

DEWEY, FREUD, AND AMERICAN MORALITY

Democracy and Education. By John Dewey. (1916; paper ed., New York The Free Press, 1966). Pp. 378. \$2.75 paper.

The Child and the Curriculum and *The School and Society.* By John Dewey. (1902 and 1899 respectively; revised ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971). \$5.00 cloth, \$1.50 paper.

The Future of an Illusion. By Sigmund Freud. (1927; New York: Liveright Publ. Corp., 1953; Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, n.d.). \$4.95 cloth (Liveright ed.), \$1.25 paper (Anchor Books ed.):

Totem and Taboo. By Sigmund Freud. (1913; paper ed., New York: Vintage Books, 1946), Pp. 207. \$1.65 paper.

☛ ocqueville said (in 1835):

Go into the churches (I mean the Protestant ones), you will hear morality preached, of dogma not a word.,.. The different preachers, treating only the common ground of morality, cannot do each other any harm.¹

Among success oriented, self-interested Americans of the last century, the existence of this utilitarian religion was a fundamental reason for a degree of altruism or conscience. However, historical studies of educational textbooks and religious primers show a remarkable decline in subject matter devoted to character or ethical education. This decline in ethical education became noticeable in the late nineteenth century and precipitous after the first world war. Concepts of individual responsibility were replaced by those of social justice and later by considerations of individual health and adjustment.

Over the same period, European democracies experienced many of the same intellectual and social trends, but considerably more character education survived there than did in the United States. In this study we will review the works of two men, John Dewey and Sigmund Freud, who were influential in reinterpreting human experience, so that a lingering religious morality was replaced in America by "scientific" optimism.

¹Quoted in S. M. Lipset, *The First New Nation* (New York: Basic Books, 1963; reprint ed., Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, 1967), p. 176.

Both Dewey and Freud were apostles of a "scientific," progressive creed. In spite of their self-identification, one wonders what was scientific about them. Obviously by modern standards, Freudian techniques seem more like dream craft than science; Dewey, trained in German idealism, was a comparatively late and perhaps inadequately prepared scientific convert. Nevertheless, it is more important to see what choices these men made on the questions of their day—particularly the conflict between religious authority and scientific progress—than to ask whether they fulfilled modern notions of scientific investigation. Therefore when we use the term science, we do so in the context and in the manner in which these men thought of science, and not by contemporary scientific standards.

Today John Dewey is better known as a pedagogue than as a philosopher. Dewey's emphasis, however, on practical experience and observation as the ground for all knowledge, including ethical knowledge, his trust in science and the democratic process to build the new society, and his condemnation and rejection of religion and of history as mistaken and restrictive, continue for the most part to pass at face value among both American intellectuals and educators.

Sigmund Freud is a slightly more complex figure than Dewey. To judge by Freud's scorn of democratic America and his rigid personal habits, one might think of him as a bourgeois conservative. To do so would be to misunderstand the basic thrust of his intellectual and social thought, which was inveterately hostile to most social and religious restrictions. Freud's battle cry against "unnecessary" repression has, particularly in this country, overturned many aspects of nineteenth century thought.

The teachings of Dewey and Freud, while encountering resistance in the United States, have been more successful here than in Europe or elsewhere. Positively, Dewey and Freud modified some unnecessarily restrictive features of Victorian morality. Nevertheless, on balance, we believe that the absence in their thought of a reasonable ethical basis (the result of their "scientific" optimism) can help to explain the country's present intellectual antipathy to ethical education, and that this constitutes part of the reason for our increasingly appalling crime rate.

I. *Pragmatic Ethics*

John Dewey was a major exponent of pragmatism, a philosophy influential in American thought in the first few decades of this century. Pragmatists, or instrumentalists, found that knowledge lies in

doing; and that truth is what all who are investigating a subject will finally agree is the truth. Sensation is a process of stimulus response by which the organism learns of a problem and adjusts to its environment thus, ideas originate in problem situations.²

Dewey believed his philosophy to be particularly American. It is beyond doubt that the progressive and unstable character of American life and civilization has facilitated the birth of a philosophy which regards the world as being in continuous formation, where there is still place for indeterminism, for the new, and for a real future."³

Dewey's philosophy left no room for absolute moral standards on scientific grounds. The supposed fact that morals demand immutable extratemporal principles, standards, norms, ends, as the only assured protection against moral chaos can, however, no longer appeal to natural science for its support, nor expect to justify by science its exemption of morals (in practice and in theory) from considerations of time and place—that is, from processes of change."⁴

Dewey, after he had abandoned an early neo-Hegelian idealism, thus clearly rejected absolute moral values—and perhaps also rejected any notion of the existence of moral values which, although relative, receive general acceptance.

In addition to rejecting absolute values, Dewey rejected any authoritative pedagogy. Education, according to him, was "a continuous reconstruction of experience in which there was a development of immature experience towards experience funded with the skills and habit of intelligence."⁵

The author of *Democracy and Education*, however, did not view himself as an enemy of morals. He was the writer of two books and many articles dealing primarily with morals, in addition to discussing moral problems in many other publications. It is true that his philosophical position on ethical problems changed from an Hegelian idealism to a pragmatic realism, but he was never "anti-ethical" in the sense in which Nietzsche attacked moral stands as an obstruction to the human will.

Nevertheless, his most famous, most influential, and most widely

² This analysis follows Neil G. McCluskey, *Public Schools and Moral Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 198-200.

³ John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization* (New York: Balch & Co., 1931), p. 33.

⁴ John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1948), p. xiii.

⁵ Richard J. Bernstein, "John Dewey," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. II.

published book, *Democracy and Education*, imposes almost insuperable objections to the teaching of ethics. He objected strenuously to separate moral education, and thought all education made for morality:

Moral education in school is practically hopeless when we set up the development of character as a supreme end, and, at the same time, treat the acquiring of knowledge and the development of understanding, which of necessity occupy the chief part of school time, as having nothing to do with character. On such a basis, moral education is inevitably reduced to some kind of catechetical instruction, or lessons about morals.^e

A narrow and moralistic view of morals is responsible for the failure to recognize that all the aims and values which are desirable in education are themselves moral. Discipline, natural development, culture, social efficiency, are moral traits-marks of a person who is a worthy member of that society which it is the business of education to further.?

Neither of the above statements is, by itself, necessarily untrue. But these criticisms are not followed by any suggestion for instruction which is not "narrow and moralistic" or which *does* include morals as part of general knowledge. Dewey then proceeded to impose a limitation on ethical education which he did not impose on mathematical or historical or scientific education: that ethics could be taught only in the experience of the school. While Dewey continued to regard ethical instruction as a necessary part of education, one can easily understand why his pedagogical followers would get the message that the schools needed to do no more than to set a good example by conducting themselves on a moral basis.

Democracy and Education has a number of references to ethics, some of them favorable to ethics or its teaching. Dewey begins his chapter on "Theories of Morals" with a strong favorable statement:

It is a commonplace of educational theory that the establishing of character is a comprehensive aim of school instruction and discipline." However, this reminiscence of the idealistic Dewey is immediately qualified by a warning against moral education by itself:

Hence it is important that we should be on our guard against a conception of the relations of intelligence to character which hampers the realization of the aim, and on the look-out for the condi-

^e Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 354.

Ibid., p.359.

tions which have to be provided in order that the aim may be successfully acted upon.⁸

Dewey discusses the conflict between "principle" and "interest" as motivators of men. Acting upon "the principle of a course of action," he solves the conflict. Applied to schools, we have the following results from this principle:

Assuming, however, that school conditions are such as to provide desirable occupations, it is interest in the occupation as a whole that is, in its continuous development-which keeps a pupil at his work in spite of temporary diversions and unpleasant obstacles. Where there is no activity having a growing significance, appeal to principle is either purely verbal or a form of obstinate pride or an appeal to extraneous considerations clothed with a valid title.⁹

Dewey was an honest and thorough thinker, so we can find this thought-that morality exists and is to be learned only in the process of individual growth-again and again in *Democracy and Education*. Discussing education as a social function, he concludes that ... such direct participation furnishes almost the sole influence for rearing the young into the practices and beliefs of the group."¹⁰ In discussing education as direction, he concludes that the basic control resides in the nature of the situation in which the young take part. In social situations the young have to refer their way of acting to what others are doing, and make it fit in. "¹¹

In discussing the aims of education, Dewey tries to avoid the "depreciatory estimate of the masses characteristic of an aristocratic community.... But if democracy has a moral and ideal meaning, it is that a social return be demanded from all and that opportunity for development of distinctive capacities be afforded all."¹² Apparently, he honestly believed that a democracy must develop its own values through the experience of all students.

Writing of history, Dewey concludes that "the great heroes who have advanced human destiny" are not the politicians, generals, and diplomats, but the scientists, inventors, artists, and poets. Through them one can understand the advance of humanity, through the course of history:

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.346.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.17.

Ibid., p.39.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

Pursued in this fashion, history would most naturally become of ethical value in teaching. Intelligent insight into present forms of associated life is necessary for a character whose morality is more than colorless innocence.¹³

Historical examples, however, are not a useful means of teaching ethics:

... The use of history for cultivating a socialized intelligence constitutes its moral significance. It is possible to employ it [history] as a kind of reservoir of anecdotes to be drawn on to inculcate special moral lessons on this virtue or that vice. But such teaching is not so much an ethical use of history as it is an effort to create moral impressions by means of more or less authentic material. At best, it produces a temporary emotional glow; at worst, callous indifference to moralizing.¹⁴

In his chapter on educational values, Dewey speedily disposes of "moral goods" like honesty, amiability, perseverance, loyalty, and the Golden Rule in morals:

These principles are so important as standards of judging the worth of new experiences that parents and instructors are always tending to teach them directly to the young. They overlook the danger that standards so taught will be merely symbolic; that is, largely conventional and verbal. In reality, working as distinct from professed standards depends upon what an individual has himself specifically appreciated to be deeply significant in concrete situations.¹⁵

The essence of Dewey's thought on teaching ethics seems to be that it cannot be taught directly, but can be learned only in doing other things. Dewey may well be right in assuming that the process of learning and Of working at vocations or professions is one of the best means of acquiring the ethics of learning or the ethics of the vocation or profession concerned. But Dewey's elimination of all other means of teaching ethics is authoritarian and insupportable. Take for example the elimination of history's "reservoir of anecdotes" regarding morals because teaching them would only produce a "temporary emotional glow." Does Dewey have any real basis for this statement? Have not military academies produced courage in their

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

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graduates by teaching of the courage of their predecessors? Did not the efforts of the British public schools to tell their pupils of the achievements of "old boys" not help to produce what Professor Friedrich has described as the "miraculous" nineteenth century improvement in the honesty of British public life? Have the examples of Socrates and Jesus had no influence on human values?

Human history records a number of persons who succeeded in improving the moral performance of their followers by teaching. The teachings of Jesus Christ are generally agreed to have helped end the cruel gladiatorial games of the Roman Empire. Historians of Methodism have shown that the teachings of John Wesley had a powerful effect on British attitudes towards slavery and other mistreatment of Africans in the nineteenth century.

If the world had to rely on each man learning his own ethics in pursuing his studies and his vocations, as Dewey suggests, one wonders how nations or races or religious groups could have improved themselves. Curiously, Dewey believes that through Science, mankind is progressing generally and that this should be taught.¹⁰ The Idea of Progress becomes his theological belief, but he forbids the teaching of individual ethics as part of Progress.

Like most of us, Dewey has his inconsistencies. Personal morals cannot be taught, but international morals can:

It is not enough to teach the horrors of war and to avoid everything which would stimulate international jealousy and animosity. The emphasis must be put upon whatever binds people together in cooperative human pursuits and results, apart from geographical limitations.... This conclusion is bound up with the very idea of education as a freeing of individual capacity in a progressive growth directed to social aims.¹⁷

Personal morals cannot be defined, but the social aims of morality apparently can be: The conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society which we have in mind."¹⁸

The reviewers view these last two inconsistencies as less serious errors. Most writers on education are likely to fall into the trap of confusing "let's simply educate" with "let's educate towards good ends."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

Perhaps Dewey fell in more deeply because of his reaction against "moralistic" teaching of the nineteenth century type and his enthusiasm for the brave *new* world of twentieth century pragmatic liberals. Much *more* serious is the fact that in *Democracy and Education* Dewey, who was long the focus of American educational thought, summarily rejected the teaching of ethics, either by precept *or* example.

II. *Dewey's Pedagogy: The School and Society*

The School and Society is Dewey's second most important book on education. The book is made up of three lectures delivered at the University of Chicago Elementary School in 1899 and five other chapters, all eight printed together in 1915. *The School and Society* is more pedagogical and less philosophic than *Democracy and Education*. The former reviews elementary education where the latter reviews all education. With an exception to be noted later, *The School and Society* follows a theory of moral education through growth (excluding examples, *or* precepts) like that in *Democracy and Education*. Froebel, a German educational philosopher, was right, says Dewey, in trying to make the activities of the child in the kindergarten be like those of the world outside. Unfortunately, German ethical principles were "too restricted and authoritative," so Froebel had to view them as symbolic of abstract principle. Fortunately for us, "there certainly is change enough and progress enough in the social conditions of the United States today, as compared with those of the Germany of his day, to justify making kindergarten activities more natural, more direct, and more real representations of current life than Froebel's disciples have done."¹⁰

In discussing the importance of work interests, Dewey writes:

Take these things out of the present social life, and see how little would remain—and this not only on the material side, but as regards intellectual, aesthetic and moral activities,²⁰ for these are largely and necessarily bound *up* with occupations.

The industrial history of mankind is an ethical record as well; the account of the conditions which men have patiently wrought out to serve their ends."²¹ This thought that study of industrial his-

¹⁰ Dewey, *The School and Society*, p. 122.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

tory might have moral purposes leads us to the single case in which *The School and Society* advocates teaching ethics by illustrative example:

On 'the more direct social side, American history (especially that of the period of colonization) is selected as furnishing a typical example of patience; courage, ingenuity, and continual judgement in adapting means to ends, even in the face of great hazard and obstacle; while the material itself is so definite, vivid and human as to come directly within the range of the child's representative and constructive imagination and thus becomes, vicariously at least, a part of his own expanding consciousness.²²

Perhaps these last comments explain an inconsistency of Dewey's writings on moral education: Dewey will allow teachers to take examples of good moral qualities from history if the history comes directly within the range of the child's imagination. The lives of Socrates and Jesus are out of the range of imagination, but our pioneer forebears fighting the Indians and building their cabins in the woods are within it.

These two books by Dewey were widely read by educators and set the tone for ethical education in America for several decades. Both consistently warn against any teaching of ethics except through the process of learning other things (with the exception of colonial craftsmen). Did this warning come from the philosophic nature of pragmatism or from Dewey's pedagogical theories?

The answer seems to lie in a combination of the two. Pragmatism was based on an effort to draw truth and values from experience, with no intellectual or religious bases; so it was perhaps logical that ethics should be drawn from experience. Dewey, however, did allow teachers of other aspects of life to cite experiences of leaders in their professions. In ethics alone did he put a positive ban on use of the "reservoir of anecdotes" of human ethical experience. The "anecdotes" were banned because they would give only a temporary emotional tone.

What led Dewey to be so hard on school teaching of a field in which he was himself the co-author of a major college text? The reviewers suspect that he was still angry at what he described as the "moralistic" and "authoritarian" efforts to teach religious ethics in the public schools in the nineteenth century. Father McCluskey, in his searching and sympathetic analysis of Dewey, gives many good

²² *Loc. cit.*, pp. 107-108.

examples of Dewey's reaction against the authoritarian religious ethics of his times. Dewey, to whom science was very important, found that "ethical science is not distinct in its methods and conceptions from physical science."²³ Dewey was probably leery of the return of dogmatic ethics in any form; hence his reactions against the teaching of ethics. Dewey also optimistically shared in a hope for the future that with the general acceptance of his philosophy schools would produce the ideal society and more formalistic teaching of ethics would not be needed.

As the next section will indicate, present day educators are beginning to move away from Dewey's narrow restrictions on teaching ethics. Recent examples of corrupt graduates of excellent universities and high crime rates among relatively well-educated boys have led us to inquire into methods of teaching ethics beyond the too simplistic formula of teaching only through experience in the school.

III. *The Influence of Dewey on Other Pedagogical Writers*

Although Dewey's philosophy has now largely lost its pedagogical followers, his leadership remained strong into the forties. He thought more deeply than any of the pedagogues and seemed to be modern in his thought. There may have been a score of books and several score articles on education for character development or on ethical or moral education published by American academic writers since *Democracy and Education*. Almost all reflect Dewey's emphasis on character development through the work of the school. This review will comment rapidly on a number of those books. The books were written for and read by teachers, many of whom undoubtedly also read one or more of the volumes written by Dewey.

In some of the books there is a discussion of "direct moral teaching," apparently meaning lectures or a teacher-led discussion of ethical responsibilities, or the use of slogans, oaths, or pledges. "Direct" teaching was probably counter to Dewey's pedagogy, but it died slowly. In one poll in the 1920s, forty-five percent of school superintendents were in favor of "direct" teaching. However, the bulk of the writers of the books discussed in this section did not agree;

There is considerable exposition of how classroom or school activities can be used to help develop character. Some ingenuity has

²³ McCluskey, *Public Schools and Moral Education*, Chapters IX and X, especially p. 204.

gone into devising methods of character training through activities. Few of the writers note frankly the sporadic and uncertain nature of this method-how it overlooks many students who do not participate in activities.

McKown's *Character Education*²⁴ reviews many plans in different areas for "citizenship contests," "School Republics," "Knighthood of Youth," and similar arrangements. His summary of the trends in "character education" in chapter four sounds as if it came directly from John Dewey:

1. A decreasing confidence in the use of formal rules . . . and similar formal material, and an increasing confidence in the utilization of opportunities that afford actual practice.
2. A decreasing emphasis upon sentiment and emotion, and an increasing emphasis upon intelligently arrived at ideals.
3. A decreasing emphasis upon *ex cathedra* pronouncements, and an increasing emphasis upon an understanding and appreciation of causes and effects.
4. A decreasing emphasis upon personal goodness as a sole aim, and an increasing emphasis upon social responsibility and social responsiveness.
5. In general, a decreasing emphasis upon abstract theory, and an increasing emphasis upon concrete practice.

Charles and Edith Germane published a book on character education in 1929 which seems to emphasize techniques more than basic ethical objectives.²⁵ Chapter headings include: "Subject Matter and Character Building," "The Assignment and Character Building," "Pupil Participation in Self-Government," and "The Home Room Organization."

A thoughtful book by Hartford²⁶ gives a number of examples of experimentation in teaching ethics by individual schools or school districts in Kentucky. The examples are classified as "community" or "supervisory" or "faculty-student" approaches. They include social work by students and discussion of **ethical material**.

A 1930 book, *Selected Readings in Character Education*, by Professor Dennis C. Troth²⁷ gives a cross section of educational ideas. A few extracts favored the "Direct Method of Character Training."

²⁴ Harry C. McKown, *Character Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935).

²⁵ *Character Education* (New York: Silver, Bendett & Co., 1929).

⁴⁰ Ellis Ford Hartford, *Moral Values in Public Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958).

Boston: The Beacon Press, 1930.

An Englishman writing in 1909, the leader of the St. Louis Ethical Society in 1911, and a writer in *Religious Education* are the only formal writers for the "direct method. Troth himself wrote: For the most part the child's character will be acquired as he acquires the measles: it will be caught rather than taught, and measles cannot be caught from one who does not have them."²⁸

Professor Harold Tuttle, in *Character Education by Church and State*,²⁹ cites many examples of character education through experiences in "uplift clubs." He writes that "a revival of direct ethical instruction is evident, (p. 54) citing a U.S. Bureau of Education publication of 1926 and a National Education Association publication. He further indicates that this public school emphasis on character education is intimately related to "the growing demand for religious education." He adds, however, a note of doubt which from today's point of view seems very relevant "To what degree it will prove an asset remains for the future to determine." (pp. 57-58).

In 1944 the John Dewey Society brought out a Yearbook *on The Public Schools and Spiritual Values*, much better written than Dewey's own publications. The term spiritual values was clearly defined to include moral values. The committee of authors proposed "to maintain both the logical possibility and the practical potential adequacy of the public school to teach such spiritual values-and this on the basis of human reason and experience and without necessary recourse to religious authority."³⁰

The thought of a John Dewey Society that the public schools might teach spiritual values is itself a shift from the earlier anti-religious attitudes of Dewey (possibly a reaction against German National Socialism). In general, however, the Yearbook restates the thoughts of Dewey: that nothing "supernatural" should be discussed in the schools; that most should be learned from experience (p. 76) and that religions should be studied by the ordinary, empirical procedures characteristic of the other work of the public school" (p. 78). However, a later statement contradicts the last: "But if the entire emotional content of religion were drained off so that it was not religion at all that was being taught, skepticism would result" (p. 85).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

²⁹ New York: Abingdon Press, 1930.

³⁰ John S. Brubacher, ed., *The Public Schools and Spiritual Values* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), p. 3.

There were a few exceptions to the general dominance of Dewey an opposition to teaching ethics. A more thoughtful book *on Education for Moral Growth*³¹ by Henry Neumann carefully considers the development of ethical values in various parts of education. Perhaps Neumann's greatest contribution is his appraisal of "the pragmatist criticism." He concludes that Instrumentalism (Pragmatism of Dewey) has performed excellent service in showing the folly of choosing school work without regard to student and group activities. Its service, however, has been greater in exposing the harm by the traditional schooling than in pointing to concrete, positive ends (p. 185).

Tunis Romein, *in Education and Responsibility* presents the pragmatist view of ethics objectively, perhaps even sympathetically, Romein himself, however, then swings around to a point of view accepting religious and moral education:

And obviously no religion must ever be arbitrarily forced upon the conscience of any man. But on the other hand the community, too, ought to have its rights, one of them being the reasonable means of constructively basing *its* education upon the Christian heritage of the Western world if it sees *fit* to do so, this to be accomplished free from the legal interference by either an individual or a minority that chooses not *to* accept this traditional Christian heritage. (p. 197)

In spite of the few doubts expressed by the advocates of "direct" character training and the Neumann and Romein qualifications, there can be no doubt that Dewey's theory of educating for ethics solely *by* experience dominated American writing on character education for a half century.

Further studies *by* the Salvatori Center confirm the on-going effects of Dewey's view of ethical education *on* the schools themselves. A letter enquiring about ethical education was sent to the fifty State Superintendents of Public Instruction. Thirty-one answered; a *number* sending along printed material. About a third of these states reported that the state office had no cognizance of a program in ethics or morals or values. Approximately another third reported programs which had scattered references to rules or laws or values.

The remaining third reported active programs, chiefly of what is

³¹ New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1928.

³² Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1955.

often called "values clarification," quoting the title of a book by Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum.³³ Use of the values clarification literature is spreading in the pedagogical world. It is a partial reversal of John Dewey, who was often unwilling to admit that a school could teach any values extending over more than one time and in more than in one place. But it sticks close to Dewey by exhorting the teacher not to "indoctrinate" and to use the experience of the student in the school as a major means of teaching.

Another excellent example of the values literature is *Values and Teaching* by Rath, Harmin, and Simon.³⁴ The book is filled with useful pedagogical suggestions about teaching values. The teacher is cautioned against "moralizing," but told he may present his own conclusions after class discussion and only at his own opinion. But, after admiring the pedagogic value of the book, its reader must still conclude that it is really only an introduction to rather general classroom discussion. It brings in none of the experience of mankind on ethical issues. It makes no effort to help students form a connected, rational view of such problems. It perpetuates most of what is wrong with John Dewey's views of teaching ethics.

A few of the states' programs, including those of California and Kentucky, openly advocated teaching moral *and spiritual* values—the latter, of course, on a non-denominational basis. This advocacy appears to be a sharp reversal of Dewey's advocacy of no religion in the schools. There are enough comments against "indoctrination," and spiritual values are, so generally defined, however, that no one need expect the return of teaching of religion to the classroom. Teaching about comparative religion is appearing in a number of jurisdictions.

IV. *Psychoanalysis and Morality*

Although parlor psychoanalysis has passed and few remaining¹ Freudians are found outside of departments of English, Freud's legacy is still difficult to over-rate. His revolt against "Victorian" morality, particularly the rigidity and hypocrisy of its sexual relations, has been amazingly successful in America. Whether Freud in fact de-

¹Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum, *Values Clarification* (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1972).

²Louis B. Rath, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney B. Simon (Columbus [Ohio]: Charles E. Merrill Co., 1965).

sired a complete repudiation of Victorianism is a question insufficiently considered by disseminators of the master's teaching. Whether he did or did not, Freud's theory of the sexual origins of civilization has necessarily changed attitudes relating to moral education and the causes of crime, along with those relating to adultery and pre-marital sex. By undermining the hypocritical standards of the Victorian bourgeoisie, Freud may have unconsciously accelerated the democratization of Western society. This would be a particularly ironic fate for the Viennese Freud, who found democratic Americans' cooking bad, their informality obnoxious, and their psyches disposed to religious mind cures-including his own.

It is possible to divide Freud's life into two parts. The first might be styled as his clinical period, 1890-1920. Largely eschewing philosophical or political questions, Freud concentrated on developing his knowledge of the human psyche and his psychoanalytic technique. Many of Freud's most significant insights came in his early writings. Of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, (1900), his first major work, Freud said in 1931, "It contains, even according to my present day judgement, the most valuable of all discoveries [the dream theory] it has been my good fortune to make. Insight such as this falls to one's lot but once in a lifetime."

Shortly after World War I, Freud turned his attention to the more general themes which define his second period. The writings of this period are the books best known to social scientists but are in many respects his most abstract and superficial: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929), and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). Freud was aware of these deficiencies: "I have allowed myself to leave the pure empyrean of psychology, and I regret it." To Lou Salome, Freud wrote:

It [*Civilization and its Discontents*] deals with civilization, sense of guilt, happiness, and similar exalted subjects, and strikes me, no doubt rightly, as quite superfluous in contrast to earlier works which always sprang from some inner necessity.³⁶ But what else can I do? One cannot smoke and play cards all day.

It would be a mistake to attribute the superficiality of Freud's political and moral analysis to his declining powers. Rather, it seems

³⁶ Quoted in Paul Roazen, *Freud: Political and Social Thought* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 103.

more appropriate to understand the unsophisticated political-moral teaching as a consequence of an unpolitical psychology. It needs little demonstration to show that the psychological concepts of the primal horde, the Oedipus complex, and sublimation (to be discussed below) are trans- or sub-political in nature. They exist independent of nationality or culture. Moreover, they avoid the question of justice or of the best regime: "Ethics are remote from me.. I do not break my head much about good and evil." Therefore, Freud, to an even greater degree than Marx, was hesitant about describing the future state; it was only necessary to socialize the psychoanalytic understanding of human nature for the good society to reveal itself.

For our analysis we have chosen one book from each period, *Totem and Taboo* (1912) and *The Future of an Illusion* (1927). This has been done for two major reasons: (1) the question of religion is central to both books, as it is clearly central to the question of morality; (2) the early book, *Totem and Taboo*, remained one of Freud's favorites, probably because it successfully integrated psychology and social theory. Since, as we will try to show, nothing in the early book contradicts the later one, we can safely say that the division between the early and the late Freud is not fundamental.

V. *The reduction of morality: Totem and Taboo*

Totem and Taboo originates in a mystery. Among primitive people who live rudimentarily in most respects, there is found a high degree of restriction upon the sexual impulses; in particular they dread incest. We learned that they have considered it their duty to exercise the most searching care and the most painful rigor in guarding against incestuous sexual relations.³⁶ The basis of the incest prohibition is the clan or tribe, which is defined by a common relation to its totem and not by natural family ties. The totem is usually an animal (often harmless) or more rarely a plant or elementary natural force (rain, water). The totem is the "tribal ancestor of the clan, as well as its tutelary spirit and protector; it sends oracles and, though otherwise dangerous, the totem knows and spares its children."³⁷

Freud takes great care in elaborating the details of totem taboo behavior. As in most of Freud's writings, he is at his best when describing the complexity of emotional ambivalence (neurosis). In

³⁶ Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, p.5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

contrast, Freud's theoretical argument is usually too simplistic. *Totem and Taboo*, for example, is based on an acceptance of Darwin's hypothesis of a primal horde in man's early history³⁸ (i.e., an omnipotent father ruling many wives and children). This condition accounts for the incest exogamy of the young men forbidden intercourse with their fathers' wives. Later, when the young men were driven from the horde and forced to found families of their own; the rule of incest exogamy would become universal.

Totem behavior, Freud argues, is a later development of the incest taboo. Young male children share the orientation of their fathers (identification) which includes the love of their mother. The competition for the mother-wife precipitates a crisis for the child. Manifestly the solution for the child would be to kill the father, whom he fears may do the same to him (castration). He is too weak, however, to kill his father physically and feels guilty when he even experiences that desire. In this serious puzzlement the child (like primitive man) may "displace a part of its feelings from the father upon some animal."

The hate which resulted from the rivalry for the mother could not permeate the boy's psychic life without being inhibited; he had to contend with the tenderness and admiration which he had felt for his father from the beginning, so that the child assumed a double or ambivalent emotional attitude towards the father, and relieved himself of this ambivalent conflict by displacing his hostile and anxious feelings upon a substitute for the father. This displacement could not, however, relieve the conflict by bringing about a smooth division between the tender and hostile feelings. On the contrary, the conflict was continued in reference to the object to which displacement has been made and to which also the ambivalence spreads.³⁸

There is one step from this assertion to a full explanation of totemism. Observers of totem tribes record periodic holidays when the totem animal is killed and eaten, and all non-violent restraints are removed from human intercourse. Paradoxically, at these times, Freud believed, the social-ethical bonds of the community were renewed:

The ethical power of the public sacrifice feast was based upon primal conceptions of the meaning of eating and drinking in common.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 167-168.

To eat and drink with someone was at the same time a symbol and a confirmation of social community and of the assumption of mutual obligation; the sacrificial eating gave direct expression to the fact that the god and his worshipper are communicants, thus confirming all their other relationships.⁴⁰

What does this sacrificial feast represent?

One day the expelled brothers joined forces, slew and ate the father, and thus put an end to the father horde. . . The totem feast, which is perhaps mankind's first celebration, would be the repetition and commemoration of this memorable, criminal act with which so many things began: social organization, moral restrictions, and religion.⁴¹

The mystery of the totem is explained by the Oedipus complex.

Thus, Freud's thesis is definitely stated: morality and justice grow out of the immoral and the unjust. Religion and politics and science are epiphenomenon or sublimations of deeper and more fundamental experience. It is no wonder that Freud could be indifferent to questions of individual and social morality: these questions are rendered illusory by the uncovering of the Oedipus complex. Freud's monistic simplicity is baldly stated: "I want to state the conclusion that the beginnings of religion, ethics, society, and art meet in the Oedipus complex. This is in entire accord with the findings of psychoanalysis, namely that the nucleus of all neuroses as far as our present knowledge of them goes is in the Oedipus complex."⁴²

VL *Altruism through Selfishness: The Future of an Illusion*

Freud foresaw the end of all illusions. Science in its slow advance could, he believed, bring this about.⁴³ Since religion is the most powerful and persistent of illusions, Freud sides with the philosophers of the Enlightenment in their critique of the infamy of religion. *The Future of an Illusion* might easily have been given as a title the one A. D. White used for his multi-volume work, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1894).

"Ibid., p.174.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.102.

"We will use the expression science as Freud did: to include both Freud's own "clinical" experiments and the more quantitative approach of contemporary scientists. Freud once contemptuously referred to the mathematical, scientific approach as the "American method."

The abolition of illusion Freud saw as a doubly difficult task. First, science is open to the charge that it is in itself another illusion. "An attempt has been made to discredit radically scientific endeavor on the ground that, bound as it is to the conditions of our own organization, it can yield nothing but subjective results, while the real nature of things outside us remains inaccessible to it."⁴⁴ Freud defends science against this accusation by emphasizing the superiority of sensory experience; he goes so far as to say that science has "already an assured and almost immutable core of knowledge." In what this knowledge consists, Freud does not say, but we can assume from other works, such as *Totem and Taboo*, that Darwin's and perhaps Freud's theories belong in the category of "assured knowledge."

Second, Freud rejects the radical skeptics, or historicists, who believe that all answers are inadequate, or else that all answers are historically determined. He accepts, however, the so-called "fact-value" distinction. Science, Freud believed, could not legislate in the realm of values or ethics. This apparent limitation of science creates problems for Freud, for he occasionally insists that illusions must be banished from both the practical as well as the theoretical worlds, i.e., he dismisses the distinction between esoteric and exoteric belief, or of prudence: all things that can be said must be said. But Freud did not feel that all restraints could ever be simply eliminated, because psychic differentiation necessitates some amount of repression. "One may perceive the biological and psychological necessity of suffering in the economics of human life."⁴⁶ How is society to maintain its authority or legitimacy if science shows religious authority to be irrational, and science itself cannot provide an alternative?

Freud's first solution to this problem is scientific enlightenment. He seems to have believed that man's nature is arranged so that an advance of human rights would simultaneously bring a greater acceptance of responsibility. To the extent that the artificial authority of religion is reduced, the natural understanding of social Authority will be increased. Therefore, as education strips away the veils of illusion, men will see that *ananke*, or necessity, dictates that absolute human liberty is impossible.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 101.

⁴⁵Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts on War and Death" (1915), *On Creativity and the Unconscious* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 207.

⁴⁸Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, pp. 88 and 97.

Further, there exists in Freud's work a subtle theme which runs counter to that of the Enlightenment, which needs to be elaborated to fully understand him, to wit:

From the first there were two kinds of psychologies, that of the individual members of the group and that of the father, chief, or leader. .

He, at the very beginning, was the "super man" whom Nietzsche only expected from the future. Even today the members of a group stand in need of the illusions that they are equally and justly loved by their leader; that the leader himself need love no one else; he may be of a masterful nature, absolutely narcissistic, self-confident and independent.⁴⁷

Over and above the task of restricting the instincts, ...there forces itself on our notice the danger of a state of things which might be termed the psychological poverty of groups." This danger is most threatening where the bonds of a society are chiefly constituted by the identification of its members with one another, while individuals of the leader type do not acquire the importance that should fall to them in the formation of a group. The present cultural state of America would give us a good opportunity for studying the damage to civilization which is thus to be feared.

Alfred Adler, one of Freud's major students, once criticized Freud as follows: If you ask where repression comes from, you are told from civilization'; and if you ask where civilization comes from, you are told from repression.' " In other words, how did the process of civilization begin and what maintains it, since men by nature tend toward narcissism and the avoidance of pain? Freud argues that the tyrannical selfishness of the leader suppresses the psyche of his followers, fostering altruism and the super-ego. The god-like leader, who takes himself for his ego ideal and so does not share his libidinal energies with anything or anyone else, creates (as it were) the psyches of his followers (children): The leader or "genius," as such a person was known in the last century, is the creator being: greater than his predecessors, he stands above the chain of causality.

In the beginning the ambivalence of the followers toward the leader resulted in the literal or symbolic sacrifice of the father, as described in *Totem and Taboo*. The sons then founded a totemic

⁴⁷Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (New York: Bantam Books, 1960), p. 71.

⁴⁸Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1962), pp. 62-63.

community of brothers. Gradually new families arose, but these were only shadows of the old one, for each new father had to recognize the rights of the others.

It was then, perhaps, that some individual, in the exigency of his longing, may have moved to free himself from the group and take over the father's part. He who did this was the first epic poet; and the advance was achieved in his imagination.: He invented the heroic myth. The hero was a man who by himself had slain the father-the father who still appeared in the myth of the totemic monster.⁴⁰

It is safe to say that Freud becomes increasingly less plausible the more precisely he tries to account for social evolution through psychoanalytic theory. The analysis of the birth of epic poetry given here and the history of the Jews given in *Moses and Monotheism* (not to mention his biographical studies, such as his analysis of Woodrow Wilson) are, to put it charitably, far-fetched: However, what Freud is doing is absolutely clear: he is working out his theories to show that all history can be understood in reference to unconscious experience, so that no alternative explanation of causality-religious or rational-can be maintained.

In summary, the question of morality is reduced to the question of power. The most powerful men, the leader types, create the super-egos in their followers, which brings about the necessary individual and institutional repression of impulse. These great men are thus the originators of illusions: "Even today the members of a group stand in need of the illusions that they are equally and justly loved by their leader; but the leader himself need love no one else."⁶⁰ He recognizes, however, that the leaders must continue to rule and, so, must create illusions. Freud is put in the embarrassing position of saying that men must willingly consent to the rule of others, which they find unpleasant; while, at the same time, he strips away the illusions which make such rule acceptable. Freud's amorality can nowhere be better seen than in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (where the importance of the leader type is minimized). Even here justice is defined by its power, and not by its intrinsic excellence or baseness. The first requisite of civilization, therefore, is that of justice-that is, the assurance that a law once made will not be broken

⁴⁰Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, p. 87.

⁶⁰ See note 47 above.

in favor of an individual. This implies nothing as to the ethical value of such a law."⁵¹

Freud's view of morality is, as we have seen, complex. On the one hand, morality is *a* beneficial product of the sublimation of the original libidinal energy, which permits civilized behavior and the development of the fruits of civilization-science and the arts. Freud himself was a scrupulously moral man who appreciated moral behavior in others. One should recall his dislike of American informality—Freud was not a hippie. On the other hand, Freud argued that Victorian morality was unnecessarily restrictive and caused neuroses. Therefore, he was in the vanguard of the critics of bourgeois morality. Moreover, he supplied the theoretical basis for a more radical critique than he may have intended. Psychoanalysis can easily be *used* to argue that all religions and moral standards are a result of, and generate, "unhealthy" psychic states.

VII. *America and the Sexual Unconscious*

We have tried to show Freud as a cautious prophet. His unbounded faith in the rectitude of psychoanalysis, and the occasional millennial flights in which he indulged (e.g., *The Future of an Illusion*), were tempered by a strong bourgeois taste and practicality. Freud's sobriety may be seen in the following detail. As Weimar waned under the hammer blows of Communism and fascism, Freud chose to conclude *Civilization and Its Discontents* with a searching question:

And now it is to be expected that the other of two 'Heavenly Powers,' Eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself *in* the struggle with his equally immortal adversary [Thanatos]. *But who can foresee with what success and with what result?*"⁵²

In America, Freudian theory became another jewel in the crown of social progress. Nathan Hale, in his erudite *Freud in America*,⁵³ describes Freud's discomfiture at his over-rapid acceptance in this country: "The spread of psychoanalysis in America, he came to believe, indicated knowledge that was not profound, critical, or accurate" (p.431). Freud remarked that one of his optimistic American followers was fated to become a pessimist: "My friend Putnam maintained in *a* recent book which is based on psychoanalysis that perfection has not only a psychic but also *a* material reality. That

⁵¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 42.

Loc. cit., p. 92. Emphasis is ours.

⁵⁸ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

man can't be helped, he must become a pessimist" (p. 480). "America," Freud said, is a mistake; a gigantic mistake, it is true, but nonetheless a mistake" (p. 433).

Freud first visited the United States in 1909 for a series of lectures at Clark University. At that time psychoanalysis was little known in the United States, although psychiatry was an established and growing profession. Freud's theories acted as a focal point for a variety of medical and social movements. "Because of the arresting and novel subject matter of psychoanalysis—sexuality, dreams, childhood; etc.—Freud came to symbolize all the new developments in medical psychology."⁶⁴ On the social side, Hale argues that "psychoanalysis initially was successful in America because it met profound needs generated by 'civilized' mortality. Its introduction coincided with the first stage of the moral revolution, the repeal of reticence."⁵⁵

Freud's works, while easily available in translation, were not best sellers at the outset. *Totem and Taboo* sold less than a thousand copies between 1914 and 1931. Later on, the *Basic Writings* sold 174,800 copies in the decade after it was first introduced in 1938. However, in the popular press—in particular to the millions of readers of *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McClure's*, *Everybody's*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *The American Magazine*—Freud was well-known "as the creator of a new scientific miracle of healing that had vague, yet insistent, sexual elements."⁵⁶

Up to the decade of the 1960's, the popularity of psychoanalysis continually grew. W. A. White observed that *Mrs. Marden's Ordeal*, a literary best-seller, was "another concrete evidence of the extent to which the psychoanalytic idea is filtering through the social fabric. We hear it mentioned on the stage, we see it referred to in the short stories in the magazines, and here is a novel which incorporates it. It really looks as if the psychoanalysts were coming into their own."⁶⁷

Lionel Trilling, in many ways the leading American literary critic of this century, recognized Freud's importance in this way:

Freud is quite at one with literature.... [The] particular concern of the literature of the past two centuries has been with the self in

" Hale, p. 432.

^c Hale, p. 480.

Hale, p. 430.

⁶ Cited in Hale, p. 432.

its standing quarrel with culture. . . . This intense conviction of the existence of the self apart from culture is, as culture well knows, its noblest and most generous achievement. At the present moment it must be thought of as a liberating idea without which our developing ideal community is bound to defeat itself. We can speak no greater praise of Freud than to say that he placed this idea at the very center of his thought.⁵⁵

In education and child-rearing, psychoanalysis has more often than not favored individual self-expression. "There was a time in the history of psychoanalytic doctrine when the inclination was to view all suppression as negative, all controls on the child as hindrance to his fulfillment."⁶⁶ Writing in the 1950s, Kluckhohn observed the rise in American culture of the 'psychological values' related to mental health, the education and training of children, and the like.⁶⁰

In the professions, psychoanalytic theory has had a variety of important results. Obviously in psychiatry Freud and his followers dominated the field for several decades and are still one of the major influences. Hale argues that ordinary American physicians have been more fully exposed to Freudian theory than physicians of any other nationality.

In theology, psychoanalysis has helped to destroy the concepts of sin and guilt (not to mention divine dread). Hobart Mowrer cites in his book, *The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion*,⁶¹ examples of seminary instruction where young clergymen are counseled not to say anything in sermons which might make parishioners feel guilty. This trend has gone so far that Karl Menninger, the author of *The Crime of Punishment* (1966), now believes that the concept of sin should be refurbished, as he argues in *Whatever Became of Sin?*⁶²

In the field of criminal justice, psychoanalytic psychiatry has played a significant role in furthering the environmental explanation for criminal behavior, while minimizing individual responsibility. Seymour Halleck, in *Psychiatry and the Dilemma of Crime*,⁶³

"Quoted in Clyde Kluckhohn, "Have There Been Discernable Shifts in American Values in the Past Generation?" in Elting Morison, ed., *The American Style* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 196.

⁵⁵ Roazen, p. 199.

⁶⁰ Kluckhohn in *The American Style*, p. 194 *if*.

⁶¹ Princeton: D. Van Nostrand & Co., 1961.

⁶² New York: Hawthorn Books Co., 1973.

⁶³ New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

dismisses the association of psychiatry with juvenile delinquency: "Permissivism does not necessarily breed crime, and it is probable that other forces in Our society have had a greater influence than psychiatry in spreading this doctrine" (p. 125). However, he goes on to make a more serious charge:

our model of mental illness can be used to encourage the notion that people are not responsible for their own behavior. The equation of sickness with non-responsibility seems to have been generalized to other behaviors, including delinquency. In a society in which people do not feel responsible for their own actions, the criminal adaptation is more easily justified and supported.⁶⁴

However, many criminologists prefer the behavioral models of Watson and Skinner, which permit both greater quantification of results and simpler therapeutics than Freudian psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, they are often brought back to acknowledging the importance of Freudian theories. Hermann Mannheim, a distinguished criminologist, devotes more attention to Freud than to any comparable figure: In the present writer's view some of the many aspects of psychoanalytic thought [as represented mainly by Sigmund Freud] are of the greatest value to the understanding of crime and punishment, while others can be accepted only with important reservations or not at all.⁶⁵

In political science, psychoanalysis has been most energetically espoused by Harold Lasswell. Lasswell, in *Psychopathology and Politics*, "sought to discover what developmental experiences are significant for the political traits and interests of the mature" (p. 8). The tool for obtaining this knowledge is psychoanalysis. "Modern psychopathology is itself a recent development, and undoubtedly the most revelatory figure is Sigmund Freud." (p. 17). Lasswell speaks of the "spectacular and influential nature of Freud's work" (p. 17).

In the related field of sociology, Talcott Parsons is heavily indebted to Freud. In the first essay of *Social Structure and Personality*, Parsons begins: In the broadest sense, perhaps the contribution of psychoanalysis to the social sciences has consisted of an enormous deepening and enrichment of our understanding of human motiva-

⁶⁴ Halleck, p. 126.

⁶⁵ Hermann Mannheim, *Comparative Criminology* (Great Britain: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), p. 312.

⁶⁶ Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930.

⁶⁷ New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964.

Lion. The enrichment has been such a pervasive influence that it would be almost impossible to trace its many ramifications" (p. 17). Although Parsons speaks of the convergence of Freud and Durkheim's theories, it is the former and not the latter who provides the framework of Parsons' study. Many sociological theorists, however, have tried to obtain more quantitative verification than Freud's theories permit, and so have been more cautious in drawing extraordinary conclusions from "clinical data."

In the period 1930 to 1960, Freud's influence in this country was truly significant. It would be safe to see him as one of the very few major intellectual forces shaping opinion during those years. Our understanding of psychology, sociology, child rearing, criminology, and political science have all been greatly affected by Freud's thought.

VIII. *Conclusion*

Both Dewey and Freud were practitioners of the philosophy of enlightenment. Dewey obviously, and Freud at bottom, placed an unbounded and perhaps unwarranted faith in the efficacy of his kind of education. Each claimed "science as the basis of his thought, although both generalized in unscientific terms. Only the knowledge of scientific truths and of the scientific method (as each defined it) could, they believed, overcome the ignorance and injustice of the ages of illusion. Moreover, both Dewey and Freud occasionally took the position of angry defenders of science; for they feared that pre-scientific modes of thought would retard its wholesome advance:

The millennialism implicit in their scientific faith was tempered to some degree in each thinker. Although Dewey had great faith in the rational development of social intelligence, he expected it to be informed by democratic processes. As we have seen, he thought that the history of American colonists furnished examples of "patience, courage, ingenuity, and continual judgement in adapting means to ends, even in the face of great hazard and obstacles."

While Dewey confidently relied on the practicality of democratic procedures and democratic education to make things right, Freud was much less certain about the shape of the future. It is obvious that he desired more and expected less than Dewey. Like Tocqueville, Freud was unwilling to praise democratic mass societies unless they could produce excellent individuals. He warned of the "psy-

chological poverty of groups," that is, the psychological impoverishment which Riesman saw in "other directed men," men subservient to the tyranny of majority opinion. In contrast, Freud desired leader types who could self-consciously pursue "high" goals-knowledge, art, and political rule. It is again ironic to observe that Freud did not adequately reflect upon the necessary antecedents (or illusions) which would enable a culture to motivate and to educate its *aristoi*.

In popular and progressive America, new ideas have always had a fascination and an unusual degree of power. Freud perceptively remarked on the propensity of Americans to religious mind cures. Lacking any deep class, geographic, or cultural divisions, such as still exist in Europe, America accepts and propagates new ideas and, if these ideas seem to be in sympathy with democratic-egalitarianism, will often cherish them for long periods. Such was the case in the reception of Dewey's pedagogy and Freud's psychology.

In any society, new ideas will be adapted to prevailing opinions. In America it was perhaps inevitable that both Freud and Dewey would become two major spokesmen for the libertarian revolt against self-disciplined morality.

The popularization of psychoanalysis coincided with a long-term decline in interest in what has been called "traditional Christianity," a decline well underway among intellectuals that was spreading to larger groups of Americans. One aspect of this is clear in the popularizations—a rejection of absolute moral judgements and of asceticism, both associated with Protestantism.

The followers of Freud and Dewey naturally emphasized those aspects of their masters' teachings most congenial to the American experience; one aspect usually ignored in these popularizations was the ethical restraint implicit in both authors. It was the old story of the followers pushing the idea too far beyond the leader's original intention.

We must remember that Dewey and Freud were both part of an early twentieth century intellectual milieu which reflected a general revulsion against nineteenth century religious moralism. Darwin, Huxley, and Herbert Spencer were other major proponents of science who had helped foster an intellectual rejection of religious

⁰⁸ Hale, p. 431.

morality by the end of the century. Moreover, the Marxian criticism of private ownership had a profound anti-ethical impact on many intellectuals. Further, the democratic ideal that each child should form his own ethics was also influential.

If the twentieth century school teacher keeps class discussion clear of ethics and the twentieth century parent avoids moral lessons in talking to his children, it is thus not Dewey and Freud alone who are responsible for these failures. But we do believe that a frank recognition of the ethical deficiencies in the teachings of Dewey and Freud can help to explain the difficulties in American attitudes towards ethics.

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