

believes that *The New Yorker's* readers are his best potential clientele. Which confirms our suspicion about the linkage between the Liberal Culture and all the "Reverend" Jim Joneses of this country.

New York's Literary Criticism

New York Magazine, the rosary of libcultists, on *Dirty Work: the CIA in Western Europe*, the latest oeuvre of Mr. Philip Agee, an admirer of the communist world enterprise:

"This is not to say, however, that *Dirty Work* is not an interesting and informative book. It is likely to become an invaluable aid to students of the intelligence community, here and abroad."

Exactly. Some of Mr. Agee's previous work has proven an invaluable aid for those who wished to kill Americans abroad.

What Happened to Personal Cleanliness Among College Students

Dr. Mortimer Adler, the renowned philosopher and a man of wholesome skepticism, asks in *Newsweek* what has happened to culture as a mode of civilized conduct that encompasses things from politeness to washing one's clothes and oneself. He complains that colleges today are not interested in transmitting culture, but rather in eliminating whatever habits of civilized behavior embattled parents have succeeded in conveying during the initial part of their offsprings' lives. It's enough to visit a dormitory at even the most prestigious college to notice that the sanitary conditions of a flophouse, by contrast, seem like a remote ideal of winsome and salubrious tidiness.

We can tell Professor Adler what happened to the culture of cleanliness and civility. It became a victim of ideas, disseminated in a quasi-totalitarian manner by the very colleges which today worry about rat-infested dorm rooms.

When in the sixties philosophers and theorists of "liberation" began to preach their gospel of jettisoning the refinements of civilization, it was obvious that the environmental and corporal sense of order had to go first—as was demonstrated by Columbia University in 1968. Next to go were—and still are, in the minds of the liberal sages—all the extensions of civilized living, such as freedom, tolerance, respect for others and democracy. At the time, some people tried to combat the trend, recognizing that we would lose Western civilization altogether if crudity became fashion. We do not remember Professor Adler among them then. It has become fashion. Some dorms look like dumps and threaten health conditions. The only hope is the knowledge that fashion changes, and the time may come when youth will re-

discover the charms of Fred Astaire's nattiness as well as the simple truth that sensitivity and comity make life better for everybody—a truly democratic ideal.

Smart!

The *Village Voice*, the New York radical canard, exhorts its readers to be thankful on Thanksgiving Day, for, among other gifts of the libcultural cornucopia:

"Be thankful that, although you opposed the Vietnam War, you didn't support the Communist Parties of Southeast Asia . . ."

One can only hear the roaring guffaw in the politbureaus in Hanoi and Phnom Penh. □

Polemics & Exchanges

On The Psychological Society—An Encore

by Tom Bethell

The Psychological Society that Martin Gross has elucidated so thoroughly consists of two broad groups: those unfortunate people who really do suffer from serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia or endogenous depression; and the mildly neurotic or the temporarily unhappy, who probably include at one time or another, most of the population above a certain income level: that is to say, people with sufficient freedom and leisure to ask themselves whether they really are as happy as the Declaration of Independence suggests they have the right to be. (The answer is always no, of course).

The point about the first group is

Mr. Bethell is Washington correspondent for Harper's and the American Spectator.

that no amount of lying on the couch and talking about it is going to do any good at all; while for the second group, in the great majority of cases there is nothing wrong at all that time alone won't cure, and so for this group, too, lying on the couch and talking about it is equally a waste of time.

This leaves us with a great deal of unnecessary psychoanalyzing. Gross' book is thus a fierce indictment of psychotherapy, particularly therapy of the Freudian variety. I think that such an indictment is long overdue, and Gross has done an excellent job of it, compiling an enormous amount of data from the professional journals in recent years, and presenting the results in clear, readable English.

The results are devastating, I feel. Six million Americans annually receive psychotherapy in hospitals or clinics.

But, Gross reports, therapists who have themselves undergone therapy are subsequently less effective at "curing" patients. Controlled studies show that groups of patients kept on "waiting lists" to see psychiatrists get better in the same proportion as those who arrive in time to tell their troubles. This is hardly encouraging, suggesting strongly that time heals psychic wounds regardless of the psychiatric couch. Psychiatrists (whose suicide rate is seven times the rate of the general population) like their patients not to be too sick, the profile of their ideal patient being that of "an unusually productive and creative person," Gross says. He alludes to the YAVIS syndrome: psychiatrists like patients who are young, attractive, verbal, intelligent and successful. "One suspects," writes Gross, "that psychiatry may be a cultural, symbolic ritual of the newly sophisticated middle and upper classes, for whom it is a mystical corroboration that one is indeed a Yavis." Amen to that.

Gross reserves his heaviest fire for Freudian psychoanalysis, quoting Hobart Mowrer, former president of the American Psychological Association as saying that "there is not a shred of evidence that psychoanalyzed individuals benefit from the experience," and Dr. Hans J. Eysenck as saying, more disturbingly: "Few patients are warned before undergoing analysis that not only is there no evidence that it will improve their status, but there is evidence that it may actually make them worse." Other studies quoted by Gross have shown that a patient is just as likely to be "cured" by an untrained layman as by a psychoanalyst.

I believe, then, that it is high time to say about Dr. Freud just how much fraud can be found in his theories. I am not interested in how "sincere" he may have been. Folly is not exonerated by sincerity, any more than evil. It does no good to claim that Adolf Eichmann believed in what he did. Ditto the Viennese "authority" whose tales of the unconscious,

the id, the Oedipus Complex, and so on, amount to the most successful imposition of charlatanry in the past hundred years of Western civilization—perhaps ever. Charlatans have always abounded, of course, in the territory occupied by Doctor Feelgood, and there are quite a number of them practicing today (dissected by Gross in a chapter entitled "The New Messiahs"), but none has achieved the quite astonishing degree of acceptance of Freud—his writings, for example, published by the *Encyclopedia Britannica's Great Books*.

Empirically, as Eysenck says, the evidence against Freud is devastating, while theoretically the Freudian mumbo jumbo can lay no greater claim to being scientific than can the incantations of African witch doctors. All "insights" by analysts are protected from the risk of falsification by the saving clause of "reaction formation." If the patient agrees with the insight, the insight is correct. If he doesn't, then he is exhibiting "reaction formation," which also proves that the analyst is right. As Karl Popper points out, this protection from falsification excludes Freudian theory from the realm of the scientific, although for some reason psychoanalysis still has a vaguely scientific ring to it.

Gross suggests at one point that Freud's influence may be increasing, but I am not so sure I agree here. When I was at Oxford 16 years ago he was regarded as a joke by both psychology and philosophy departments (I majored in psychology and philosophy). Today, I would imagine that his star has fallen even further. I don't think that many people really believe in the Freudian thaumaturgy any more, even though millions do go to "shrinks." Gross does point out that patients undergoing Freudian analysis "are surprisingly few in number: currently only 30,000 patients in the United States, perhaps 40,000 world wide." (But they do represent, Gross adds, "a cross section of the upper echelon neurotic population of the Psychological Society.")

Most people, I feel sure, go to see a

"shrink" for a few heart-to-heart talks because their husbands/wives/boyfriends/girlfriends have left them, and there are very few patients with the illusion that their personalities are being remade. Probably not much harm is done or money wasted even if Blue Cross insurance is paying the bill, as is the case with government employees in Washington. The psychiatrist has usurped the role of the priest for the upper middle class. This is one of the fundamental clichés of our times, but it is true all the same.

Of course, one can't afford to become too complacent about the abundant psychiatrizing of our day. As the example of Washington amply demonstrates, there are plenty of people in our society who are eager to make voluntary actions compulsory, and the mental health establishment, I am sure, is no different. In 1977, the President's Commission on Mental Health warned "that up to 32 million Americans are in need of professional psychiatric help." The egregious Rosalynn Carter is pushing hard for an expanded state "mental health" apparatus. Stay out of her way if you see her coming down the street. Someone should point out to her—as I am sure no one has—that the KGB regards Soviet dissidents as having mental health problems, too.

As for the millions who are unnecessarily a part of the Psychological Society, one has little sympathy for them. Over the centuries, men have always devised elaborate ways of conjuring money out of the pockets of the gullible, and our age is no different; indeed, there are more of the gullible than ever, as G. K. Chesterton foresaw, when he remarked that "a man who ceases to believe in God doesn't believe in nothing; he believes in anything." If Freud ever read those true words, how he must have smiled to himself!

Go out and buy Martin Gross' book. It is packed with useful information and it deserves to be read as widely as possible. □

Rockford College Institute
Rockford College
5050 East State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61101