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A Critique Of Popular Psychologies

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A CRITIQUE OF POPULAR PSYCHOLOGIES

BY

Paul Feldman

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Philosophy of Carroll College in partial fulfillment of the requirements of "Magna Cum Laude" recognition.

Helena, Montana

1956
This thesis for "Magna Cum Laude" recognition has been approved for the Department of Philosophy by

[Signature]

Rev. Gerald J. Lynane
Within the last few decades, there has been a steady flow of books of practical psychology on the book-racks of American drug stores, depots, and book stores. Their promise is the same - no more worry, peace of mind, financial security, etc. Being meant for consumption by the average person, these are sold largely in cheap editions. Most are easily read and feature attractive covers, eye-arresting titles, and good format. They are purchased in prodigious numbers. In their wake has come an equally ponderous shower of magazine articles proclaiming the formulae for successful living.

There are several possible reactions to the present emphasis on these everyman's psychologies. Some would actually hail them as contributing greatly to an increased knowledge of man. Others would view with alarm their presence as an indication of a possible need, a possible lack of sound moral fibre in Americans. Each reaction has some foundation in the psychologies themselves. Together, these reactions make an analysis of these psychologies warranted.

The reaction that these psychologies represent a great increase in the knowledge of man is not solidly founded. There is
nothing really new about the emphasis on the Bible which charac-
terizes such authors as Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. Indeed, his
only innovation is a personal selection of particular Scriptural
passages, those showing only the mercy and the gentleness of God,
ever His justice and anger. It is even doubtful whether Dr.
Peale is unique in this regard. This has been traditionally the
approach to the Bible of many Protestant sects.

Some would herald Joshua Loth Liebman as a prophet of new
knowledge because he expounds the value of new psychiatry in over-
coming mental disorders and calls for an integration of religion
and psychiatry. On closer examination, Rabbi Liebman is doing
little more than repeating what has been taught by psychoanalysts
since their master proclaimed the far-reaching power of the sub-
conscious.

The presence of these psychologies should sound an alarm that
maybe their presence indicates a need. It is often true that the
supply of any given commodity is indicative of the demand for that
commodity. Now the supply of books of this type is prodigious.
Therefore, there must be a large demand. The need for an orien-
tation of man to a goal becomes more urgent the farther man se-
parates himself from a goal by pre-occupation with the triviali-
ties that cross his path daily. To the extent that man has an

1Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking,
(New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953.)

2Joshua Loth Liebman, Peace of Mind, (New York: Bantam Books,
Inc., 1955.)
abundance of material goods to satisfy his economic needs and wants, to that extent is he prone to make the gaining of even more of those goods his constant passion. We need not quote figures to prove the abundance of the material things of life in America. That abundance has become but a bait for an increased desire for them. A man cannot turn his passions loose in over-indulgence and have at the same time noble aspirations, goals, and habits of life. Both cannot exist together. The effect of excessive sensual indulgence is a deadening of the intellect and a benumbing of the will. Training of the mind and discipline of the will are possible only when the passions are first put under their control.

The abundance of material goods reverses this course. With the darkening of the modern man's understanding, proper and adequate personal goals have been lost sight of and very trivial ones have been substituted in their stead. Modern man has weakened a will already once weakened by original sin. Since man by nature must perfect himself in the proper demands of that nature, he cannot find happiness in his material possessions. He cries for a philosophy that will explain himself to himself and tell him how to be at home with himself. Men have become too immersed in their material possessions to take the sometimes hard message of the complete Scripture to give up everything and follow Christ. They are searching for a philosophy which will yield happiness without sacrifice, even a fleeting happiness. Thus it is that some of these psychologies which do not demand too much of men, have a certain
appeal.

With all this in mind, it should prove valuable to compare these popular psychologies with a Scholastic standard to determine where they coincide and where they conflict. This will be the purpose and goal of this thesis.
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Chapter I

THE RISE OF THE POPULAR PSYCHOLOGY
The universal craving of every man for security, love self-expression, and recognition looks in many places for fulfillment. Some men seek and find guidance for their lives and consequent happiness in religion. The Church was instituted as the universal means to gain happiness. But not all men are humble enough to face the job of re-orienting their lives to the supreme goal of God, and so they will scorn the Church, will condemn Her as too old fashioned to teach the twentieth-century man how to live with his twentieth-century fears. But though they spurn the Church as a means to happiness, they cannot destroy their own craving for happiness. Modern dependence on the psychiatrist to heal all one's inner troubles is one of the penalties modern man must pay for his lack of religion. Spurning religion, he is continually looking for a philosophy to explain himself to himself, confident that with this knowledge, he will be able to face the world with equanimity.

Where is this man looking? Some men are going back to the Church they once spurned to find God. The boredom and aimlessness of their ego-centered lives is driving them to God, the Author of all life. Others are gorging themselves on entertainments and in worldly goods, in an effort to lose themselves in the present and thus forget about the demands of a future final goal. Still others are turning to the psychiatrist's couch. Again, others are appealing to comfortable popular psychologies.

There are three main reasons for the modern man's frustration and for his turning to popular psychologies. The first is
positivism in our educational system. The second is materialism in our economic life. The third is the threat of Communism and of destruction.

From the time that he enters first grade, the student of our American public educational system is taught to have a critical attitude. He is told that he should not take knowledge on faith, which is an inherent contradiction, for how else could he learn the alphabet? Everything should be proven. And since science is in its zenith, the scientific approach to any new fact is used. Science, these naive persons tell us, accepts nothing unless proven experimentally. Hence, every fact, whether of a scientific nature or not, is to be subjected to an emperioological investigation. Only the concrete, material things can stand up under such a pre-rigged test. Spiritual entities, since they cannot be so examined, just do not exist. Laws cannot be universal, since all we can know is the particular and the individual. Thus laws, and especially moral laws, can vary. They need not be the same for all peoples. Now, since there can be no objective standard in morality, (for objective implies something beyond what each person thinks of it) just as there are no spiritual entities in science, so the only standard for morality can be the will of the individual person. In like manner, some would base the laws of the state not on the nature of man and on his essential relations but on the will of the lawgiver. Objective, immutable morals are thus reduced to subjective, mutable mores. This is positivism.

But positivism does not give modern man the freedom he is look-
ing for. In the first place, his notion of freedom itself is faulty. True freedom is not, as many moderns would have it, license to let one's passions run wild. Such a kind of freedom can lead only to destruction of the person; e.g., it would not be a healthy kind of freedom for a train to jump the bounds of the track. The only result of this kind of "freedom" would be destruction of the train. So too, for man to clamor for complete freedom to turn his passions wild can lead but to his destruction. Thus promising liberty to himself, he falls slave to his passions. Man was given a reason to keep him on the track of life. To the extent that he departs from it is he less alive.

Positivism is but the modern term for ancient subjectivism and individualism wherein each man decides for himself on matters of moral import. There is no objective standard to govern his actions. But in spite of what the positivists say, there is in each and all men an objective sense of justice, a sense of basic morality. Man's whole being rebels when that inner voice of justice is ignored or an effort is made to argue it into non-existence by the positivistic plea that the individual person is not bound by any norms external to himself. And so modern man, being taught positivism in our schools, is necessarily often in conflict with reality and hence frustrated. Popular psychologies today, promising happiness without rooting out subjectivism, hold an appeal for the modern man.

A major reason for the modern man's frustration and his turning to these popular psychologies stems from the first. Since pos-
Itivism teaches man great respect for the concrete and the material and a disdain for things that can't be touched, seen, and studied by the senses, i.e., spiritual things, a materialistic attitude toward the whole of life is an obvious and very logical conclusion.

Americans have become ensnared in their materialism. Living in twentieth-century America, in which the object is maximum material production, the average man has absorbed an attachment to material things. Ease, convenience, long vacations, and few hours of work have become a part of his thinking. With a mind schooled and ceaselessly absorbed in this treadmill of sensual satisfaction, many find it almost impossible to abandon these material luxuries to seek happiness in the development of mental and moral virtues. They want peace of mind, security, and happiness without involving themselves in any major change of life. It is to this kind of mentality that many of the popular psychologies are directed.

Another reason for the American's frustration and turning to popular psychologies is the threat of Communism and nuclear weapons with their threat of annihilation which has destroyed the heretofore smug security of his materialistic paradise. His world is in danger of collapsing upon him. The situation for peace in the world is not bright. Although the Second World War, the Korean War, and the war in Indo-China have all successively been unofficially terminated, still tension in the world is very great. The Russians have very recently boasted of guided missiles of astounding range. Their war production is at high levels. They are tightening their grip on the Near East, in Asia, Europe, and South America through mil-
itary and economic aggression. Their professed spirit of peace at the conference table is constantly belied by their subsequent actions. There is indeed cause for anxiety on the part of Americans.

It is this anxiety born of a very troubled world that causes many to look for some philosophy to sustain themselves in this present immanent danger of destruction. Were this threat removed, e.g., if the world were presently restored to a state of disarmament and of peace as it was in the twenties, then, the immediate concern being eliminated, many would live once again in the rip-roaring, wide open spirit of the twenties. The popular psychologies would find little market.

Being relativistic, modern man many times will not accept any absolutism, especially that of a church. Thus many churches can require little more than pious thoughts. What is wanted is something that will comfort without requiring too much personal effort. We today see a class of literature especially designed for this. Writers viewing this potential market and deciding to meet it give birth to popular psychologies. Most of the books that have yet appeared have been neutral on religion, perhaps in order to secure a greater market or circulation. Many of these have filtered down into cheap editions with attractive covers. The promises made by these authors often have been nothing more than the basic needs of all men - security, self-expression, friends, etc. Results are promised in a hurry. Many are based on nothing stronger than anecdotal evidence giving testimony to the success of the suggested
techniques. Some try to impress the reader with their unique wisdom by advising him to review their book at regular intervals in order to dwell continually on putting their ideas into practice.

Some writers, like Dr. Peale, base most of their approach on the "sweetness and light" passages of the Scriptures. Only comforting verses are quoted. Those which show God's justice or anger are omitted. Other writers, like Dale Carnegie and Earl Prevette, absorb volumes of Benjamin Franklin, Thoreau, Emerson, Dickenson, and the military and financial greats to secure the keys to their success in order that all their readers may do likewise. Joshua Loth Liebman says that if religion were more up-to-date and if psychiatry were more extensively utilized, man's worries would largely be conquered. Psychiatry is thus made the panacea for the world's present woes.

One important fact that all these overlook is that not every man has the talent and the ability to be the President of the United States. The idea of pleading for the rights of all men as equals is well and good if it is first understood in what ways men can be said to be equals. Surely, they are equal in that they are all men, aiming towards an eternal goal. All men should have equal freedom to perfect themselves, but only in so far as each man can poten-

\[ 3 \text{Dale Carnegie, } \textit{How To Win Friends and Influence People}, \text{ (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1951.)} \]
\[ 4 \text{Earl Prevette, } \textit{How To Turn Your Ability Into Cash}, \text{ (American Book - Stratford Press, Inc., 1948.)} \]
\[ 5 \text{Liebman, op. cit.} \]
tially be perfected. To write a book promising to make every man a leader can be the source of a great many frustrations. Not every bricklayer can become a Demosthenes by practicing a few techniques of the art. To promise such is unjust and confusing.
Chapter II

The "Peace of Mind" School
A great promise of the popular psychologies is peace of mind. This appears as an elusive quality of general euphoria, particularly, a state of mental, calmness and bliss. It has become the object of much present research. Its attainment is hailed as the greatest achievement of life. It has been called "God's gift to a chosen few." Its possessor is acclaimed a marked man by those who are still fumbling for it. Indeed, even some of those who acclaim it in others scarcely know its foundation or worth. They can describe it only in very vague terms. They are less able to defend their conviction that its possession is the greatest good in life. Ignorant though they are of what it is and what its inherent value is, they are nevertheless determined to possess it.

What is peace of mind and what is its value? To answer the first question, we'll examine the opinions of some of the noteworthy psychologizers of the day. Then we'll see what the scholastics would consider peace of mind. To answer the second question, we'll look at the results of these theories, for the results achieved by a given thing are a great clue to its value.

For one group, peace of mind is that feeling of well-being one achieves by keeping his mind free of all so called negative thoughts. All one's thoughts must be positive. This goal of freedom from negative thoughts is built on several postulates. First, for a man to harbor thoughts of inferiority or to have any anxieties or fears is bad psychologically. Secondly, any man can achieve this state of freedom from negative thoughts if only he applies the

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6 Ibid., p. 6.
correct devices.

A negative thought, e.g., would be, in matters of greatest importance, a fear of death, a fear of serious accident, or a fear of suffering. Regarding one's job, it can be a feeling of envy because another gains a desired position. It could also take the form of doubts about one's ability to be a success in any field, even a field exceeding one's capabilities. A man's failure to attain even the highest of jobs is explained on the supposition that he didn't exert the right amount of effort or he wasn't enthusiastic enough. These authors seem to deny any natural personal limits. In lesser matters, negative thinking would encompass anger, envy, petty jealousy, feelings of bodily fatigue, everyday disappointments, headaches, and domestic quarrels, even exasperation at not being able to bowl as high a score as the boss.

The attitudes covered by this general term "negative thinking," are quite diverse. Some definitely should be eliminated for they can lead to serious mental disorders, e.g., envy, and anger. To achieve normalcy one must indeed learn to bear disappointments, these being the inevitable lot of man. We must learn to bear with many of the idiosyncracies of our neighbor as he must of our own. We should cultivate a sufficient spirit of detachment lest we become overly upset by trifles. However, to maintain that the fear of death is unhealthy or that a fear of accidents is bad psychology is quite an opposite extreme. Death is a fact in the life of every man. The fear of accidents is a natural, healthy, instinctive prolonger of life.

To doubt one's ability to be a success in a given field is
bad psychology only if one has the ability to be a success and the
doubt is, for example only, a rationalization of one's laziness.
But to reduce all doubts about one's abilities to psychological
deficiency just doesn't face reality. All men are not alike in
basic physiology, intelligence, education, inclination, training,
or opportunities. Some men will never be record-setting salesmen
just as others will never be famous in scientific research. Many
limitations are imposed by nature herself. A man who is consti-
tutionally a phlegmatic will have great difficulty in becoming a
barstool storming political candidate. So too, the extrovert who must
be the life of any party and who is content only when out selling
himself or some product would be a very unlikely candidate for the
Trappist Choir.

Men's natural intelligences vary greatly. For some, a career
in engineering presents no great hardships. For others, not thus
specifically gifted, almost no amount of good will or effort can
supply. Finally, men's opportunities for success vary greatly.
For the colored sharecropper in Alabama to gain skill and renown
in church art would be much more difficult than for the son of a
painter in the French court, even though the former had just as
much native ability as the latter.

Of course, in spite of differences in basic talents, education,
and opportunities for success, some men have risen to heights of
success way above those more gifted and blessed by nature. Effort
and determination can overcome many handicaps of nature. But this
does not destroy our thesis that men are different in their native
abilities. The success of the less gifted can be explained in terms
of developing his small talents to the utmost, while the failure of
the one possessing greater gifts is the result of nothing more than
lack of development of perhaps even greater native endowments.

Another postulate of this school follows from the first, and
states that freedom from negative thoughts can be achieved by any­
one who earnestly desires it by the application of a few simple
mechanical techniques. Belief in self is the shibboleth slogan.
We are told to "repeat this formula over and over to self to over­
come feelings of inferiority." But daily action toward a goal is
much more important than constant self-assurance that one is pro­
gressing towards his goal. Because emphasis on action is absent,
the whole philosophy of belief in self loses its foundation and de­
generates into a sort of day-dreaming, a pie-in-the-sky attitude.
One finds very shortly that it is much easier to build castles of
dreams than of reality. And this is the inevitable result if simple
velleity without action is made the final key to attainment.

Scriptural phrases are often used in this regard as part of
the bag of tricks of these self psychologizers. They are hailed as
being sound and scientific and modern. Thus is clothed in the lan­
guage of the day the very pragmatic notion of religion, it works,
and we find subjective material utility established as the criterion
of the objective, revealed word of God. Faith becomes a skill and
prayer has more or less efficacy according to the "size" of the prayer. 8

7 Peale, op. cit.
8 Ibid. p. 47.
Regarding prayer, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale says, "Just as there exist scientific techniques for the release of atomic energy, so there are scientific procedures for the release of spiritual energy through the mechanism of prayer." These techniques of which Dr. Peale speaks would be sound if they were based on the fundamental fact that man is a creature, has a fallen nature, and cannot conquer his lower nature except by the help of God. They would be further significant if based on the command that God told us to pray. As Dr. Peale presents prayer, it is no more an absolute requirement of nature than is the ability to remember names. Both are useful for social ease, but either can be used according to the usefulness at the moment. Prayer becomes then not a daily duty but a mere device one relies on when he needs help and cannot manufacture it himself. But true Christian prayer is not something that can be replaced by the pagan's prayer wheel.

Passivity is another device for gaining peace of mind. It acts as a sedative. One consults the Bible only so far as certain parts of it are comforting. It is not a rule of life. Peace for these naive authors becomes capable of attainment by the mere mechanical process of thinking of peaceful scenes and reiteration of peaceful words. Very real causes for genuine alarm are dismissed without question as being non-existent and conducive to depression. Now this is nothing short of an avoiding of reality, just because it is unpleasant, which is the ostrich approach.

Some would advise an admission of guilt to God after wrongdoing, not so much out of a sorrow for wronging Infinite Goodness,
as because in this way one will rid himself of a guilt feeling and so will feel better, something quite different from sacramental confession. And so man, not God, becomes the point of reference. A final device for gaining peace of mind is the development of a sound and satisfying philosophy of life. We trust that these writers do not mean, by the word "satisfying," a completely subjective concept of God. Man's end is not a subjective matter, but was implanted by the Creator in human nature. The means chosen, i.e., the philosophy of life, cannot be subjective if an objective end is to be attained.

In conclusion, so called "positive thinking" can be a valuable psychological tool if its possessor does not try to gain with it goals which are beyond his ability. However, by reading the statements of this school, the layman may easily be led to believe that anything, in any category, is capable of his attainment, through belief regardless of ability. Belief, simply as belief, becomes the goal, the psychological device, which produces success. The object of belief is less important. This attitude is responsible for a good many frustrations of the day. Suggestions for gaining peace of mind are good as far as they go. However, it appears that too much stress is laid on certain superficial and mechanical acts such as thinking positively, relaxing, looking at the brighter side of everything, etc., while not sufficient emphasis is laid on the necessity for the development of a sound goal in life, based on human nature, and on one's personal abilities, and ultimately on

10 Ibid., p. 47.
the final end of all human life, i.e., the *summum bonum*. Only by subordination of one's will to the latter can happiness be found. It is not something that can be produced as such by mechanical means only. Dependence on God's will, as mentioned weakly by some, can be the source of real consolation. But this concept is almost lost in a maze of references to religion and prayer as mechanical skills and techniques of proven effectiveness in problem solving. The point is not emphasized that God is a personal God, not a mere mechanical force.

Also in this "peace of mind" school are the enthusiasts. Theirs is a manufactured enthusiasm, purely subjective, not elicited by any transsubjective value. Enthusiasm for this group is not that emotional stimulus normally accompanying a strong movement of the will toward a given end, but one that tends rather to be an emotional stimulus to the attainment of no particular end. It appears to become enthusiasm simply for the sake of enthusiasm. For one schooled in Scholastic psychology, this is a reverse concept. It contorts the metaphysical order of knowledge, volition, emotional stimulation, and action. For these, emotional stimulation precedes knowledge and volition and is directed to no particular action. But even though this emotional orexis is not originally aimed at anything, it cannot remain in a vacuum. With reality removed as both the point of original and terminate reference of enthusiasm, phantasy easily becomes substituted for knowledge and for intellectual ap-

\[\text{The group includes Earl Pevette and Dale Carnegie, both previously mentioned.}\]
petition. Emotion becomes centered on self instead of on some external object with the resulting danger of a self-centered, vas-cillating personality. If enthusiasm of this type is indulged in too extensively, the subject may become estranged from reality. In his serious moments, he may fall heir to disappointment and despair, since the real world seldom compares with his fancied one. Such efforts to flee from reality lead to various forms of serious escape mechanisms. This end is an all too possible result of a false enthusiasm which springs from no proper object.

But what do the advocates of this type of enthusiasm prescribe to attain it? The first suggestions are purely mechanical devices similar to those employed by the positive thinkers. The second important suggestion is the reading of the lives of prominent men in all walks of life with an idea to glean from this reading their ideas for success and their secrets for enthusiasm.

We are told that one gains enthusiasm by consciously striving to look at the brighter side of everything, by constantly telling himself that he is enthusiastic. Some would even suggest doing brisk exercises at any time of the day to gain body vigor, while constantly re-assuring oneself that one is going to be vibrant all day long.

Reading the lives of great men is calculated to instill enthusiasm and in this fashion. A mere reading of the way in which a number of men have applied themselves to gain success is supposed to bring almost automatic success to the reader. The inherent fallacy is as old as Socrates. Knowledge is not virtue. This ancient fallacy fails to take into account the free will of man in
choosing the good once presented by the intellect. Instead of induc
ing action, such indiscriminate reading of the achievements of
great men can just as easily add fuel to the imagination. One can
re-live these men's lives in mind rather than face the world of
reality, achieve something worthwhile oneself, and so free oneself
from the disappointments that inevitably follow a period of day-
dreaming. Reading the lives of great men can, of course, have real
psychological value under proper conditions, a fact utilized in
bibliotherapy.

The basic fallacy of this type of enthusiasm is, as we have
seen, its ultra subjectivism. It tends to isolate enthusiasm from
the object towards which one is enthused. Enthusiasm can have sig-
nificance only in terms of a primary and ultimate goal in life, a
goal firmly established in consciousness. Enthusiasm must be de-
termined by real, not fancied goals. From the relation of enthu-
siasm to a goal external to the person follows our criticism of
this group of writers. That enthusiasm cannot be manufactured from
within the person without reference to a goal outside him is life.
One's scale of values must be objective.

A third group promising peace of mind calls upon psychiatry
itself as the long neglected key to happiness. These would have it
that the majority of the personal troubles in the world could be
eliminated if psychiatry were better understood and more univer-
sally used. Over-emphasis on psychiatry is particularly found in
the circle of the Psychoanalysts. The sub-conscious here is of
great importance. All, or at least the greatest number of man's
mental troubles and disorders are traced to repressed experiences in early life. The solution, for many of these, lies in a depth therapy, a critical and thorough and extensive examination by a psychiatrist, over a considerable period of time. All one's motives for action are brought forth and examined. The knowledge thus gained is intended to serve as a basis for future conduct. Having seen what patterns of conduct have preceded certain feelings of guilt or depression, one is thereby motivated, they say, to avoid such modes of acting in the future. One characteristic of the psychoanalytic approach is the so-called neutral attitude towards morality. The patient is looked upon as the subject of certain phenomena. The psychiatrist is merely an observer of actions and reactions in a subject.

Psychology is given the credit for enabling us to "find out who we are and why human beings become 'split soul'." So-called pre-psychological religion is accused of being unable to satisfy mankind in its quest for salvation in this psychological age. The underlying assumption seems to be that human nature somehow suddenly changed with the discoveries of Freud. But man did not wait for Freud to learn how to live any more than it waited for Aristotle to learn how to reason.

Rabbi Liebman gives a rather thorough and fair comparison between religion and psychiatry.

Both prophetic religion and psychology stress the need for forgiveness and tolerance. Religion stresses the freedom of the will whereas psychology stresses the fact that man must be freed from his inner conflicts before he can take responsibility for his life. The latter would

12 Liebman, op. cit. p. 9.
make man's actions phenomena to be tabulated, not subject to moral censure, as religion would. Both religion and psychology would stamp pride and insincerity as dangerous. Both would endow man with untapped sources for goodness. Religion emphasizes unity whereas psychology gives man a kind of psychological emotional togetherness.

Strict Freudians could not agree to this religious appreciation. For these and others, there are many areas of divergence between religion and psychiatry. Conscience for some is an ogre to be allowed expression in a highly limited and purely personal area. For some, the inhibiting fear of punishment for sin is tabbed as the source of many wrecked lives. But conscience and the fear of punishment for sin save many who would avoid their own destruction through no other appeal. Sin is doing something that is bad for one's nature. It is going contrary to nature. The notion that what Catholics call sin is only self-expression is false. The self-expression of strict Freudians is rather self-destruction.

Confession is criticized by some as being ineffective because its methods of examination and self-analysis are not as thorough as the depth therapy of the psychoanalyst. But confession is a supernatural, not a psychiatric entity, and as such, cannot be compared effect for effect with psychiatry. The object of Confession is a removal of guilt through the forgiveness of God and an infusion of grace to enable the soul to keep away from sin in the future. The end of many sessions with the psychiatrist has become merely an explaining away of guilt.

13 Ibid.

14 Psychiatric examinations of the type called for could well be too expensive for all but the most wealthy.
Still discussing the attitudes on religion of the psychiatric group, we find several inconsistencies regarding man's last end. A number of these men claim neutrality on the question of immortality. In choosing a neutral stand on the question of immortality, Rabbi Liebman for one, puts into doubt his whole philosophy. Rabbi Liebman calls throughout his book for an integration of religion and psychiatry and even explores the motives behind atheism's and agnosticism's denial and doubt of God in order to demonstrate their groundlessness, only to falter himself on the absoluteness of an immutable, eternal end of man. If man had no end beyond the grave Rabbi Liebman is wasting time in stressing the importance of religion. The foundation stone of religious belief is some form of after-life where justice that was lacking in this life will be satisfied and where intellect and will, bound for Infinite Truth and Goodness, may attain it. Logically, since Rabbi Liebman does stress religion, he should also affirm an afterlife.

Concluding, may we note that sincere religious convictions are a powerful therapeutic aid to the preservation of mental health, but they do not constitute a cure-all. Religious convictions have no mental health value for an individual unless he makes an honest attempt to regulate his conduct according to his belief. Religion is no substitute for psychiatry. When a person's health has broken down, pious exhortations alone will not restore it, but religion may well provide for a better plan of life in the future. Psychiatry is no substitute for religion, despite the attempts of some of the new "religionists." Religion is not aided by mistaking its proper locale.

The Catholic religion is a revealed supernatural religion.
Being supernatural, it cannot be compared with psychiatry, a natural science. However, this fact does not imply opposition. There need be no more opposition between the Catholic religion and psychiatry in the sense of treatment of the mentally ill than there actually is between the Catholic religion and general medicine. Religion works on the normal level; psychiatry, on the abnormal. There need be no opposition between the Catholic religion and analytic psychiatry so long as the latter avoids smuggling in its false philosophy. Strict Freudian psychoanalysis is doing just that. \[15\]

The peace of mind schools have acclaimed the supreme importance of their product. The positive thinking school would gain it by avoiding all negative thoughts and cultivating tranquility by various techniques. The school of enthusiasm theorizes that enthusiasm can be secreted from within. They too prescribed mechanical means for attaining this end. Finally, the schools of psychoanalysis would promise peace of mind on the application and understanding of psychiatry.

But is peace of mind, tranquility of spirit, freedom from mental strain, an end in itself? Is it, as Rabbi Liebman states, "the supreme gift God gives to a few?"\[16\] To claim that peace of mind is an end in itself is to subordinate the true meaning of life. Complete peace of mind was surrendered by man in the Garden of Paradise.


\[16\] Liebman, op. cit., p. 5.
when Adam turned his back on his Maker. From that moment on, man was destined to work out his salvation by the sweat of his brow. Difficulties and troubles, mental, physical, and moral, were made the lot of man. It was God's way of punishing man for his disobedience. Life on this earth was never intended, from that moment on, to be a Paradise. This life was henceforth to be a struggle, a period of trial, during which man would make up in an inadequate, though positive way, for his original fall. This life was to be a striving for the Infinite, for perfect happiness to be attained only in Heaven.

Those who make peace of mind and its consequent happiness the supreme end of life are embarking on a quest that can to frustrations, for they are striving to possess something which may be denied us here on earth. Their error is to confuse the real end of man. His goal is Heaven, not a Paradise on earth. That peace of mind is not an ultimate goal in life is attested by the saints. St. Teresa, the Cure of Ars, and John of the Cross, for example, write vividly on the "dark night of the soul." During these periods, though their faith never faltered, they received no divine consolation, but were subjected to the utmost mental torments. The whole foundation upon which their spiritual life rested seemed to slip away from them; for days at a time they could see no purpose in life, their prayers didn't aid them at all, the rigorous standards of their moral and mental lives seemed to them to no purpose. And yet, all this had a purpose. They were undergoing in a sense understood by few, the real meaning of this earthy life as a trial and as a period of purification before the
bliss of eternal life.

But if the greatest saints should experience such periods of dryness, of lack of enthusiasm, and should be filled with thoughts of utter rejection, even by God Himself, it is no wonder that the ordinary man should be unable to maintain a buoyant spirit without ceasing. Peace of mind, then, is not and cannot be an ultimate goal in life. We must strive to perfect ourselves through association to attain our ultimate goal of Heaven. As the saintly bishop of Hippo remarked some sixteen centuries ago, Our hearts were made for thee, O Lord, and they will find no rest until they rest in thee.
Chapter III

THE FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL
A second major trend in popular psychology might be classified as the school of friendship. Making friends and influencing people becomes a major aim in life. This approach seeks social manners and mores, with little relation to ultimate goals. It is a typical example of a philosophy which teaches the day-to-day practices of Christian charity, though without ever relating them as such to charity. Instead of being meritorious, this kind of good social behavior is advocated for the spirit of good feeling it brings or because of the money value it has. No mention is made of an absolute, immutable moral standard, of an objective religion, of an ultimate goal in life. The equality and dignity of each person and the unity and solidarity of the human race as a foundation for love of neighbor, are never considered. An ill-defined Golden Rule becomes the measure of conduct.

These systems are primarily manuals of etiquette, tact, and good salesmanship, and are concerned thus primarily with dealings with other men. But they are not restricted to this alone. They give a number of hints for overcoming daily worries, and for developing healthy attitudes towards life in general.

Some of the suggestions made by this school include: Become genuinely interested in other people, talk about their interests, not one's own, and remember their names, if you would win their friendship. To win people to one's own way of thinking, avoid argument, respect the other man's opinions, let him do a great deal of the talking, and appeal to his nobler motives. To change people
without giving offence or arousing resentment, praise before, during, and after the change is suggested. Encouragement, letting the other fellow save his face, and giving him a reputation to live up to and making suggestions instead of giving commands are additional suggestions. To make home life happier, husbands and wives are cautioned not to nag or criticize, but to give honest appreciation, be courteous, and pay little attentions.  

Each of these suggestions has universal application, regardless of one's over-all philosophy of life. It need hardly be mentioned that in themselves they do not constitute a philosophy of life. Not one of these rules is subject to change from one age to the next. All are founded on basic human nature, all are applied natural law in the day to day contacts between millions of men and women.

An approach of this kind would appeal to the person with an average education probably more than anyone else. It sets forth in a few rules those basic laws of daily social living which are so necessary for society to run smoothly. Indeed, being so utterly practical in its suggestions, it would probably inspire a great deal of ordinary courtesy and considerateness in the average person. This approach can also be the object of a somewhat ex professo interest by the undergraduate in psychology, so basic and representative are its rules.

With an aim of helping the average fellow solve his personal


18These rules are much more exhaustively put forth in Aristotle's Rhetoric.
problems, rules of as basic a nature as those suggested for social
grace are expounded. Again, no total philosophy of life, more cor­
rectly, a theology of life, is aimed at. These authors make no pre­
tense that their suggestions do constitute such. The following are
some of the suggestions for overcoming chronic anxiety: Live one day
at a time; plan for the future, but don't worry about it. Worry
will not change the future; obviously it cannot improve it; it may
make it worse because of the way it can sap strength. Plan your day
and then keep as close to the schedule as possible. Don't let the in­
evitable reverses which happen to every man be the source of emotion­
al disorders. Don't become involved in trifles. Maintain a positive,
reasonable attitude toward life. Our life is what our thoughts make
of it. Do the very best you can and don't let criticism bother you,
for unless you have done something that arouses jealousy or envy, you
are seldom criticized. Hints are also given on overcoming financial
worry. Get a budget made to fit your needs and then live within it.
Learn how to spend wisely. Among the suggestions for general health
are moderation in food, drink, sleep, and recreation. 19

The mere enumeration of the above rules is sufficient to commend
them to a great many people. Each is founded on the nature of man
in the best Scholastic tradition. They are prudential suggestions
which can be utilized by any man with profit. But since the sugges­

19 Ibid.

For a complete chapter which gives the opinions of a typical
member of this school regarding the part of health in the general
physical and mental well-being of the average person, see Earl Pre­
Vette, How To Turn Your Ability Into Cash, quoted above.
tions made by this group of psychologists all conform with basic human nature, can there be any danger to one who reads volumes of their works?

For most readers, these books will indeed do good. The wisdom of their ideas is generally recognized. The only danger would be to one who had not previously formed a central philosophy of life. Because they fail to offer a philosophy of life and don't even mention religion, there is some danger that one totally lacking in both might try to elevate their few platitudes to a theology of life, or, failing to find one, might cause increased and worse frustration.
CONCLUSION
The modern man is too often characterized by boredom, frustration, and purposelessness. Because life has no single over-all purpose, he is divided against himself. His goals are continually shifting. His frustration is reflected in his isolation from his fellowman. Witness his constant wars and his breaking with traditions. Modern man too is estranged from his God. The demands of goodness are always a reproach to those not living aright. Organized atheism is fundamentally a projection of self-hatred; no man hates God without first having hated self. Revolting against God and the whole of existence, he thinks he has disproved both. The modern man's sense of guilt is never completely destroyed in him. The ego may try to evade its warnings by hyperactivity, violence, or a false sense of social justice, but the conscience can never be completely silenced.

The egoist hates betterment because of fear of the truth. The ego-centric man, through his intellectual pride, refuses to admit that a position once taken can be false because this would require giving up his evil ways, since it implies another superior Mind which is not deceived by the hypocritical face of piety which often deceives the world. The egoist hates betterment because of fear of Goodness, but Goodness is not to be feared for it is perfect Love.

The despairing and the bored have already had their first knowledge of hell in the final stage of egotism enthroned. Man can avoid the frustration which follows upon lack of a true objective goal. In the course of one's lifetime, by thoughtless imitation or rational
selection, the mind becomes imbued with a number of principles. Not all become so strong as to influence one's behavior reflexively. Some, one compromises on in the hour of temptation. It requires a strong will to lead the mind back to the world of reality, where impulse is subdued. But if there are no worthwhile ideals to fall back on, there is no haven of peace and holiness to which the mind can retire.20

No life can develop normally except under the guidance of reason, directed towards the goal. The goal can never be attained unless emotional drives are submitted to rational control.

Many modern psychologies have introduced the notion that stable moral principles and anything that approaches a moral ideal, all authority, human or divine, in the home, the state, or in any human relationship whatsoever, are to be curtailed or denied. The attempt is sometimes made to make adherence to any eternal religious truths or fixed principles of morality akin to tyranny and hence to be resisted vigorously.21 Thus, instead of the moral man with his fine ideals and principles of conduct, there are those who would substitute an anarchical individual with no standards, no principles, and no ideal but to attain his own personal satisfaction.22 In fact, all the techniques of psychiatry are marshalled to deal with these things, e.g., emotional adjustment, inferiority, fears and timidity, etc., but without delineating or attempting to crystallize principles

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20Moore, Thomas Verner, Personal Mental Hygiene, (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1944.) p. 221.

21_Ibid._, p. 223.

22_Ibid._, p. 229.
of conduct.

In sharp distinction to this inadequate approach, the Scholastics demand a true philosophy of life. Man must shrink from no labor, refuse no sacrifice, spare no pain and no effort to become as his God is. By sacrifice and unselfishness alone can man give expression to that image of himself which is like unto God. He must realize that the strings of his destiny are in his own hands. He is personally responsible for the management of his mental, emotional, and moral life. God must be the center of all life if happiness is to be found. Pleasure is a by-product of duty; it evades direct pursuit. Material things are stepping stones to heaven, not the be-all and end-all of human existence - as some modern advertising blurbs would have it.

Self-knowledge can take away the boredom of the modern man. Self-knowledge is a critical examination of self, made in an impartial, objective manner. Its purpose is obvious. One who is shackled by his errant ways, his pre-occupation with self, and who seems bent on a treadmill of boredom and frustration cannot make a change unless he first faces himself, accuses himself of his faults, and uncovers his mental disorders. For a man to desire improvement, to desire to rid himself of his worries and frustrations without taking stock of himself to determine the causes for those worries is naive and futile.

After the examination has been made, and the cause for the boredom and frustration is determined, the life must be re-oriented towards the goal of all life, the goal founded on the metaphysics of
his nature. Here one no longer searches for shallow satisfactions. Boredom comes from lack of purpose. Now the purpose of life is clear. Self-knowledge takes away loneliness. One no longer understands love as the satisfaction of the ego, but as expansiveness towards God and neighbor.

Self-discipline is needed to direct one's life toward this central goal. Self-discipline does not mean self-contempt or destruction of personality, but rather aims at self-expression in the highest sense of the term. A man is not "self-expressive" when he satisfies his lusts like the beasts; he is "self-expressive" when he orders his passions according to reason and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. A stream that spreads itself in many small channels has little depth. So too, a life that has no single purpose becomes tired and bored. Self-discipline integrates us by deepening the channel of our lives. The intellect is disciplined by serious reading and by a profound study of human nature in those around us. Any will can be trained, if there is genuine humility after a fall and a renewed prayer for God's grace; then self-possession begins to be a habit, and the most difficult things become easy in time.

Human emotions are normally mental reactions to our apprehension of a situation, but they should be controlled and directed. To control one's emotions requires a knowledge of the emotional mechanism itself and a taking of a wholesome mental attitude to the situation which caused the emotion. The suggestions of Mr. Dale Carnegie to overcome many minor emotional ups and downs are very practical.23

One must prepare for the critical moments in life and guard against reacting to impractical dreams. We all must face personal responsibility. The temptation to succumb to the pleasure of the moment must be watched. Obedience to the dictates of pleasure is disastrous. When thwarted by real life, it seeks an outlet in the world of phantasy, in plays and daydreams and vain imaginings, in fact, even ultimately in the dream world of the schizophrenic. It is so much easier to build a rosy future in the world of dreams than in the world of reality. But the consequences are disastrous. In fact, they are nothing less than complete and abject slavery.

The maxim that the end of man is self-expression has two meanings, the divine ideal of eternal beauty and the other, our own selfishness. If the divine ideal is to find expression, then much effort must be expended to rid oneself of selfishness, since man by nature is social. The ego will rebel. But such an outcry is but a defense reaction against long and painful effort. It is so much easier to conceive of the expression of oneself as giving free outlet and ample manifestation to natural emotions as they arise, in brief, to follow always the road of least resistance. Putting oneself up on a pedestal can lead eventually only to failure, to the emotional death of intellectual torpor and hopeless indifference. One must climb down off his high horse - or, as the Alcoholics Anonymous said so truly - must "stop playing God." One must face reality and accept it on its

own terms. Life must be a contribution, to the well-being of each and every human being, with an ultimate, eternal goal in God. The role of religion in a philosophy of life has been variously treated.

During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries of the world have consulted me. I have treated many hundreds of patients, the larger number being Protestants, a small number of Jews, and not more than five or six believing Catholics. Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook.

Religion as a therapeutic aid in mental hygiene is applicable only to those who have sincere and honest religious convictions. If a patient has no religious convictions, he cannot be aided by religious concepts until he sees their truth and honestly adopts them.

Every human being must formulate a philosophy of life. Every serious philosophy of life involves either a positive or a negative attitude towards God and religion.

Supposing that man has a religious concept of life, as one that influences his conduct and is not merely an external profession of belief, of what mental hygiene value is it? One who has made a religious philosophy of life the great living force in his mental activity can view his own humble lot with patience and contentment.


26Moore, op.cit., p. 234.
He realizes that he need not accomplish something great in the eyes of the world, but need only submit his mind to the guidance of the Supreme Intelligence and devote his energy day by day to accomplishing in the most perfect manner possible the duties that each day imposes. The fundamental concept in a religious philosophy of life requires that we live in a social order, in a world of intelligent beings, in which God is the Supreme Intelligence. The need for a religious philosophy of life becomes obvious in the big problems of life. Merely natural re-interpretation will not be adequate to meet them. It becomes weak in the face of serious, prolonged difficulties. True equanimity of spirit can be gained only with the conviction that this life is passing, that a greater world awaits us.

The great story of life goes on. Man, pilgrim and wayfarer on earth for a brief flash of time before entering eternity, must constantly strive to attain his goal. When he finds that there is no lasting happiness in self-satisfaction or when the wars brought about by an unruly expansion among nations of the unrest within himself, seem on the verge of destroying him, he turns in haste to find some central philosophy of life.

But neither a philosophy that promises a shallow, subjective peace of mind, nor one that exalts an enthusiasm aimed at no goal, nor one that would make psychiatry a cure-all, can adequately satisfy his soul which was destined for nothing short of perfect Truth and Goodness. Nor can a manual of social manners satisfy him if he has not first a sound philosophy of life, and indeed, a theology of
life, on which to build.

Only a philosophy that emphasizes man's creatureness and his dependence on God in everything, and that acknowledges that man can perfect himself only in association with other men, can adequately suffice and supply. This life must be recognized as only a stepping stone to eternity. Archbishop Trench summarized in a few lines the only attitude which can bring a measure of happiness to this ephemeral, earthly existence.

Could we but crush that ever-craving lust
For bliss, which kills all bliss; and lose our life,
Our barren unit life, to find again
A thousand lives in those for whom we die;
So were we men and women, and should hold
Our rightful place in God's great universe,
Wherein, in heaven and earth, by will and nature,
Naught lives for self. All, all, from crown to footstool -
The lamb, before the world's foundation slain;
The angels, ministers to God's elect;
The sun, who only shines to light a world;
The clouds, whose glory is to die in showers;
The fleeting streams, who in their ocean graves
Flee the decay of stagnant self-content;
The oak, ennobled by the shipwright's axe;
The soil, which yields its marrow to the flower;
The flower, which breeds a thousand velvet worms,
Born only to be prey to every bird -
All spend themselves on others; and shall man,
Whose twofold being is the mystic knot
Which couples earth and heaven - doubly bound,
As being both worm and angel, to that service
By which both worms and angels hold their lives -
Shall he, whose very breath is debt on debt,
Refuse, forsooth, to see what God has made him?
No, let him show himself the creatures' lord
By free-will gift of that self-sacrifice
Which they, perforce, by nature's law must suffer;
Take up his cross and follow Christ the Lord.27


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