with a career, say,

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in advertising. In their opinion, there were other difficulties involved. But Friedan wrote as if finding a creative career would settle all of a woman's problems. She never considered personal or psychological blocks which might prevent even an "enlightened" woman from beginning, or continuing or enjoying a career once it was begun. She seemed to believe that once a woman outgrew the feminine mystique her personal and psychological problems would automatically disappear. Certainly, Erich Fromm would not have agreed. He insisted that a human being must develop a "productive orientation," and brotherly love. And men like Billy Graham, Fulton Sheen and Norman Vincent Peale believed self-realization was dependent on accepting God's grace. Walter Lippmann thought in terms of disinterestedness.<sup>21</sup>

Friedan ignored almost all questions concerned with metaphysics, religion and philosophy. And although she mentioned numerous psychologists, she really said very little about psychology. She was equally reticent about ethics although she obviously had ethical standards of some sort since she believed that "not all feelings of human guilt are unfounded; guilt over the murder of another is not to be analyzed away, nor is guilt over the murder of oneself." But she never explained why she believed a woman should feel guilty about anything even murder. A religious man would point to God's law; Erich Fromm to brotherly love; Lippmann to a sort of Kantian cate-

gorical imperative. But Friedan never informed her readers of her general view of man or life. She hinted at a philosophy of life when she discussed self-esteem. "Self-esteem...can only be based on real capacity, competence and achievement... ." Thus there were values Friedan admired although she never revealed the foundations of her judgment. In the end her view of life was reminiscent of Marjorie Hillis, Dorothea Brande, Walter Pitkin and Helen Gurley Brown. Of course Friedan wrote for a more sophisticated audience than her predecessors. She tried to sketch the historical and social roots of the problem, and her references to thinkers like Freud, Mead, Rollo May and Erich Fromm assumed a fairly well informed readership. But her basic approach to life was the same as those earlier writers. She preached action and movement, as if they were ends in themselves. An unsigned review in the Economist, a British magazine, compared Friedan favorably to Simone de Beauvoir, but complained that both women displayed "the same feminine failings...humourlessness, righteousness and running on too long... ." It was an interesting comparison, for Friedan was the first best-selling guide to praise the existentialists. One wonders how she felt about their view of life. Her own position would have been much clearer had she explained.<sup>22</sup>

And were the so-called creative careers offered by capitalism and considered so necessary and desirable by Friedan really worth securing? Men like Schindler, Blanton and Fromm

did not think so. They believed that many important positions in business were too competitive, and thus destroyed a human being's chances for happiness. Erich Fromm went so far as to condemn the whole capitalist system; it perverted man's true nature. But Friedan obviously did not agree. She was not opposed to capitalism and the careers it sanctioned despite the fact that she believed that advertising systematically subverted the social sciences to exploit women, and that business was dependent on military contracts and on selling useless goods to survive. Friedan only wanted women admitted to the "rat race" on equal terms. Even here Fleis thought she was naive. Friedan saw the problem as one which could be solved by education. But Fleis pointed out that

this neglects the fact that the changed attitudes and plans must be acted upon in the context of the total society. The woman who develops the new life plan will find few institutionalized channels by which it can be put into effect. Negroes, too, have begun to change their attitudes and goals and to find that this is not enough without facilitating changes in social institutions.<sup>23</sup>

Judging by her later involvement in the Woman's Liberation movement and American politics, Friedan came to agree with Fleis. But not all the critics agreed with Fleis about the need for social change. Lucy Freeman, in the New York Times, thought Friedan had actually overemphasized the importance of the cultural environment:

Sweeping generalities in which this book necessarily abounds, may hold a certain amount of truth

but often obscure the deeper issues. It is superficial to blame the "culture" and its handmaidens, the women's magazines, as she does. What is to stop a woman who is interested in national and international affairs from reading magazines that deal with these subjects? To paraphrase a famous line, "The fault, dear Mrs. Friedan, is not in our culture, but in ourselves."<sup>24</sup>

One was reminded of the ancient debates about free will and determinism. The next best-selling author avoided the problem by stressing man's flexibility; a wise man simply adjusted to his environment, even if the environment left a great deal to be desired.

## NOTES

1. Anon., "1964 Paperback Best Sellers," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 18, 1965, p. 72.
2. Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 8-9, 16, 24, 35, 209-10, 251, 269; The original hard cover edition was published by the Norton Company, New York, in 1963.
3. Ibid., pp. 251, 269-270, 274-276, 293, 351.
4. Ibid., pp. 64, 180, 326.
5. Ibid., pp. 299, 302-303, 322.
6. Ibid., pp. 69, 171, 244, 300, 324-325.
7. Ibid., pp. 326, 332-337.
8. Anon., Review of The Feminine Mystique, Times Literary Supplement, May 31, 1963, p. 391; Friedan, p. 322.
9. Friedan, pp. 188, 267, 306, 316-318, 330-331, 341-342.
10. Ibid., pp. 14, 174, 178-179, 323.
11. Ibid., pp. 37, 106, 109, 111, 178, 184-185.
12. Ibid., pp. 97, 99.
13. Ibid., pp. 117, 126-129.
14. Ibid., pp. 197-246.
15. Ibid., pp. 32-35, 41-42, 45, 58, 180-181.
16. Ibid., pp. 197-198, 223.
17. Ibid., pp. 148-149, 161-162.
18. Ibid., pp. 307-312.
19. Ibid., pp. 300, 342-343, 351, 356.
20. Sylvia Fleis Fava, Review of The Feminine Mystique, American Sociological Review, Dec. 1963, p. 1053; Friedan, pp. 244, 332.
21. Friedan, p. 322.

22. Anon., "The Segregated Sex," Economist, Aug. 10, 1963, p. 519; Friedan, pp. 300-301, 304.
23. Fava, p. 1053.
24. Lucy Freeman, Review of The Feminine Mystique, New York Times, April 7, 1963, p. 46.

## Chapter 25

## Maxwell Maltz

Maxwell Maltz was originally a plastic surgeon. Over the years he realized that patients had very different emotional reactions to their reconstructed faces. Some experienced a rise in self-esteem and self-confidence; others continued to feel inferior and inadequate. Some even became more depressed. Others simply refused to have their scarred faces repaired. In fact, in Germany, he saw many students who were actually proud of sabre scars which would have depressed most Americans. Maltz linked these insights with a phenomena associated with hypnosis. While hypnotized, people reacted emotionally to what they thought was happening. The same person could be made fearful by telling him a tiger was in the room, or happy by convincing him that his financial worries were over. Thus an emotional response was determined, not by what actually happened, but by what a person thought was happening. Maltz concluded that "the individual's mental and spiritual concept or picture of himself," his self-image "was the real key to personality and behavior." It was "no exaggeration to say that every human being is hypnotized to some extent, either by ideas he has uncritically accepted or convinced himself are true." Thus everyone had been conditioned to react to certain "bells" or ideas just like Pavlov's dogs:

Feelings of inferiority originate not so much from "facts" or experiences, but our conclusions re-



garding facts, and our evaluation of experience. For example, the fact is that I am an inferior weight-lifter and an inferior dancer. This does not, however, make me an "inferior person".... It all depends upon "what" and "whose" norms we measure ourselves by.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, if we feel miserable because we can not dance or lift weights, our misery was not triggered by a universal fact of life but by an erroneous concept we had been conditioned to believe; we had been taught that "we should measure up to some other person's 'norm.'" And "the next logical conclusion in this cockeyed reasoning process is to conclude that we are not 'worthy,'" that we are inferior because we cannot achieve certain goals; and since we were inferior we obviously did "not deserve success and happiness." We made ourselves unhappy because we responded to these misconceptions as if they were true. But few people understood the process. They seldom realized that their depressing emotional reactions were triggered by their own evaluation of themselves and the world. In reality, they were resentful, angry, or resigned not because of what happened to them, but because of how they evaluated events.<sup>2</sup>

Maltz was a determinist. A human being's self-image was a product of his personal history, especially early childhood. Unfortunately few people were brought up intelligently. Most never learned to think rationally about themselves and the world. Maltz wrote Psycho-Cybernetics (1960) to help people

re-educate themselves. Maltz was sure he understood the key to happiness. It was not a matter of getting a better job, or having a scarred face repaired, although a happy person was more likely to improve both his appearance and his economic position. Maltz agreed with and quoted Dr. John A Schindler, happiness was simply a "state of mind in which our thinking is pleasant a good share of time." Happiness was a mental habit, an attitude people assumed toward life. And this attitude could be learned. We could condition ourselves to stop letting outside events dictate our emotional responses. We could stop being slaves, and learn to control our own emotional moods. Of course the technique had limits. Under tragic circumstances we could not expect to achieve happiness, but even here we could be happier, or, at least, less miserable, if we learned to curb our self pity. Maltz was aware that the idea that a person could keep his "thoughts pleasant most of the time" by practicing "in a more or less cold-blooded manner" to deliberately and systematically cultivate new ideas and a new self-image "strikes many of my patients as rather incredible, if not ludicrous when I first suggest it." But the approach worked. People could learn to be happy and to change their personalities so as to enrich their lives.<sup>3</sup>

Maltz defined a good personality as "one which enabled you to deal effectively and appropriately with environment and reality, and to gain satisfaction from reaching goals which

are important to you." To develop a good personality, a person must simply learn to think in a certain way, that is, to believe certain ideas since it was ideas which triggered emotional responses. To begin with, we must not blame ourselves for our mistakes or deficiencies. We are all the products of history. The past explained why we were what we were. It was not our fault. Men must learn to accept themselves. "The most miserable and tortured people in the world are those who are continually straining and striving to convince themselves and others that they are something other than they basically are." Moreover, if a man felt bad because he considered himself inferior, he usually thought the cure was "to make himself as good as everybody else, and the way to feel really good is to make himself superior." Thus he tended to try too hard. And this usually increased his sense of frustration. To mature he must learn that

inferiority and superiority are reverse sides  
of the same coin. The cure lies in realizing  
that the coin itself is spurious.

The truth about you is this:

You are not "inferior."

You are not "superior."

"You" as a personality are not in competition  
with any other personality simply because there is  
not another person on the face of the earth like  
you or in your particular class.<sup>4</sup>

"God did not create a standard person." Each man was unique. We must learn to accept ourselves. Relax, "there are no fixed standards common to 'everybody else.'" Physical fashions

and styles constantly change. In the 1920's women wanted boyish figures, but in the fifties and sixties many women were "anxious because they did not have 40 inch busts." Moral standards are just as changeable. Maltz pointed out that a man brought up as a head hunter would feel guilty and unworthy "if he doesn't shrink a head." Maltz also quoted Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, an earlier best-seller, to the effect that an overly strict conscience can make a person miserable. Maltz's determinism and his cultural relativism would seem to put him in direct opposition to the religiously-oriented best-sellers, but later we shall see that he believed in a paternalistic God which confused his view of morality to some extent.<sup>5</sup>

All men have faults. People cannot be happy unless they accept this fact. Just remember that the "negatives belong to us - they are not us." We are not our mistakes; man must learn to differentiate between his self and his behaviour. "'You' are not ruined or worthless because you made a mistake and got off course, any more than a typewriter is worthless which makes an error, or a violin which sounds a sour note." Besides learning to accept themselves, people must also learn to accept other people. Most human beings interpreted other people's conduct egocentrically. If someone does something which displeases them, they take it personally. They see it as an attack. But

Most of the time the other person's reaction or position is not taken in order to make us suffer... but because he "understands" and interprets the situation differently from us....To give the other person credit for being sincere, if mistaken, rather than willful and malicious, can do much to smooth out human relations and bring about better understanding between people.

Try to understand why other people must act the way they do. Be careful not to confuse fact with opinion. A husband cracks his knuckles. That was a fact. A wife feels it was done to annoy her. That was usually just an erroneous opinion. Even if someone does consciously exploit or wrong you, he did what he did because of his upbringing. People make mistakes. They do not commit evil acts. Don't condemn. Still, some feelings of aggression were inevitable, even in a rational person. Maltz recommended that we channel this aggression into exercise and work. Exercise had a double function. Besides serving as an outlet for aggression, strenuous exercise was also vital to sound health.<sup>6</sup>

Along with learning to accept themselves and other people, human beings must also understand that goals were vital for happiness. "We are engineered as goal-seeking mechanisms." Without meaningful goals, "we are apt to 'go around in circles,' feel 'lost' and find life itself 'aimless,' and 'purposeless.'" We can "find no real satisfaction or happiness in life without obstacles to conquer and goals to achieve." Maltz never said why this was true if happiness was a state of mind, an attitude

we could learn to cultivate. In any case, we must be realistic about our goals. We must be aware of our real strengths and weaknesses. We must not undertake tasks totally beyond our abilities. "Creating a better self-image does not create new abilities, talents, powers - it releases and utilizes them." But to strive after even a realistic goal took courage for "nothing in this world is ever absolutely certain or guaranteed." But human beings must be willing to make mistakes and to suffer a little pain. A man can usually conquer his fear of failure if, before he acts, he just considered what were the worse consequences, that could possibly befall him if he did fail. It was seldom a true catastrophe. We must be realistic and learn not to make too much of relatively small consequences; if we did this, worry diminishes. If we completely mastered this technique, worry actually disappeared altogether. As an example of this technique in action, Maltz cited the case of a man who lost \$200,000 in a business deal. The man felt he was ruined and disgraced. In reality, he had merely lost \$200,000. It was only a subjective evaluation which equated the loss with ruin and disgrace. His upbringing had taught him to see such a setback as a catastrophe. He was conditioned. He acted automatically. He could have viewed the situation quite differently if he had been trained differently. A wise man did not let outside events dictate his emo-

tional response. Instead, he developed the habit of happiness.<sup>7</sup>

Maltz quoted Bertrand Russell's The Conquest of Happiness (1930) on how a person should proceed when he or she begins to feel emotionally upset, angry or fearful. The first step was to examine the ideas which caused the pain. Look into their irrationality closely. Did you expect too much from yourself, or others, or the world? Pin-point the irrationality, and reject it. Remember the healthy ideas of self-acceptance, charity and goal striving. "Let your conscious beliefs be so vivid and emphatic that they make an impression upon your unconscious." Think through your beliefs, become rational, and reason with yourself in those moments in which you are "tempted to become infantile."<sup>8</sup>

And be optimistic. Maltz assured his readers that God had not created an "inferior product." God made man "the most marvelous creator of all." And this was not a sign of foolish egoism for the glory belonged to God, not you. Just accept yourself. Each of us had a "life instinct" which works toward health.<sup>9</sup>

Maltz never systematically discussed religion. Infrequent references to God were scattered at random throughout the book. (In general, Maltz's book rambled, a fairly common trait in the best-selling guides.) Maltz seemed to be a Christian of some sort. He quoted the Bible and praised Jesus. But he was never explicit, and said very little about his beliefs or theology. He did describe God as an all-wise, all-loving,

all-powerful being who offered man forgiveness and peace of mind. God was man's loving father. We were his children, and God would help us attain our goals. God wanted man to master the art of living. He wanted us to be strong and self-reliant. He also wanted us to be charitable, and think more of others than ourselves. We must understand "that every person is a child of God and is a unique individuality which deserves some dignity and respect." Maltz also believed in miraculous cures, and cited Alexis Carrel as an authority. But Maltz thought people were wrong to refuse medical help when they were sick. He also believed in telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. Maltz never discussed why God felt a need to create the world, or why God made men so incompetent if he wanted them to be happy. Nor did Maltz discuss the comparative merits of various religions and sects. He ignored the question of immortality.<sup>10</sup>

Maltz held several beliefs not in accordance with traditional Western religion. He said men were not responsible for their conduct. Maltz also believed in cultural relativism. Moral standards changed according to historical circumstances. Thus the head hunter could not be morally condemned. Maltz made no attempt to relate this concept to his belief in an all-powerful God, or the traditional belief in free will held by most Western religions.<sup>11</sup>

With Maltz, God and religion were treated like an afterthought, something added for flavor, a bit of spice to make



his approach more familiar and palatable to middle-class Americans.

Maltz was not content to tell people what they must think to be happy. He wanted to show them how to absorb these new ideas more quickly. Maltz claimed to have discovered a new method of learning which would make it much easier for people to apply adult, rational standards to their daily lives. He came across the new technique while studying the science of cybernetics. "Cybernetics has to do with teleology - goal-striving, goal-orientated behaviour of mechanical systems." By understanding the principles of cybernetics Maltz claimed to have made "an important breakthrough in psychology." "I myself take no credit for the breakthrough, other than the recognition of it." He realized that "the so-called 'sub-conscious mind' is not a 'mind' at all but a mechanism - a goal-striving 'servo-mechanism' consisting of the brain and nervous system, which is used by, and directed by the mind." The word cybernetics came from a Greek word which meant literally "the steersman." Maltz called his approach psycho-cybernetics because "the brain and nervous system constitute a marvelous and complex 'goal-striving mechanism,' a sort of built-in automatic guidance system which works for you as a 'success mechanism' or against you as a 'failure mechanism' depending on how 'You,' the operator, operate it and the goals you set it."<sup>12</sup>

The creative mechanism worked on data which men fed it, including their thoughts, beliefs and interpretations. Triggered by desire, the forebrain selected a goal, for example, a cigarette lying on a table, and fed the information to the automatic mechanism which directed the hand toward the desired cigarette. The human eye enabled the automatic mechanism to know if it was off course. If needed, corrections were automatically made until the cigarette was procured. The person reaching for the cigarette is conscious of only a few of the operations involved in the complex undertaking. This automatic mechanism will also handle more complicated problems. In fact, it can solve any problem, personal, commercial, scientific, or artistic. "If you really mean business, have an intense desire, and begin to think intensely about all angles of the problem - your creative mechanism goes to work." The mechanism begins to scan back through stored information in the brain. "It selects an idea here, a fact there, a series of former experiences, and relates them - or 'ties them together'... ." It solves the problem or completes the equation. "When this solution is served up to your consciousness...something 'clicks' and you at once 'recognize' this as the answer you have been searching for." Thus the conscious mind or forebrain poses the problem, selects the goal and gathers information, but it does not solve the problem. All of us could relieve ourselves "of a vast load" of care and worry

if we could but recognize the simple truth,  
that our Creator made ample provisions for us  
to live successfully in this or any other age by  
providing us with a built-in creative mechanism.

Thus man has available to him a power greater than himself. But we can do more than solve problems with our built in creative mechanism. It can also help us change our beliefs from irrational to rational; and it can help us form new habit patterns which can produce a happy state of mind.<sup>13</sup>

Maltz recommended certain techniques which would enable people to use the mechanism more efficiently. The key to successful reconditioning was to realize that our beliefs and habits were originally formed without effort and with no sense of strain. No "will power" was involved. Maltz agreed with Emile Coué that suggestion was the proper technique. But the suggestions must be made without effort if they are to be effective. Thus we must "form a clear mental image of the desired end result, and...practice without effort toward reaching that goal":

Experimental and clinical psychologists have proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the human nervous system cannot tell the difference between an "actual" experience and an experience imagined vividly and in detail.

Thus picture yourself, as you would like to be, or imagine the things you want to have. Become enthusiastic about it. Feel the joy of success. This was the basic procedure you followed when you worried about a catastrophe which had not occurred yet.

You imagined the undesirable results which would occur if things went badly. Thus you generated emotions like fear and anxiety. To be happy, just reverse the process. Imagine yourself winning. Set aside thirty minutes a day when you can be alone to imagine yourself as you want to be. Vividly see yourself going through your daily life with the new attitude. "This exercise builds new 'memories' or stored data into your mid-brain and central nervous system." After practicing for a time, you will find yourself automatically, without effort, acting in the manner you consider desirable.<sup>14</sup>

Maltz claimed just thinking about throwing darts or making free throws with a basketball could improve actual performance. If you have trouble making a sale, imagine yourself as a confident, resourceful and successful salesman. It will lead to the actual success you want. He agreed with Dorothea Brande, who wrote the best-seller, Wake Up and Live (1936), that it was possible to act as if it were impossible to fail. He also approved of her idea of building up self-confidence by a gradual series of graded successes. You begin with a task you can do and experience the emotional charge of success. Then you progress to more difficult tasks, building a back log of confidence. "Memories of past successes act as built-in 'stored information' which gives us self-confidence for the present task."<sup>15</sup>

Another effective technique was to purposely change your habit patterns. Thus if you habitually put on your right

shoe first in the morning, make yourself begin with the left shoe, and, as you tie the lace, say to yourself that throughout the day you will be as cheerful as possible, more friendly, less critical of yourself and others, and that you will shut out negative thoughts and thus insure success.<sup>16</sup>

It was important to give every technique recommended a twenty-one day trial. The body needed this much time to re-adapt. And remember not to overload yourself. Try only one major task at a time.<sup>17</sup>

Maltz also examined rival therapeutic systems and explained why they were inadequate. He agreed with Dr. Schindler about psychoanalysis. There was no "future in digging continually into the past...the underlying emotional problem has the same common denominator in every patient." The patient "has  ~~forgotten how~~, or probably never learned how, to control his present thinking to produce enjoyment." Moreover concepts like the id, and the super-ego were unscientific, "weird mumbo-jumbo." The behaviorists also misunderstood man. They confused man with his body. They said thought was merely the ~~movement of electrons~~, and consciousness merely a chemical action. They classified "will" and purpose as myths. They failed to understand that man was much more than just a mechanical instrument.<sup>18</sup>

Maltz claimed that his self-image psychology resolved the apparent conflicts between various therapeutic methods. "It

furnishes a common denominator... ." All the other techniques used by therapists--direct and indirect counseling, psychoanalysis and auto-suggestion etc.--had one thing in common; in that they had any success at all, they all used creative experience to build a better self-image:

Regardless of theories, this is what really happens, for example in the "therapeutic situation" employed by the psychoanalytical school: the analyst never criticizes, disapproves, or moralizes, is never shocked, as the patient pours out his fears, his shame, his guilt-feelings and his "bad thoughts." For perhaps the first time in his life the patient experiences acceptance as a human being; he "feels" that his self has some worth and dignity, and he comes to accept himself, and to conceive of his "self" in new terms.

Self-image psychology also explained why positive thinking worked for some people and not others. Those who could convince themselves to think positively set up new conditioned reflexes.<sup>19</sup>

A hard cover edition of Maltz's book was published in 1960. But the book did not appear on the paperback best-seller's list until 1965, finishing sixth. Who did the book appeal to? Did Maltz write for the same audience who read the other best-sellers of the sixties? It's doubtful. His approach was very different from Brown--Maltz practically ignored sex; or Fromm--Maltz dismissed psychoanalysis and accepted capitalism; or A. S. Neill who we shall see criticized capitalism and wanted sexual freedom. Maltz reflected the earlier, pre-nineteen-sixties best-sellers. He referred favorably to four best-selling

authors of the thirties, forties and fifties, Dorothea Brande, Alexis Carrel, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and Dr. Schindler. He also mentioned techniques used by Emile Coué and Bertrand Russell. And while Maltz never mentioned Dale Carnegie by name, his book was similar in tone. Like Carnegie, Maltz seemed to see God as a convenience; God helped man without setting up stringent rules or threatening him with eternal punishment. Moreover, God did not burden man with free will; both Carnegie and Maltz agreed that man was not to be blamed for his mistakes. His conduct was completely determined. Maltz went even further than Carnegie and explicitly said he believed in cultural relativism. Also, both men constantly made flattering references to salesmen, businessmen, inventors and athletes. They were completely satisfied with capitalism. But Maltz never openly advocated exploiting people as Carnegie had. Maltz merely explained how a man could gain confidence and bring added enthusiasm and energy to his work. He never considered, as Carnegie did, the tactics one might employ if he was in competition with someone equally enthusiastic and ambitious.<sup>20</sup>

Maltz made very little effort to describe the society his readers lived in. He did not discuss economics, politics, the communications media, race, drugs, or America's sexual mores. But Maltz's book did have one truly unique feature. Where other writers had been satisfied to link psychology with religion, he added cybernetics to the mixture, capitalizing

on America's growing interest and faith in computers and automation. Like any good businessman he too kept up with the times.

But the next best-seller was a different breed. He detested "the times." He considered himself a revolutionary, and wanted to push beyond the accepted customs of the day, which he blamed for much of man's unhappiness.



## NOTES

1. Maxwell Maltz, Psycho-Cybernetics (New York: Pocket Books, 1969), pp. VI, VII, 2, 8, 53, 189-190; The original hard-cover edition was published by Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey, in 1960.
2. Ibid., pp. 2-3, 33-34, 143.
3. Ibid., pp. 2, 71, 97-98, 100, 103.
4. Ibid., pp. 57, 124, 243.
5. Ibid., pp. 57, 59, 97, 127, 180.
6. Ibid., pp. 115, 126, 134-136, 161-163, 259-264.
7. Ibid., pp. 100-102, 114, 117-118, 125, 206, 219-220.
8. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
9. Ibid., pp. 12, 122.
10. Ibid., pp. 24, 43-44, 119-120, 265-267.
11. Ibid., pp. 4, 12, 43-44, 180, 265-267.
12. Ibid., pp. V, VIII, X, 12-13, 18.
13. Ibid., pp. 13, 16, 20-21, 25-27, 78.
14. Ibid., pp. XII, 41, 45, 59-60, 73-74.
15. Ibid., pp. XI, XII, 35-36, 68, 122-123.
16. Ibid., pp. 109-110.
17. Ibid., pp. XIV, 28, 86-87, 89.
18. Ibid., pp. X, 65, 243.
19. Ibid., pp. IX, XI.
20. Anon., "1965 Paperback Best Sellers," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 17, 1966, p. 64.

## Chapter 26

A. S. Neill

In Summerhill (1960), A. S. Neill, an English progressive educator, accused modern society of mutilating the minds of the young.

In Neill's opinion

the newborn child brings with him a life force;  
his will, his unconscious urge is to live...He acts  
as Nature intended him to act, as he was made to act.

The infant had only to be left alone to grow into a loving, happy, cooperative adult. There is no wickedness in an infant. Neill was sure that "human beings are good; they want to do good; they want to love and be loved. Hate and rebellion are only thwarted love and thwarted power." But few adults understood the truth:

Practically every adult believes that the nature of the child must be improved. Hence it happens that every parent begins to teach the young how to live....The original voice of the child's natural life force meets the voice of instruction.

Children were told that certain acts were "naughty," "dirty" or selfish. This type of education destroyed man's chances for happiness, and as a consequence

his love-making is in the main unsatisfactory;  
his pleasures are mostly tawdry, cheap, escapist.  
He is a moralist, that is, one who considers  
natural living to be wrong or at best inadequate,  
and he trains his children accordingly.

This culturally imposed distortion of human nature explained why the human race had so many wars, sex crimes and suicides.

so much racial and marital hatred, and, possibly, even why the frequency of cancer was increasing.<sup>1</sup>

Neill wrote Summerhill to show people how a child should be educated to cultivate his natural goodness. Neill's emphasis on education was unique among best-selling guides.<sup>2</sup>

Summerhill was the name of the school Neill founded one hundred miles from London in 1921. He began it as an experiment to test his hypothesis that true freedom brought happiness. But Neill no longer considered the school an experiment. The hypothesis had been proven correct. Summerhill now had a student body of about forty-five middle-class boys and girls between the ages of five and sixteen. Because of economic difficulties Summerhill had no scholarships for poor children.<sup>3</sup>

The main premise of the school was that happy children and happy adults were the products of freedom. Children should be left on their own as much as possible. They must be free from imposed authority, hate and punishment. Many years of experience had taught Neill that

there is no need whatsoever to teach children how to behave. A child will learn what is right and what is wrong in good time - provided he is not pressured.

"Freud showed that every neurosis is founded on sex repression." Thus it was wrong to force a child to repress his natural inclinations. "We will allow every child to live according to his deep impulses." We must not force a child

to follow our wishes. They must not be manipulated physically or psychologically, overtly or surreptitiously. At Summerhill the child decided whether or not he would study or go to class. The children even chose most of the school's rules at a General School Meeting held every Saturday night. Each pupil and each staff member had a vote. Among other things, the meetings decided what was to be done to those pupils who broke the democratically chosen rules. They were usually fined. Unruly children were sometimes barred from classes by their fellow students. Neill found that, while children younger than twelve took very little interest in self-government, they rarely missed a meeting. Neill did reserve some decisions for himself; he alone planned the menus, sent and paid bills, hired and dismissed teachers.<sup>4</sup>

Experience had convinced Neill that teachers and parents should be equals. But to treat a child as an equal was very difficult for most adults. They had to be very mature and patient and see long range advantages in the course. In all cases, a child must be trusted and treated with respect. He must never be preached to, or mocked with sarcasm. And of course, a child must never be beaten or spanked which was a form of sexual sadism, never used by a person who had "a fully satisfying sex life." Adults must remember that "no child can stand authority." It builds hatred and most children have killed off their families in fantasy which tends to breed guilt.<sup>5</sup>

"It is moral instruction that makes the child bad."

There may be some reason to give adults moral instructions, but it was psychologically wrong to corrupt a child's nature:

To ask a child to be unselfish is wrong. Every child is an egoist and the world belongs to him....The chief result of mother's encouraging him to share...with his little brother is to make him hate the little brother. Altruism comes later - comes naturally - if the child is not taught to be unselfish. It probably never comes at all if the child has been forced to be unselfish. By suppressing the child's selfishness, the mother is fixing that selfishness forever.

To please his mother, the child may hide his true desire, but the unfulfilled wish lives on in his unconscious. Even non-neurotic stealing should be tolerated. A normal child will steal for curiosity and adventure. "He has not yet made the distinction between mine and thine." Children should be free to live out this stage of their lives. And if the theft inconveniences someone, and has to be dealt with, the act should never be made a moral issue, that is a matter of good and evil; it should be viewed strictly as an instance of one human being abusing the rights of another individual.<sup>6</sup>

The same liberal approach was also appropriate for sexuality. "The moral prohibitions of childhood fix the infantile interest in sex." The sexually frustrated child had difficulty maturing; as an adult he will be dominated by infantile sexual attitudes. Children should be allowed to freely explore sex. Children should also be allowed to in-

investigate their feces and urine if they are interested; this included older children who may have suppressed their earlier desires due to parental pressure. It was also healthy for a child to see his parents nude. It would probably be advantageous if he saw them having sexual intercourse. And a child should always be allowed to masturbate if he wants to. Moreover, sex play among small children was natural. In fact "heterosexual play in childhood is the royal road...to a healthy, balanced adult sex life." True, free children might shock your neighbors, but, if so, do you want your child in touch with such people? Unfortunately you may find yourself under social pressures you cannot resist. Then "it may be grim necessity to tell a child who has reached the age of understanding not to play with his genitals in public." But always tell the child the truth when the child asked questions about this particular situation, or any other aspect of sex.<sup>7</sup>

As for adolescents they too should be sexually free. In fact, Neill approved of a full sex life for anyone who wanted it. Sex, with love, was man's greatest joy. And every form of sex was proper if both persons find delight in it. When sex was tender and bathed in love, nothing can be considered out of place. Neill also favored having both sexes live in the same house:

Mixing of the sexes would lead to much that is valuable, to tenderness, to natural good manners,

to a necessary knowledge of the opposite sex, to the lessening of pornography and leering snickers.

Neill quoted the famous anthropologist, Malinowski, who said there had been no homosexuality, rape or sex crimes among the Trobrianders until missionaries segregated boys and girls in separate hostels.<sup>8</sup>

If children wanted to read about sex, Neill allowed them to do so, although few free children seemed particularly interested in what the general public considered spicy reading, for "what had been spicy reading to ignorance had become commonplace reading to knowledge." Children also enjoyed sadistic tales, but were not sadistic themselves, not if they were raised freely.<sup>9</sup>

Neill favored legal abortions, and felt that the improvement of contraceptives would, in the long run, lead to a new sex morality. Neill not only rejected the traditional Christian view of sex, he rejected religion in general. He did not believe in a traditional God or eternal life. He was convinced that no one actually knew anything about God. Religion sprang from and encouraged an infantile view of life. It was pure wish fulfillment. If man's unconscious was made conscious, religion would have no function in society. Besides, religion inculcated a distorted view of sex; religion associated sex with sin, and thus corrupted a child's basic goodness. Furthermore, religion insisted that human beings had free will,

while in reality most people and all children were enslaved by their compulsions. Neill never taught religion to children. He would never interfere if a child was interested in religion, but experience showed that no "free child" wanted to practice religion.<sup>10</sup>

Children should be given whatever they need physically and emotionally. A baby should be fed when it was hungry, not according to a time schedule. It should also be held when it cried. And its toilet training should not be forced. And adults must remember that one of a child's most pressing needs was the need to play. "Children are primitives, and until they ask for culture, they should live in as primitive and informal an environment as we can give them." Why burden them with the study of mathematics, French, science, or history? Lessons should be available for those who want them, but no child should be forced to attend if they preferred playing:

People who have the innate ability and wish to be scholars will be scholars; while those who are only fit to sweep the streets will sweep the streets....I would rather see a school produce a happy street cleaner than a neurotic scholar.

Real success was not measured by prestige or salary. Real success meant "to work joyfully and to live positively." And a person was much more likely to live this way, if, as a child, he had lived out his fantasies in play. Thus it was not really important if a child learned mathematics, history



or geography. Besides, if a child did decide to go to college, he could make up the work very quickly. A motivated student did not need all the years usually allotted to preparing people for college entrance examinations. Thus while there were formal lessons given at Summerhill in the morning, they were optional. New students averaged about three months before they voluntarily went to some classes. But one girl, from a convent school, "loafed" for three years. No student was given homework or examinations. Most students did some wood and metal work. There was also a good deal of dancing at Summerhill. And the students regularly wrote and produced plays. In general the children spent a good deal of time playing outdoors.<sup>11</sup>

Children also needed a good deal of love and affection. "In a child, the will to power is the will to be admired and loved. The child strives to compel admiration and attention." "When the ego is satisfied, we have what we call goodness. When the ego is starved we have what we call criminality." Most adults are somewhat starved, thus their personalities are a mixture of goodness and criminality. Give the child what it needs. If children were allowed to live out "their self-centered fantasy stage" they would be able "to face the realities of life without any unconscious longing for the play of childhood." A mature adult never expected children to feel gratitude for what they received. Most children take

it as their natural right to be fed and clothed by their parents or guardians. A child does not give love; he just wants to be loved.<sup>12</sup>

But freedom did not mean license or libertinism. Neill's standard of judgment seemed simple; is what the child doing really harmful to anyone else? If not, don't object, or you are anti-life. But a child should not be given everything it asks for, and it must never be allowed to violate the personal rights of others, otherwise the child will be spoiled. Everyone has rights, and everyone is equal. For instance, a child should not be allowed to walk on an adult's piano; but neither should an adult borrow a child's bicycle without permission. "No harm is done by insisting on your individual rights, unless you introduce the moral judgment of right or wrong." If a child hits an adult, it might be appropriate to hit back. "Hitting a child gives him fear only when it is associated with a moral idea, with the idea of wrong." Neill was aware that it was not always easy to decide "what is and what is not punishment."<sup>13</sup>

Neill accused most Freudians of confusing freedom with license. They were too quick to accuse an adult of punishing a child when the adult was merely standing up for his rights. That was because the Freudians had developed their ideas by treating children who had never known real freedom to be themselves, and who consequently had never developed

"natural respect for the freedom of others." But with a truly free child the conflicts between the child and the adult were reasonable, that is, they were in the open, and about real issues which could be decided. The issues were not subterfuges designed as an excuse to inflict punishment on the child, or revenge on the adult. Real issues can be worked out. Thus a free child might take an adult's machine tool, but he did it because he thought he needed the tool, not to anger the adult. If the adult took the tool back in the same spirit, without moralizing, the child understood, and was not emotionally damaged. But if freedom was not license, it was also not an abrogation of common sense. At Summerhill the students had voted to accept certain sensible restrictions such as no swimming without a life-guard and no cycling alone in the street for children under eleven.<sup>14</sup>

Adults must never hurry children to grow up. Each child had his own rate of development. Neill told of asking five noisy boys, age seven to eleven, to be quiet because a teacher was sick. They promised but five minutes later they were as noisy as ever:

It is true that a stern voice and a whip would have secured peace for the teacher, but peace at the expense of introducing fear into the lives of those children. The universal method of dealing with children is to teach them to adapt themselves to us and our needs. This method is wrong.

Neill used an analogy. A boy of six cannot chin a bar

four times, and to ask him to do so was to make an excessive demand. Yet the same boy would easily chin himself four times when he is eighteen. Adults must have patience; free children will eventually become good adults. "It is not in human nature to be antisocial. Egoism itself is enough to make normal people social. Only a stronger factor than egoism can make a person antisocial." Human beings want to be liked by their neighbors

but this desire to please others develops at a certain stage in his growth. The attempt by parents and teachers to artificially accelerate this stage does the child irreparable damage.

Unfortunately it usually took children more time to become social beings than society customarily allowed. Society should be more patient. The wait and effort were worth it. Eventually a free child was fortified against shame, fanaticism and isms of all kinds. He would also learn to earn a living. There were no lazy children. What society called laziness in children was inevitably a lack of interest or a lack of health. A sane society would not ask children to work until at least the age of eighteen.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, most children who came to Summerhill had already been somewhat damaged by society, some slightly, some more severely. "The only cure that should be practiced is the curing of unhappiness." But changing children was a long, hard task. It took time for new students to work through their repressions and learn the difference between freedom

and license, but eventually they did learn. Neill gave a new student a great deal of acceptance. Years of experience had taught him that it was best to "approve of all the things that a child disapproves of in himself - that is, I try to break down the child's superimposed conscience, his self-hatred."<sup>16</sup>

Sex was a consistent problem with new students. Neill "never had a pupil who did not bring to Summerhill a diseased attitude toward sexuality and bodily functions." To overcome these distortions, boys and girls lived in the same houses. This way, they got used to one another, and could satisfy their curiosity early. As a result there were no peeping Toms at Summerhill. There was also no homosexuality. Neill believed that sex with love should be available to all students. "I know of no argument against youth's love life that holds water." But

I know that adolescent sex life is not practical today. But my opinion is that it is the right way to tomorrow's health. I can write this but if in Summerhill I approved of my adolescent pupils sleeping together, my school would be suppressed by the authorities.

"That I do not provide contraceptives is a matter of bad conscience with me." A free person is not promiscuous. Promiscuity was neurotic. Mature love may not last forever, but, with healthy people, it was true, loyal and happy while it did last. Thus there was no fear that the older pupils,

at least those who had been at Summerhill from early childhood would indulge in sexual license. They had not been repressed and therefore had no unnatural obsession with sex.<sup>17</sup>

To help both the staff and students, Neill gave weekly talks on psychology which were open to the older children. He discussed such topics as the inferiority complex, masturbation, morals, humor, and the psychology of stealing and the gangster. He also had private talks with pupils who asked for them, but got few requests. Neill had been deeply impressed by Freud and thought all teachers should have a knowledge of depth psychology. But he was aware that psychology was a new science. Man actually understood very little about the inner forces which shaped human life. Thus Neill depended more on personal experience than theory. Over the years he discovered that "true freedom in community living... seems to do for many what psychoanalysis does for the individual. It releases what is hidden."<sup>18</sup>

Neill claimed that Summerhill had been extraordinarily successful, especially if a child arrived before he was twelve. It usually took older children longer to adjust. A few had to be sent away because they made the school "a hell" for the other students. But basically the Summerhill approach worked with all kinds of children, although it worked best with intelligent children.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, due to the corrupt orientation of

civilization, it was always necessary to explain to a free child that the world outside was frequently vicious and anti-life. In fact, our present society was insane, and it trained children accordingly. It stressed anti-life values - duty, obedience, profit and power. It made sex dirty, and inculcated guilt. A child could not even bathe nude in the sea. Women were taught to feel inferior to men. Children were educated to become dull, anxious adults, scared little men and women, conformists, fit to work at dreary offices and shops, amusing themselves with trashy mass culture. To force children to accept this horrible status quo, they were bullied, coerced, frustrated, made fearful, and played off against one another. The subsequent resentment destroys any chance they had of growing into loving, happy adults. Neill quoted a favorite verse of children:

Tommy saw his house on fire,  
His mother in the flames expire;  
His father killed by falling brick  
And Tommy laughed - till he was sick.

In Neill's experience, all children laughed at this verse, even those who cared for their parents. "They laughed because of their repressed hate for their parents - hate caused by spankings, by criticism, by punishment." Some people excused the harshness of our system by pointing to the wealth it produced. But Neill countered by explaining that no man, not even a rich man, can enjoy economic comfort or security if his

soul was anti-life and anti-love. Moreover, the system was not so successful economically as many of its champions claimed. There was still a great deal of poverty. But even if this system were ultimately lucky enough to produce economic security, it still would not be worth the emotional suffering. Human beings had to humble themselves to fit into an authoritarian society. They became "the pawns of politicians, merchants, or exploiters." And the price was prodigious. Their daily lives lacked joy, and twice in Neill's lifetime the people had allowed their children to be killed in two major wars "for causes that do not touch their individual lives."<sup>20</sup>

But Neill predicted a great future for mankind, if we educated our children to be free:

There are so few self-regulated babies in the world that any attempt to describe them must be tentative. The observed results so far suggest the beginning of a new civilization, more profoundly changed in character than any new society promised in any kind of political party.

Despite the sorrow inflicted on man by modern society, Neill did not advocate its violent overthrow. If he tried, they would kill him "as a public danger." Neill admitted that Summerhill was an isolated island. He made no attempt to fit into a community because a community would interfere with Summerhill's freedom. But he did not apologize for his isolation. It was not possible for him to convert large numbers of people. Instead he had decided to make a few children



happier, and hope that they might eventually change society.<sup>21</sup>

Summerhill was not widely reviewed. In fact, not a single daily newspaper review was listed in the Book Review Digest. Two of the four reviews listed were in academic journals. Moreover, not a single bookseller was willing to place an advance order; and yet by 1965 the book, originally published in 1960, was the third best-selling trade paperback. And by 1970 it was required reading in 600 university courses. What accounted for the popularity of so neglected and so revolutionary a book? Margaret Mead provided a partial explanation. She thought the book seemed a bit more revolutionary to some readers than it actually was. She felt Summerhill came "out of the past, like a ghost of the 1920's." Many of Neill's so called revolutionary ideas had actually been popular in certain circles in the twenties, thirties and forties. The book jacket of the original edition lent some support to Mead's claim. It was covered by endorsements from such people as Ashley Montagu, the anthropologist, Henry Miller, the novelist, Sir Herbert Read, the literary and art critic, and Carl R. Rogers, one of America's leading non-directive psychologists. According to Mead some of the ideas endorsed by Neill had even managed to obtain a fairly mass following; for instance, Neill's desire to fit the program to the child, and not vice versa, had become a bit of an educational cliché by 1960. In fact Mead warned that a reaction against Neill's view

of educational freedom had already begun by the time the book was published. Many educators were rebelling against a contentless curriculum and over-emphasis on emotional adjustment at the expense of the intellectual life.<sup>22</sup>

Mead was partly right. By 1960, some Americans, impressed with the Russian space achievements, were feverishly encouraging the study of science and technology. Even Erich Fromm, who wrote a very favorable introduction to Neill's book, thought Neill underrated the "authenticity of an intellectual in favor of an artistic and emotional grasp of the world." But subsequent events seemed to indicate that Mead overrated the sustaining power of America's intellectual and technological renaissance. The fervor induced by Sputnik wore off. Moreover the more permissive and less intellectually disciplined culture propagated by the Beats in the fifties continued to flourish, and gave birth to what was termed the Hippie and countercultures in the sixties. This trend undoubtedly accounted for a good deal of Neill's success. Herbert Marcuse and Norman Brown were two other writers who achieved a certain popularity by agreeing with Neill that society was too harsh in repressing the child's sexuality and natural goodness.<sup>23</sup>

Paul Woodring, the education editor of the Saturday Review of Literature, foreshadowed the later debates that would take place between the advocates of permissiveness,

like Neill and Brown, and the more conservative Freudians. Woodring considered Neill un-Freudian because Neill believed that all sexual frustration and all adult interference would "warp the child's emotional development." Woodring pointed out that Freud had described the id as ruthlessly aggressive and in need of restriction if civilization was to survive. Bruno Bettelheim, a psychoanalyst, explained the fact that Neill saw the source of man's unhappiness exclusively in society, and not in the battle between Eros, the Death Instinct and the super-ego, as Freud had, by pointing out that "Neill came to psychoanalysis by way of Wilhelm Reich." Reich, who broke with Freud in the early nineteen-thirties, did not accept Freud's Death Instinct, and believed that man was naturally good if not corrupted by a repressive upbringing. Orson Bean, an American entertainer, writer and educator, who knew Neill, claimed that Neill had discussed Reich's point of view in the original manuscript of Summerhill, but that the material had been cut by his American publisher.<sup>24</sup>

Erich Fromm introduced another controversy. He thought Neill was too impressed with Freud, and, therefore, "over-estimated the significance of sex." Fromm believed that sexual problems only mirrored social and personality difficulties. If a human being developed a "productive orientation" he had no sexual difficulties.<sup>25</sup>

Woodring pointed to another problem. He doubted that children would actually accept the judgment of their peers

as Neill claimed. Children really wanted adults to set limits to their behavior. Besides, a child was not in a position to know what skills it would need as an adult, so how could it decide its own course of study? Moreover, a good teacher could quickly interest a child in almost any subject.

Neill's approach to curriculum did have some interesting social and political implications. He was obviously not impressed with the argument that the citizens of a democracy must receive a truly broad education, since, theoretically, they must decide on complicated political, social and economic questions. Possibly Neill believed that a free upbringing would produce bureaucrats and experts who would not victimize the uninformed who would be thus left free to devote all their time and energy to matters which deeply and directly interested them.

All the reviewers considered Summerhill an interesting and worthy experiment, but they were all very cautious. "As a document," Mead wrote, "it is raw material for analysis rather than anything that can be taken at its face value." But the mere fact that such "raw material" eventually became a best-seller indicated that a growing number of Americans were dissatisfied with traditional values, and were at least willing to consider a rather radical approach to living, quite a change from the nineteen thirties, forties and fifties.

## NOTES

1. A. S. Neill, Summerhill; A Radical Approach to Child Rearing (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 24, 243, 250, 316.
2. Ibid., pp. 250, 316.
3. Ibid., pp. 3-4, 17.
4. Ibid., pp. 7, 13, 47, 51-52, 254, 286-287, 294.
5. Ibid., pp. 254, 270, 273, 286-287, 294.
6. Ibid., pp. 8, 276-277.
7. Ibid., pp. 95-97, 100-101, 172, 208, 210, 215, 220-221, 227, 250-251, 351.
8. Ibid., pp. 211, 213, 215, 287, 370.
9. Ibid., pp. 263, 269, 271.
10. Ibid., pp. 209, 211, 237-238, 245, 286, 353, 371, 374.
11. Ibid., pp. 4-5, 13-15, 24-26, 29, 87-88, 140, 180-183, 378.
12. Ibid., pp. 61, 273, 305, 328.
13. Ibid., pp. 9, 144, 166, 168, 306-308.
14. Ibid., pp. 19-21, 294, 349.
15. Ibid., pp. 59, 109, 250, 253, 255-256, 277.
16. Ibid., pp. 115-116, 294-295.
17. Ibid., pp. 57, 59, 205, 208-209, 213, 215, 234, 236.
18. Ibid., pp. XXIII, 12, 273-274, 294.
19. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
20. Ibid., pp. 12, 95-97, 98-99, 102, 208, 245, 302, 343-345.
21. Ibid., pp. 23, 72, 104, 294, 345.
22. Dorothy Davison (ed.), Book Review Digest 1961 (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1962), p. 1046; Harold H. Hart (ed.), Summerhill: For and Against (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1970) pp. 7, 9; Anon., "1965 Paperback Best-Sellers," Publisher's Weekly, Jan. 17, 1966, p. 64;

Margaret Mead, Review of Summerhill; A Radical Approach to Child Rearing, American Sociological Review, June 1961, p. 501.

23. Neill, p. XV; Norman Brown, Life Against Death (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959); Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956).
24. Paul Woodring, "Editors' Bookshelf," Saturday Review, Jan. 21, 1961, p. 91; Bruno Bettelheim, Untitled Essay, Harold H. Hart (ed.), Summerhill: For and Against (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1970) p. 103; Orson Bean, Me and the Orgone (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), p. 68.
25. Neill, p. xv.

## Chapter 27

### The conclusion 1960-1965

The best-sellers of the 1960-1965 period offered a number of novelties. Four of the five authors broke with tradition. Brown wanted complete sexual freedom for single women and bourgeois hedonism unhampered by any religious or ethical restrictions; Fromm wanted a socialist economy; Friedan true equality for women; Neill a free, natural education for children, and sexual freedom for everyone. Only Maltz was traditional, mixing a mild hedonism with faith in God.

In general, religion fared quite poorly. Fromm and Neill criticized traditional religion vigorously, labeling it childish and immature. Brown and Friedan simply ignored it. Even Maltz, an advocate, treated religion as an afterthought. Not that the public had completely lost interest in religion. There were two best-selling paperbacks explaining the liberal theology so despised by Graham and Sheen; and another best-selling paperback interpreted evolution as having a religious goal.<sup>1</sup> But these were specialized works. The guides to happiness were primarily secular and hedonistic and all firmly rooted in the things of this earth; their differences concerned ethics, the types of pleasures recommended, and the nature of man's psyche.

In a sense, Maltz, the traditionalist, blended the styles of Peale and Schindler. He had faith in a God of sorts, preached

the Gospel of Success, and believed that people could create positive emotions through conscious thought control. He explicitly rejected Freud. Happiness was a mental habit. This concept was an ancient Epicurean and Stoic ideal, and had been used by Lippmann, Brande and Carnegie. But Maltz, like Schindler, gave it much more attention and emphasis than the earlier writers. Fromm, Friedan and Neill disagreed. They did not think man was as adaptive, or as flexible as Maltz and Schindler believed. In a sense they froze man's nature. According to Fromm, to be happy, man needed a "productive orientation" and brotherly love. Fromm rejected Freud's view of sex, and his belief in the inevitable battle between man's instincts and civilization. Man needed love. He could not adjust to the standards of modern society without suffering dire consequences. Friedan was also rather rigid. She said women could only experience "self-realization" if they were engaged in fulfilling work. Neill too denied that human beings were as adaptive as Maltz believed; man had an unalterable need for a free upbringing if he was to fulfill his potential. For Fromm and Neill, there was no good or evil in the Biblical sense, only good and bad educations. A "productively oriented" child would ultimately become a responsive, loving adult, free from hate and fierce competitive drives. An adult who missed a free upbringing could be repaired to some extent, but it was a difficult task,



requiring skilled therapy.

Brown was unique. She was not particularly interested in man's adaptability. She was concerned primarily with glamorous consumption and sexual pleasure. No other best-selling guide ever recommended hedonism so candidly, or so crassly, without even a nod to the Golden Rule or brotherly love. In fact, Brown advised being dishonest and exploitative when it helped. And she callously dismissed human beings she considered dull, "creepy," or neurotic. Her aggressive attitude was reminiscent of Pitkin's Social Darwinism. Brown was also the first author since Hillis to recommend sex outside of marriage. But she was a much bolder advocate than Hillis. Virgins were labeled inhibited and unhappy. Married men were acceptable partners. And it was permissible to have more than one lover at a time. But sex was more than just a source of physical pleasure to Brown; it could also be used to earn money, advance a career, or increase the number and quality of a woman's dates. Brown was also the first author to mention the famous Kinsey Report.

Fromm was more conservative about sex. He specifically rejected Freud's theory of sexuality. Sexual desire was not man's main motive force. Instead, it was just one manifestation of man's need for love. Thus sex was only meaningful when accompanied by brotherly love. Friedan said very little about sex. She approved of a satisfying sex life for women, but said

little about how they could achieve it, other than to insist that well-educated, high-dominance women had richer sex lives than women in the grip of the feminine mystique. She too quoted Kinsey. Neill believed in a free sex life for people of all ages, including children. He also believed modern methods of contraception would eventually lead to a new sexual morality. Maltz practically ignored sex. And for this reason, he alone of the writers of the sixties would have been at home among the earlier best-sellers. That he was now an exception underscored the changes taking place in America. A new spirit was emerging. To sense the magnitude of the change, one had only to contrast the sexual attitudes expressed in the sixties with those of the thirties. Brown, Friedan and Neill would have been unthinkable in an era dominated by thinkers like Dimnet, Young, Link and Carnegie. But in the intervening twenty years the spirit of psychologists like Freud and Reich, anthropologists like Malinowski, investigators like Kinsey and birth control advocates like Margaret Sanger had infiltrated the mass culture, and suddenly the "unthinkable" began to dominate the best-seller lists.

But despite their new interest in sex, the best-sellers continued to be fairly indifferent to the other physical aspects of life. Brown, Fromm and Neill mentioned diet and praised the benefits of exercise, but no author put particular stress on diet or exercise as a means of achieving happiness.

Sex was not the only subject which reflected a more adventurous spirit in the sixties. More and more radical political and social ideas began to appear in the best-sellers, although Brown, for one, was still happy with American capitalism since she approved of glamorous consumption and fierce competition. Maltz too accepted capitalism, and, like Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale, he glorified the culture and aspirations of salesmen, athletes and small businessmen, although, unlike Brown, he wanted their individualism tempered with charity and humaneness. Maltz asked for no change in the American system, not even that the schools teach his version of psycho-cybernetics.

But unlike Maltz and Brown, Friedan, Fromm and Neill were highly critical of American society. According to Friedan, American capitalism encouraged wastefulness and meaningless consumption. And even with the built in waste, the economy still needed huge military allocations to function successfully. Moreover, business systematically misled and exploited women. And instead of enlightening women, the American educational system cooperated by perpetuating the feminine mystique. Friedan compared the plight of women to the exploitation and injustice inflicted on the blacks. (Maltz, Brown and Neill ignored the problem of race.) Still, despite her bitter criticism of America, Friedan accepted the basic system. Her goal was to have women enter this exploitative society

on equal terms. The only concrete reforms she suggested were a woman's version of the G. I. educational bill, and a massive propaganda campaign to inform women of the dangers of the feminine mystique. In the end, Friedan sounded like Hillis, Brande, and Pitkin. Life was merely action and movement.

Neill and Fromm were both more radical than Friedan. Neill totally condemned capitalism. It stunted the emotional growth of human beings. Moreover, it even failed at the task it was perpetually claiming to excel at; it did not, despite its claims, provide materially for all the people. Poverty still pitted society; and the Great Depression and the various recessions had caused a great deal of unnecessary suffering. But Neill was no political revolutionary. He rejected violence. Instead he hoped that free children would eventually change society voluntarily.

Erich Fromm agreed with Neill about capitalism, and his attack was even more detailed and specific. Capitalism treated people as commodities, even in sexual matters. Life was merely a matter of procuring a series of "good bargains." Fromm specifically criticized Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale for encouraging this approach to living, which led inevitably to a splintered society where men were emotionally isolated, ashamed, anxious and guilty. This unnecessary neurotic suffering accounted for the West's increased dependence on drugs, alcohol, crime, suicide and meaningless sex. Capitalism must

end. Fromm favored a decentralized government, worker control of industry, more equal income, world government and disarmament. But he too opposed violent revolution; the changes must be voluntary. Thus even in the 1960's, despite their radical demands, best-selling guides were still opposed to violent revolution. In fact, they were still reluctant to spell out in detail evolutionary political programs which would procure the societies they considered desirable.

The writers of the sixties were also traditional concerning the question of evidence. None was particularly concerned with proving his claims. As with the earlier best-selling guides they did not burden their readers with theological, philosophical or empirical evidence. Brown based her view of life on her own and her friends' experience. Except for a few references to the Kinsey Report, she ignored any formal philosophical, religious or psychological justification. She simply assumed that the life style she recommended would satisfy any enlightened woman with common sense. Fromm did justify his position with elaborate discussions of philosophy, religion and psychology, and concluded that man had a human nature which could and usually was betrayed in a capitalist society. But despite the elaborate discussion, Fromm offered no real proof that man could not adjust to adversity and emotional deprivation, even in a Capitalist society. One assumed that Fromm's position was based on the findings of

his clinical practice. But his actual explanation was not documented. In the end, it rested on untested assumptions. Like Fromm, Friedan was also convinced that human beings had a definite nature which would be frustrated without challenging work. But unlike Fromm, she did not bother with elaborate religious, psychological, or philosophical discussions. She based her conclusion on her own experience and on the findings of certain psychologists whose empirical evidence, if it existed, she ignored.

Neill was another pragmatist. What made people happy was justified as long as it did not harm others. Neill supported his position by citing both his forty years of experience at Summerhill and the work of Freud, whose theories he modified in the light of his own personal experience and possibly of the work of Wilhelm Reich. But Neill did not present any systematic evidence either. There were no statistics or carefully controlled experiments. His explanations were anecdotal. For the most part the reader was asked to accept Neill's unchecked observations and guesses.

Maltz made absolutely no attempt to explain, no less justify, his religious position. Nor did he attempt to reconcile his belief in cultural relativism and determinism with his faith in a paternalistic God. His confidence in the efficacy of controlling emotions through conscious thought control was based on his clinical experience. But he gave no real data

to buttress his claims. Nor did he give any proof concerning his claim that the system he called psycho-cybernetics actually enabled people to learn his techniques more rapidly.

Despite their lack of empirical evidence, Fromm, Neill and Friedan assumed that their readers would be interested in sustained discussions of such topics as child rearing, religion, psychology and advertising. Brown and Maltz were more in the tradition of writers like Hillis, Carnegie, Peale and Boone; for the most part they took no chance on boring or confusing their readers with details or long discussions of the pros and cons of their position. They preferred pace to depth.

As was noted earlier Maltz disagreed with Fromm, Friedan and Neill about man's ability to adapt. Actually, this particular conflict existed, in one form or another, among all the best-selling guides throughout the entire period, 1929-1965. It could be seen even in the very first year where Lippmann's disinterestedness clashed with Dimnet's Catholicism. Throughout the entire period one group of best-selling writers insisted that man had a "human nature" which could be betrayed, although they seldom agreed about how that nature was to be defined. Another group insisted that man was eminently flexible, and could adapt emotionally and intellectually to changing circumstances. Among the first group one could include all the religiously-oriented writers from Dimnet to Maltz (although

writers like Maltz and Carnegie had a foot in both camps), Freudians like Blanton and Neill, and a neo-Marxist like Fromm. The second group was less numerous, and would include Lippmann, Jacobson, Schindler, Carnegie and Maltz. Of course none of the second group were purists. They too limited man's adaptability with some philosophical or ethical reservations, Lippmann did not recommend applying the principle of disinterestedness to murder or financial exploitation. He assumed man had a stoic-like social conscience. And while Schindler advised people to ignore the popular social mores concerning business and success, he wanted them to respect the sexual customs of their day. And neither Carnegie nor Maltz asked men to live without a belief in a comforting God. Thus in every case faith in man's adaptability had limits. No one granted their readers the right to choose any life they wanted. But finally in the sixties, one popular writer, Albert Ellis, pushed the disinterestedness of Lippmann and the re-conditioning techniques of Schindler and Maltz to their logical conclusions. He stressed man's ability to adjust emotionally and intellectually without limiting his flexibility with ethical restrictions of any kind. Ellis was a noted New York clinical psychologist who wrote a number of popular books, although none ever made the yearly best-seller list.<sup>2</sup>

Ellis was determinist. Man was a product of his own and the race's history. Thus moral guilt in the Biblical sense



did not exist. It was philosophically irrational for man to blame himself for his mistakes, or to feel guilty about his conduct. It was equally irrational to judge your self-worth by your accomplishments, or by your moral virtues. From a scientific point of view, no one could prove that life had a predetermined goal or purpose. Life was merely a matter of doing, and the deeds did not have moral value. "Moral value" was a man-made concept which changed from locale to locale, from era to era. Deeds did bring pleasure and pain. And Ellis advised people to judge their conduct and the conduct of others on this basis. Pleasure was desirable, pain undesirable. Thus Ellis sanctioned a form of intelligent, long-range hedonism.

As an after thought, Betty Friedan had wondered if we lived in "a sick or immature society." The phrase "sick society" soon became a cliché, applied freely whenever people discussed war, poverty, the consumer society, advertising, race, drugs, riots and assassinations. But Ellis gave the term "sick" a unique twist. Not only were wars, poverty, racism and the other grim aspects of our culture usually symptoms of irrationality and "sickness," but the people who condemned these symptoms and branded them vile usually did so in equally compulsive and irrational terms. It was the proverbial blind leading the blind. The critics usually condemned people who manifested undesirable traits in terms of sin or evil. Moreover, they labeled wrongdoers as unworthy human beings. Thus

even the nominally un-religious took a basically religious attitude; they implicitly denied that all men were the products of their own and the race's history. They insisted that men were morally responsible for their choices, a judgment which implied the existence of a God-like dispenser of grace which was accepted by the elect, and refused by the damned. Thus in Ellis's terms a white racist was irrational, but so was Martin Luther King who criticized the racist in terms of the Baptist religion and Biblical morality; a vicious policeman was probably irrational, but again so was a critic who branded him a pig, and an unworthy human being; and while Hitler's racism was unscientific and irrational, so was a man who thought the Jews were God's chosen people.

Ellis' standards could be applied to some of the best-selling guides. Friedan was right to insist that it was irrational to deny a woman the right to seek a career, but she was equally irrational to insist that a woman could not be happy without a career. Fromm too was irrational in Ellis' terms; a human being may want love, and strive for it, but a rational person could be reasonably happy without it.

In Ellis' opinion our society was dominated on all sides by irrational styles of thinking, and an irrational style was more of an obstacle to human happiness than any particular undesirable idea or institution such as racism or a foolish, wasteful economy. The prevalence of the irrational style guar-

anted that men would continue to torture themselves and others unnecessarily, no matter what political or economic system prevailed. But like the other guides to happiness, Ellis offered no concrete suggestions on how rational thinking could be introduced into our society on a mass scale. In his books, he seemed apolitical.

Looking back, a great variety of religious, philosophical, psychological and economic ideas were reflected in the best-selling guides to happiness between 1929 and 1965. America was not a simple culture. It was as if a number of very distinct cultural traditions co-existed side by side, even among the middle class. (Imagine the difficulties facing a politician or a school board attempting to please enough members of this mixed audience to get elected.) But despite the variety, three basic approaches to life did emerge. Some writers advised Americans to discover man's true nature and to shape their lives accordingly. Another group moved toward a more existential interpretation of life; man was adaptable and could mold his own destiny, although, of course, no one pushed this point of view to its logical conclusion as Ellis had. A third group - people like Pitkin, Brande, Hillis and Brown--ignored theories of human nature, and advised their readers to plunge into life, seeking action and movement, without reflection, more or less accepting or rejecting, as was convenient, the economic, social and sexual mores of the day.

And these mores changed as can be seen from a detailed study of the best-selling guides to happiness from 1929 to 1965. In fact only two traditions held during the entire period. No writer stressed the dark side of life, or saw existence as an absurdity not worth the pain and effort every human being faced. And no writer recommended suicide as a solution to unhappiness, not even if a person was suffering from a terminal disease. Every other economic, social and political standard was eventually challenged. Looking back we can see certain trends developing: there was a decided shift from an absolute to a relativistic standard of morality; traditional religion was increasingly criticized; depth psychology and behaviorism grew in popularity; hedonism and free sexuality were more openly sanctioned; and the attacks on capitalism increased in frequency and severity.

Still no writer offered a working program to reorganize society in the foreseeable future. All the critics--conservative, liberal and radical--assumed that a wise person would change his personality so that he could discover or create a comfortable niche within the existing system; a person might drop-out or plunge-in but he had to deal with America's evolving capitalist society. He had no other choice.

## NOTES

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2. Albert Ellis, The Art and Science of Love (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1960); The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Man-Hunting (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1963); Sex and the Single Man, (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1963); The Theory and Practice of Rational-Emotive Psychotherapy (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1964).

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