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The Status of American Goals and Values

IN THEIR INVITATIONS to participate in this discussion, the organizers propounded a series of provocative questions to each contributor. Those posed to me were: (1) Does America have a unique set of goals and values? (2) How much discrepancy between ideal and real goals is permissible? (3) How can conflicts be resolved?

In a general way these questions may be answered very quickly and easily. First: Does America have a unique set of goals and values? Yes. In fact it has a number of them. Second: How much discrepancy between ideal and real goals is permissible? If real goals differ from ideal goals in that they are actually pursued, there is no reason why the discrepancy between the two should not be infinite. The amount of difference that is tolerable is measured only by the limits of tolerance itself. Third: How can conflicts be resolved? If the conflict is between ideal and real goals, it is most conveniently solved by dropping the ideal; that is, if there is any reason in solving this sort of conflict in the first place. If, however, the conflict is between discrepant actual goals of different people, the solution found in fact will usually express the precise ratio of strength of the interested parties. It is seriously doubtful whether any other solution will prove to be stable.

These remarks are not intended to dismiss the issue, but to indicate the need to fix the terms of the discussion if it is to cut beneath current stereotypes.

THE COMMUNITY AS THE BASIS OF GOAL-VALUE SYSTEMS

This paper rests on the assumption that the objectives men pursue in the course of their interhuman activities are fixed by the character of their communities. We take "goals" to mean the

qualities men secure by their social activity and "values" to mean the principles which organize their goals into systems and determine appropriate means. Communities are total ways of life arising out of the human requirements for stable and consistent interhuman activities which are complete enough to take care of the normal needs of the ordinary life. The goal-value systems which arise in social life represent the array of means and ends appropriate to particular communities. The empirical sociology of value — that is the study of the system of means and ends in any given pattern of interhuman activity — is assumed to rest on the relativity of any given goal-value system to community type. In the past such goal-value systems as tribalism, agrarianism, cosmopolitanism and nationalism have been anchored in the communities of the tribe, peasant village, city and the nation.

While America gradually evolved a more or less "dominant" goal-value system and while this is undergoing change at present, America has at no time sustained a single, exclusive goal-value system. The multiplicity of American goal-value systems is anchored in the plurality of its communities. Even in colonial days three distinct types of communities with fragments of a fourth had appeared. At this time America had evolved plantation communities in the South, village communities and cities in the northern colonies. Moreover, there were some small settlements of peasant communities at this time. Each of these types of communities continued to develop throughout the 19th century. To them, after the American revolution, was added the national community which grew slowly at first, but evolved more rapidly as time went by. Moreover, beginning in the 1830's there was an increasing tendency for blocks of ethnic aliens to form in the expanding cities, adding pluralities of ethnic ghettos to the other community types operating as semiclosed, semiautonomous systems within the framework of American society. Each one of these communities was in process of evolving its distinctive goal-value system.

The First National Synthesis of an American Goal-Value System — The Rise of the Yankee as the Distinctive American Type

In the conflict of the many subcommunities with one another that has marked the increasing consolidation of American society, there is a tendency for the more powerful, which is usually also the more comprehensive community, to win out. The town grows at the expense of the village, the city at the expense of the town

and the nation at the expense of the city. Moreover, sometimes where a conflict between two different subcommunities occurs, the arena for the conflict is shifted to a community more comprehensive than both. For example, the conflict between Negro and white communities of the American South after the Civil War took place within the framework of the region. The conflict between the farm communities of the Old Northwest and the eastern industrial-financial centers prior to the Civil War shifted to the framework of the growing nation. So, too, did the conflict between the plantation-dominated South (technologically backward and resting on slave labor) and the industrial and farm-village communities of the North (resting on a progressive technology and free labor). This is no place to trace in detail all the forms that community conflict may assume. However, it should perhaps be noted that not all forms of such community conflict have the components of alienness and prejudice peculiar to ethnic and majority communities.

However, with the tendency for each conflict to shift to the arena of most comprehensive power, a transvaluation of goals occurs. When former rural communities are replaced by the city, there is simultaneous redefinition of goals. Though their private preferences were at opposite ends of the scale, the agrarian mystic Oswald Spengler¹ and the cosmopolitan sophisticate Georg Simmel² were agreed that the European peasant rural communities and the city differed in characteristic ways: the core of economic life shifted from agricultural to nonagricultural pursuits; a subsistence economy was replaced by a money and market economy; property in land ceased to be the main type of wealth; the organic rhythms of the natural year were replaced by artificial clock and calendar schedules; the family and age grades declined in importance as the clique and social class arose; and even the very modes of thought were changed as a traditional outlook was thrust aside in place of a logical and rational point of view.

The transfer of the arena of community conflict to the next higher level of power³ is an aspect of a process which in the

¹Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1926. Vol. II. Pp. 85 ff.

²Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. (Trans. by Kurt H. Wolff.) The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois. 1950. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." Pp. 409 ff.

³This, to be sure, is not always voluntary. The conflict between two communities may be utilized by a third with more power than either to improve its own situation the easy way. It may offer its services as moderator as a part of a long-range program of taking over both.

community at large directly parallels the formation of economic consolidations and mergers and the increasing domination of an area of economic life by a few giant concerns. These two kinds of consolidation are merely a specific and a general form of the same process. In fact, the community framework within which the giant economic concerns of contemporary North America operate is provided not by the rural community, the ethnic community, or even the city, but by the nation. The social historical phenomena of greatest importance on the American social scene — more important than any of the conflicts of American sub-communities — is the growth of the nation at the expense of all local forms.

The growth of the American nation, the most comprehensive and powerful community of American society, has been accomplished by the destruction of subcommunities and the reincorporation of their fragments into a new system. To a considerable extent the integration of the nation and the predominance of its goal-value system are to be measured by their capacity to create new and special social types. A social type is an individual whose behavior epitomizes the goal-value system of his community. The communities of hunters and gatherers created the tribesman; rural subsistence communities sustained the peasant; the urban community supplied the social foundation for the citizen; and the new community of the nation-state has created the "national."

In other contexts, on the basis of a review of much of the literature on American character, the following formulations⁴ were made:

All major observers agree that American character tends to manifest great practicality, considerable anti-intellectualism, a genius for organization, a strong materialism, a tendency to conceptualize social and political affairs in moralistic terms, a manifestation of great faith in individual initiative, and a sense of civic responsibility. These are the major clues to American character, and the Yankee emerges as the central and unique American type.

This list of traits and trait combinations is about as near to a general characterization of the uniqueness of the American "national" as it is possible to formulate. Moreover, the general historical process by which these American traits arose out of American subcommunities can be traced.

The social composition of the eastern seaboard of colonial

⁴Don Martindale, *American Social Structure*. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York. 1960. P. ix. For comparative purposes, see Bradford Smith, *Why We Behave Like Americans*. J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia. 1957. Pp. 77-98.

North America was initially fixed by the the fact that the majority of its inhabitants were north Europeans (predominantly English), middle and lower middle-class townsmen of a variety of Protestant faiths. There was no extensive peasant contingent among them; there was only a comparatively thin strata of upper middle-class and royalist elements. Though the primitiveness of frontier traditions forced a rural way of life on the majority of the colonial Americans, their "natural" community was the town rather than the rural village, and they were dominated by a "civic" rather than by a traditional "agrarian" mentality.

Moreover, the pioneer farmer in America later derived from the seaboard did not have a peasant's attitude toward the land. His orientation to the wilderness was more that of the miner or extractor. With great frequency he was derived not from peasant but from middle-class urban stock.

The particularism of townsmen (which would raise loyalties to the local community above all loyalties to interlocal combinations) was strong in the days following the American revolution. In the teeth of the obvious fact that the national government was in their own hands, the colonists retained a powerful suspicion of central government. The Bill of Rights is a monument to this suspicion. That in the face of this particularism the new nation could thrive at all is a tribute to good sense and practical necessity. The world was, after all, entering a period of national consolidations of economic, political and social life. Economic, financial and political concerns were in considerable measure national and international. Hamilton represented those economic and financial interests in the new state that seized the economic and financial opportunities that had been forcefully vacated by the British. Secondly, the threat of a reinvasion of the state by the British made it militarily advisable to strengthen the central government. Finally, a newly rising society on the frontier was raising problems which it was unable to solve by its own resources and was pressing the state and central governments for assistance. The chief frontier problems requiring federal help were transportation and the Indians. Hence, while the mentality of townsmen remained dominant, a new national mentality was rising. The townsman was the clearest voice within the latter.

Between the period of the forming of the new state and the Civil War, the evolving community structures of the United States were shaping into three regional groupings — the Northeast, the South, and the Old Northwest. The contrast between the northern village communities and the southern plantation communities has already been sketched. In both North and South the agricultural husbandman was evolving into a farmer, though in different ways.

However, of greater importance for the moment was the existence of two sets of class tensions, the resolution of which eventually tended to strengthen the national community as against all of the regions.

The lesser of the class tensions in the early state period were between the eastern capitalist, banker, businessman and western frontiersman. It is a mistake to view this as a rural versus urban conflict, for the frontiersman was often rural only from necessity. He was often motivated by the desire for speculative profits. He mined the land for its superficial resources, and often left a semiruinied farm behind him. Only gradually during the course of the nineteenth century, when genuine peasant types (such as the Germans and Scandinavians) settled on the land abandoned by the pioneer farmers, was the same land improved and brought under intensive cultivation. Meanwhile, the original "Old Yankee" pioneer farmer had often cannily moved into the newly forming towns, organized the banks, businesses and enterprises. The pioneer farmer of the Old Northwest was derived from middle-class elements of the eastern seaboard, even as his forefathers on the coast had been derived from middle-class elements from north European countries. Between the Old Northwest and the Northeast a drama was played out somewhat similar to the previous drama between the colonists and England. This time, however, the eastern banker and businessman played the role parallel to the Tories of the colonial period. However, between the eastern and midwestern groups there was a more fundamental kinship than in their colonial counterparts. The psychology of both groups was essentially middle class, for they represented the upper and lower sections of the middle classes; they were its creditor and debtor sections. The mentality of both groups was essentially that of middle-class townsmen. The easterners were Episcopalians, Congregationalists and Unitarians; the midwesterners were Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists. The moment their situation improved and their indebtedness declined, the midwesterner behaved precisely like his eastern cousins. In fact, as soon as their fortunes improved, they liked nothing better than to send their daughters to Boston finishing schools and their sons to Harvard.

The social classes of the Northeast and the Old Northwest tended, each in its own peculiar way, to carry their problems to a national level. The easterners sought federal support of tariff policies which would protect their new businesses, and they also wanted to establish a national banking system. The midwesterners sought federal support to bring the Indians under control, to finance the building of roads and canals and, later, the

railroads. They also sought federal support of liberal land policies and cheap money schemes. As Northeast and Old Northwest carried their contests to a national level, each helped strengthen those aspects of the federal government which would take care of its particular needs.

The major class tension joined the Northeast and Old Northwest in opposition to the South. The plantation communities were tied to the other regions in a number of ways. The northeast manufacturing area was one of the primary markets for southern cotton. Whenever the slave plantation system began to dominate an area, it either drove the non-slave-owning farmers to migrate or to retreat to marginal lands. The Old Northwest was one of the main export areas for the excess southern population. The South was a traditional low tariff area, which put it in tension with the North. The protective tariffs resorted to by the North for the benefit of budding industries guaranteed the high price of southern imports. As an area resting on a wasteful system of agricultural practices, the South contested with the West in the attempt to extend the plantation system. This ran counter to the drive from liberal, small, individualized land holders of the West. Eventually the advanced technology and free labor system of the North clashed with the unprogressive technology and slave labor system of the South.

Here, too, the contest was shifted to the national scene. The Civil War tremendously strengthened the national community, and led to a reconstitution and simplification of an emerging national character. The war greatly reduced the role of the goal-value system of the South in the emerging national scheme. The war forced a fusion, with many mutual compromises developing between the Northeast and the West. In the newly constituted Republican Party the mentality of the middle-class Protestant townsman was lifted above the regional formations that contributed most to it and placed in a dominant position on a national scale. The concessions made by the East to the West in the course of this development were notable, including the Homestead Act, the Morrill Act and the formation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Meanwhile, the Civil War not only represented a great shared national experience but created fabulous markets for both manufactured and agricultural products. It accelerated the movement toward mass production in industry and toward mechanization and commercial orientation in agriculture.

From the Civil War period to World War I, the South was occupied with the problems of reconstruction and race. The region was too riddled by internal tensions to enter very deeply

into other events sweeping the country forward. Between the re-organized Northeast and Midwest, which had been fused by war and industrialization, and the areas farther west, a new drama developed somewhat similar to that which had earlier split asunder the Northeast and Old Northwest. The West was still the debtor region, still in need of transportation facilities, still inclined to take political action to promote its economic interests (in Populism, the Free Silver Movement and the Greenback Movement). However, the West as a whole presented new problems. The Southwest had a special major set of problems in its Spanish components. The arid west presented special problems for agricultural and social technology. Among other things, it not only rendered irrelevant the farm techniques successful in the East and Midwest, but also many of its social and political arrangements. The Homestead Act, for example, promoted a fragmentation of holdings which was extremely uneconomic in many areas of the arid west. The settlement of the West first leaped over the arid west to the coast, where the Oregon Territory to some degree enacted a drama similar to the settlement of the Old Northwest. Major events on the Great Plains included the destruction of the buffalo and the brief flowering for two decades of the heroic period of the cattle industry before the windmill, barbed wire, dry farming, winter wheat and irrigation began to convert the area to agriculture. By 1890 a frontier line had ceased to exist, and all the free land had been taken up.

Though new elements were beginning to appear on the national scene that did not fit the main pattern, there is little doubt that the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first 10 years of the twentieth century were the period of the first inclusive synthesis of the American character. It was even experienced by many Americans as a kind of age of awakened self-consciousness. In the 1880's, as Kazin notes, America was ready for a truly national literature.

However, it was not alone in its literature that America was coming to a new self-consciousness. In the pragmatism of Charles Pierce, William James and John Dewey, American thought for the first time produced a distinctive philosophy of its own. In the skyscraper, Americans were making a unique contribution to the architecture of the world. In the prairie style of Sullivan and Wright, America was developing a style of domestic architecture of its own. In this period, a national self-consciousness was even manifest in the attempt to regulate population through immigration control designed to conform to its emerging concept of an ideal population composition.

The Decline of the Yankee as the Distinctive American Type

At the very time when American character came to its first full synthesis (around 1890) and elevated the Yankee into its distinctive national type, major events were in process which seriously upset the trial balance of the American national community.

By 1890 the frontier line had come to an end. America was a land of small towns. The Yankee with his Puritanism, his capacity for hard work, his mechanical ingenuity, his strong self-reliance and moral confidence (which permitted him to view success as the natural reward of virtue), his civic consciousness, his town-meeting democracy, was the epitome of the small Protestant town. Intuitively, he viewed the country as a whole as a sort of federalism in which his small town was the one solid and dependable unit.

The three great processes which arose outside the first synthesis of community and character in the United States were: (1) the gradual assimilation of the mass migrations from the period of the 1880's to the first world war; (2) the rise and partial integration of the city; and (3) the formation of powerful complexes of mass industry and government.

The influences of these forces have not yet been completely assimilated. Many students, for example, have even come to believe that they have rendered archaic much of American liberalism and conservatism. For American liberalism and conservatism became fixed with respect to the first synthesis of American community and character in ways blinding them to emerging properties of the changing national community.

The set of characteristics listed earlier as typifying the American character represent its first synthesis. They were more true during the period 1880-1910 than they have been since that time. While they still hold, in considerable degree, they seem to hold less true as time goes by. The American character is changing, and it is not yet clear where the change will end.

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Discussion

THE PAPER PREPARED by Professor Don Martindale is most commendable for the breadth and perspective in which it presents the goals and values of American society. He has used the historical method rather than the analytical method of science, and this choice of method may have influenced the selection of substantive materials about goals and values he has included. This does not imply any desire on my part to deprecate the historical method and to applaud the scientific. However, by definition the former is more appropriate for the study of the origin and development of basic goals and values in American society, and the latter for the study of the current status and content of goals and values.

When values are studied, especially if it is assumed that they have changed or are changing, one may expect much disputation. The debate that has ensued the publication of the Jacob report on *Changing Values in College* is a present reminder of this fact.¹ Much of the discussion about that report has tended to focus upon the meanings to be attached to terms like values and the methodology used in studies of values. The Hazen Foundation, the sponsor of the research, has published two critical essays about the Jacob report, one by a philosopher² and another by a sociologist.³

Reference to the importance of methodology is made for non-partisan rather than partisan motives. The study of goals and values is an emotionally overburdened enterprise. The methods of philosophy, history and behavioral science would each appear to be needed. The philosopher has much to contribute to an understanding of the ontology of values. The historian is the master of a methodology that permits a description of the development of values in a given society. The behavioral scientist would appear to have a special responsibility in describing the present status and content of values in society. The behavioral scientist and the

¹ Philip E. Jacob, *Changing Values in College*. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1957.

² John E. Smith, *Value Convictions and Higher Education*. The Edward W. Hazen Foundation, New Haven. 1958.

³ Allen H. Barton, *Studying the Effects of College Education*. The Edward W. Hazen Foundation, New Haven. 1959.

historian are concerned with the "isness" of values as distinguished from the "oughtness" described in philosophy, or perhaps it is the difference between values abstractly and concretely described.

I had hoped that Professor Martindale, a sociologist, would present a discussion of the current status of goals and values based on the empirical data now available. Admittedly much of these data are derived from research on microcosmic situations. For example, the Goldsen *et al.* report "What College Students Think" may be cited.⁴ The rural life studies of Landaff, New Hampshire and Harmony, Georgia, etc., reveal much about values in specific communities.⁵ In addition the extensive literature of attitudinal and public opinion studies should offer a theoretician much empirically derived material for the development of a macrocosmic analysis of the present status and content of goals and values of American society.

The distinction that Professor Martindale makes between goals and values is useful because it highlights the fact that the two concepts are frequently used interchangeably in the literature. Goals are "the qualities men attempt to secure in the course of their activities," according to Martindale's definition. I assume that the term is used as a synonym for a value as used by Laswell and Kaplan which they call "a desired event — a goal event."⁶ In any case, the eight values used by Laswell (power, respect, rectitude, affection, well-being, wealth, skill, and enlightenment) correspond closely to the goals cited by Martindale. The Goals of Life Inventory, developed as a project of the Cooperative Study in General Education, evaluates twenty goals that are more specific than those of Martindale, although it appears to have the same connotation for the term goal.⁷ It includes self-development, serving the community, serving God, peace of mind, etc.

Values, according to Martindale, are "principles in terms of which men arrange their goals in axiological systems and fix the relations between means and ends." His use of the word "evaluated" in this context raises a question about the clarity of his terms. Gunnar Myrdal avoids using the term "value" because it

⁴Rose K. Goldsen, Morris Rosenberg, Robin M. Williams, and Edward A. Suchman, *What College Students Think*. D. Van Nostrand Company, Princeton, New Jersey. 1960.

⁵Carl C. Taylor, *et al.*, *Rural Life in the United States*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1949. Pp. 495-509.

⁶Harold D. Laswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society*. Yale University Press, New Haven. 1950. Pp. 16-28.

⁷Harold E. Dunkel, *An Inventory of Student's General Goals of Life*. *Education and Psychological Measurement*, 4:87-95, 1944.

has a loose meaning.⁸ He finds the terms beliefs and valuations useful. The former are ideas people have about how reality actually is or was; the latter are ideas they have about how it ought to be, or ought to have been.⁹ "Evaluations" appears to be a synonym for Martindale's use of the term values. It may be inferred from his discussion that the culture of American society permits great and wide diversity in the principles by which means and ends are evaluated, or by which evaluations are made. However, it is not clear what these principles are. In fact, the most disappointing feature of the whole discussion about the current status of "values" (to use Martindale's term) is his apparent failure to be specific about what the principles of evaluation are. His discussions of liberalism and conservatism give some hints, and his discussions of the major American goal-value systems that have developed historically are exciting. However, the reader is left to write his own postscript about the current status of goals and values.

The temptation of a discussant is to overlay his role, especially with reference to negative criticisms. To compensate, the following postscript is attached to Martindale's excellent historical development of American goals and values.

Professor Martindale has organized his discussion of goals and values around the development of community life: tribalism, agrarianism, cosmopolitanism, and nationalism. History helps us understand who we are, and it gives us a perspective on our present status. However, a discussion of the history of community life in relation to goals and values is apt to overshadow the fact that goals and valuations are shaped by and shared in patterns that we call institutions. Also the socialization of the individual person is closely related to, and in a sense is a product of, the interaction of personality system and institutions or social systems. In our monolithic society with its propensity for conformity to the mass image, institutions perform a major function in aiding the individual in identifying himself and the goals and values to which he is committed. Hence such diversity as there exists in the goals and values of our society is maintained by the role the person performs and the status he has in such institutional structures as the family, the educational system, the economic system, the political system, and the religious system. Variability regarding goals and values are found within each of these institutional structures. Available evidence would seem to

⁸Paul Streeter, Editor, *Value in Social Theory*, A selection of essays on methodology, by Gunnar Myrdal. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1959. P. 77.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 71.

support the notion that variability in goals and values is greater with reference to institutional systems than to community systems. Professor Martindale seems to suggest this in his discussion of conservatism and liberalism. An understanding of the current status of goals and values in American society requires an analysis of the function of institutions in maintaining diversity of goals and values.

I confess considerable skepticism about using variability in community life as a model for ordering goals and values in American society. Studies of community life suggest that the relation of local community groups and institutions to their respective regional and national organizations and institutions is far more important and decisive than is the interrelationship of these groups within the local community in which they are located. Vidich and Bensman¹⁰ document this in their microcosmic research on a New York State rural community. Nisbet¹¹ and Stein¹² in their review of literature in the sociology of the community place the same ideas in larger perspective.

I can illustrate this by reference to the several institutional structures that are usually represented in the rural community. The economic enterprises are a case in point, whether they are oriented to production or distribution of goods and services, or whether they are organized as private enterprise or cooperatives. The producer is not producing for a local market, nor is the distributor interested only in local decisions for the products or services. Rather, both evaluate opportunities in terms of alternative prices in relation to supply and demand in other communities. The choice to produce or not, to sell or not, to buy or not, is part of an over-all production and distribution mechanism that is ordered by corporate enterprise (a trade association, a manufacturing association, labor union or other groups) beyond the local community that structure the decision-making processes.

Even the local church, an institution that is proud of its individualism and autonomy, is influenced in its decisions about goals to a greater degree by the regional or denominational class to which it belongs than it is by the wishes of the local congregation. In Protestant denominations, for example, national goals regarding

¹⁰ Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, *Small Town in Mass Society — Class, Power and Religion in a Rural Community*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. 1958.

¹¹ Robert A. Nisbet, *The Quest for Community — A Study of the Ethics of Order and Freedom*. Oxford University Press, New York. 1957.

¹² Maurice R. Stein, *The Eclipse of Community — An Interpretation of American Studies*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. 1960.

benevolence giving are far more determinative of budget askings in a local church than is the economic potential. The promotion of the clergyman is far more likely to be determined by the degree to which his church fulfills the national goals than locally derived goals.¹³

The same may be said with equal validity for educational, welfare, and political goals and evaluation. In fact, in our society we seem to have allocated this type of leadership to high priests in each institution who articulate the goals and values of that institutional structure. Lawyers are the high priests of the political structure.¹⁴ Physicians are the high priests of the health system, the theologian of the religious institutions, and the schools have a similar small professional group that performs this function.¹⁵ Professional schools train these high priests in the formulation and articulation of acceptable goals and values.

I suspect that among the high priests of the institutions the basic goals in American society are much more uniform and pervasive than Professor Martindale's review would suggest. A hint of this is suggested by a study conducted by Skolnick and Schwartz on the students enrolled in Yale University Professional Schools.¹⁶ Law and divinity students are budding high priests for the political and religious institutions, respectively. It might be theorized that prospective lawyers are concerned with power goals, ministers with rectitude and moral issues, physicians with well-being, etc. Contrary to expectations Skolnick and Schwartz found that law and divinity students both emphasize power or decision making in their personal and professional life as a primary goal. To be sure, many selective factors are probably operating to make this similarity possible. However, it is most surprising to find that future clergymen see rectitude or morality as a secondary goal.

The difference in goals that are apparent in American society may be closely related to the institutional structures through which persons seek to fulfill their goals. If so, then the differential means for fulfilling goals are more important in explaining variability than are the differential goals. For example, the segment of the economy in which the farmer functions may be

¹³Vidich and Bensman, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-57. Paul M. Harrison, *Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition - A Social Case Study of the American Baptist Convention*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. 1959.

¹⁴Donald R. Matthews, *The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers*. Doubleday and Company, New York. 1954. Pp. 30-32.

¹⁵Neal Gross, *Who Runs Our Schools?* John Wiley and Sons, New York. 1958.

¹⁶Jerome H. Skolnick and Richard D. Schwartz, *Power Perspectives of Divinity and Law Students*. A paper presented at the Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts. April 22, 1960.

important in how he evaluates the means available to him in fulfilling his goals. The farmer, and his high priests, articulate an ethic to which they are committed, which guides choices he makes between "good" and "bad" means for goal fulfillment.

There is another aspect to the relative uniformity of basic goals in American society that is easily overlooked. A number of recent works suggest the importance of personality in the political process.¹⁷ I am of the opinion that the personality variable is an important, but relatively unexplored variable, in relation to the purposes of this conference. The recent research on an upstate New York rural community, to which we already referred, discusses the personality variable in relation to community integration. The authors¹⁸ state:

While integration thus exists at the institutional level, there is always the possibility that it does not reach down into the personal lives of the community member Adhering to publicly stated values while at the same time facing the necessity of acting in immediate situations places a strain on the psychological makeup of the person.

In a concluding chapter of their report, they examine the dilemmas faced by the residents of the small town and the modes of personality adjustment that these residents use to minimize their personal conflicts. There is a new urgency in the need for research on personality as a factor in goals and values as they relate to agricultural policy, especially because, I believe, the valuations of the American farm public have been radically restructured.

Clarification as to who the high priests are and what their roles are varies within the different institutions in American society. It is rather clear that in political, religious and health systems technically trained high priests are available and that their role differs from that of other functionaries in these systems. In other systems technically trained high priests are not available in great numbers and their role has not been universally accepted. Agriculture is one of the systems in which the role of the high priest is still being defined and his technical competence being established. A resolution of the ambiguities involved in the role of the high priest will do much to clarify the goals and values of agriculture.

¹⁷T. W. Adorno, et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1950; Harold D. Laswell, *Power and Personality*. W. W. Norton and Company, New York. 1948; Alfred H. Stanton and Stewart E. Perry, *Personality and Political Crisis*. The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois. 1951.

¹⁸Vidich and Bensman, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

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Discussion

PROFESSOR MARTINDALE has presented what I consider to be as thorough and scholarly a treatment of the status of American goals and values as one could in the scope permitted him. It is something of a brief intellectual and social history of the United States, tracing as it does some of the main themes in our development.

Professor Martindale's approach and emphasis, however, are those of a sociologist. I do not by this statement insinuate criticism or disagreement. On the contrary, I am, to the extent of my knowledge of the subject, in quite firm agreement with him, but as a political scientist concerned primarily with the development of political thought it is perhaps only natural that my approach and emphasis be somewhat different from his. I wish therefore as a student of political theory to raise some further questions with reference to the status of American goals and values. Perhaps these questions are all raised either explicitly or implicitly by Professor Martindale, but here we shall attempt to come at them in a somewhat different manner.

From its beginnings western civilization has embodied two fundamentally opposing traditions. These may be described or characterized in a number of ways, but there is hardly a more apt way to describe them than to say that one tradition has made God the measure and the other has made Man. One has accepted the existence of a transcendental order while the other has insisted that order is man made and exists only within the immanent realm. The tension between the two traditions may be observed in the debate between Socrates and Thrasymachus as to whether justice is natural or conventional. We can also see its outlines in the high Middle Ages in the conflict of Scholastics and Nominalists — Thomas Aquinas on the one hand and Marsilio of Padua on the other. We observe it again in Machiavelli and his critics, or in Hobbes and his critics. In the eighteenth century, Burke has become heir to the position of Socrates, and Robespierre to the tradition of Thrasymachus. In our own century the struggle continues with perhaps the best representatives of the God-the-measure tradition being the British and American liberal democracies and the best representatives of the Man-the-measure tradition being the new totalitarianisms of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

Now I confess to gross oversimplification. At the level of reality, if not at the level of theory, the two traditions are commingled, and this is particularly true of the modern period. Bodin, the father of the modern concept of sovereignty, was troubled by the demands of a transcendental justice. The Marxist may deny with great vigor and in total sincerity the existence of a transcendental realm or the capacity of man to transcend existence, but in his denial he uses the language and symbolism of transcendence. The examples one could give of this commingling are endless, but one more might be in order. We speak constantly of our form of government as one in which both the principles of majority rule and minority rights operate, and it is true that they do. What we do not always realize is that majority rule makes man the measure whereas the minority rights principle appeals to a belief in man's capacity to experience transcendence. Taken alone the majority rule principle in effect holds that all opinions or desires are of equal worth, that the highest authority is the human will, and that social order demands that we count heads rather than make it necessary for the majority to resort to force. The minority rights principle, on the other hand, ascribes to the person a dignity and a worth independent of human opinion and authority, and although it may well serve utility and social order, it is not their creation.

These two traditions are, of course, functions of different views as to the nature of man and different philosophies of history. I will not bore you with any discussion of the nature of man or philosophies of history except to point out that in one tradition man has been regarded as a blend of spirit and body, reason and passion, good and bad. The higher elements of his nature are constantly opposed and thwarted by the lower with the consequence that his reach will always exceed his grasp and that his institutions will always fail to serve in full the purposes for which they were established. In the other view man has generally been regarded as a uniquely highly developed animal with an unparalleled capacity for adaption. He is the master of his own fate and in good season he will perfect himself and establish within history a just and lasting peace when neither fear nor want will be known.

Today, as in the past, the great line of demarcation runs between these two traditions, or, in symbolic terms, between the City of God and the City of Man. This was pointed up not so long ago by one of the most distinguished of contemporary political philosophers, Professor Eric Voegelin of the University of Munich. According to Voegelin:¹

¹Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Totalitarianism," *Rev. of Polit.*, Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 75 (January, 1953).

The true dividing line in the contemporary crisis does not run between liberals and totalitarians, but between the religious and philosophical transcendentalists on the one side, and the liberal and totalitarian immanentist sectarians on the other.

Substantially the same idea is offered by Professor Leo Strauss.²

Looking around us, we see two hostile camps, heavily fortified and strictly guarded. One is occupied by the liberals of various descriptions, the other by the Catholic and non-Catholic disciples of Thomas Aquinas.

Further explication of the idea is contained in one of Reinhold Niebuhr's more recent books with the suggestive title of Pious and Secular America.³

Returning now to the task at hand — a discussion of the status of American goals and values — I should like to suggest again that in America from our beginnings both traditions have operated simultaneously. I have already made reference to our commitment to both majority rule and minority rights. There is also our great faith in the people coupled with such nonpopular institutions as the senate and judicial review. We have separated church and state, and for good reason, but yet we say that we are one nation under God and that in Him we trust. We have said that the business of our government is business, yet we tax ourselves to serve the underprivileged of the world. We have fought a war to end wars and make the world safe for democracy, and then have withdrawn to a selfish and blind isolation. We fought another war to secure a world free from fear and want, but we are not a nation devoid of realism. We have evidenced an almost unbounded optimism and faith in progress, yet we are cautious, conservative and intent upon constructing as many dikes against contingencies as is possible. We have admired the philosophy of revolutionary France, but our institutions owe much more to 1688 than to 1789.

The point is, I trust, abundantly clear. We have accepted both the City of God and the City of Man and have been a nation with a divided loyalty. But there is reason to believe that throughout most of our history most of us have made our loyalty to the City of Man subordinate. We have acted as if man is endowed with a spark of the divine, as if there is an objective standard of justice, and as if we have obligations extending beyond time. And, too,

²Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1953. P. 7.

³Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1958.

most of us have been prepared to accept something less than perfection and have agreed with Walt Whitman that probably each fruition of success will bring forth something to make a greater sacrifice necessary.

I would submit that goals and values are — in the last analysis, if not more immediately — functions of how we conceive of man and his destiny. This may be trite, but it is too often forgotten that attempts to establish heaven on earth have only succeeded in creating hells. Such attempts result from our failure to appreciate the nature of the human materials with which we must work or from becoming too immersed in the tradition of man the meas-

ure.

To the degree that these observations are correct, the question becomes one of the relative strength of the two traditions today. Will we continue to try to build the best city that is humanly possible, aware that it will always incorporate injustice and suffering, or will we abandon the oldest knowledge of man, our finiteness, assume ourselves to be gods and attempt the establishment of our particular version of heaven? Of course I do not know the answer to the question I have raised, but the evidence that we are rapidly turning to the secular, immanentist creed is sufficient to justify genuine concern. I will indicate only some of the developments, but they are sufficient to give us pause.

There is, for example, reason to believe that our values are increasingly materialistic. The unparalleled creature comforts of our age and the leisure which has attended our industrial and technical advances do not seem to have inclined us any more toward the life of the spirit or of the mind. Rather they appear only to have sharpened our appetites and accentuated our baser natures. I need not elaborate upon the dangers of excessive materialism. They are known to us all as are the signs of excess, but I would like, for the sake of emphasis, to point to two. Materialism can be and is the enemy of liberty. One need only point to Russia or China. We might well ask ourselves, however, whether we are prepared to accept the sacrifice involved in what we hope will be a successful prosecution of the Cold War. It is not without significance that the percentage of our gross national produce expended for public purposes has been declining for some time although our responsibilities and our resistance to taxation have never been greater.

Materialism, however, is perhaps a greater threat to our unity than to our liberty. Professor Roland Pennock, in an

excellent study of liberal democracy,⁴ has termed it the greatest danger,

...partly because it leads to a devaluation of liberty but chiefly because of its divisiveness. The possibilities of increasing total production are severely limited.... On the other hand, the possibilities for increasing the material well-being of one group at the expense of others are almost without limit.

The implications of these facts are obvious.

Another danger, paradoxically, has its origin in one of the great sources of our strength. I refer to our dedication to the principle of equality. It is an ancient principle, dating at least from the Stoics, but in relatively recent times it has undergone a vast change in meaning, the change being from an abstract to a literal content. It is one thing to assume that men are equal before their Creator and that therefore they should be equal before the law, that they are entitled to the respect of their fellows, and that equally they should have the opportunity of developing their capacities. It is quite another thing, however, to assume that because men are equal in some respects they are equal in all. To make them equal in fact involves nothing less than totalitarianism. A literal equality is incompatible with human voluntarism, spontaneity, liberty and excellence. It is compatible with mediocrity, anti-intellectualism, enforced conformity, and the deadening of the human spirit. Of necessity it is established only at the level of the lowest common denominator.

Is there any evidence that we are tending in this direction? I believe there is. I believe it is to be seen in the growing demands for conformity and social integration, in the increasing intolerance of intolerance and individualism and in our retreat from republicanism to majoritarianism. Tocqueville, with amazing insight, foretold the dangers of democratic equality 125 years ago, and our subsequent history has to a distressing degree sustained his prophecy. It is worth remembering that historically democracy is a form of government which has met with reasonable success only in those societies disciplined by belief in a transcendental order. When it becomes a social philosophy — or as we put it "a way of life" — the essence of which is egalitarianism, it is likely to be total in its demands.

Another danger stemming from our immanentism is our unrealistic optimism. It is not necessarily true that virtue always

⁴J. Roland Pennock, *Liberal Democracy*. Rinehart and Co., New York. 1950. P. 370.

triumphs, that right will prevail. The years since World War II provide many examples of the type of behavior I have in mind. In retrospect our rapid demobilization in 1945-46 was a dangerous mistake, but it was a mistake made on principle rather than because of lack of foresight. I am aware that this action can in large part be attributed to political pressures, but I would insist that it must also be attributed in part to our naive belief in an inevitable progress toward a permanent peace. The League of Nations had failed in large part because of our nonparticipation, but with the United Nations it would be possible to beat our swords into plowshares. And there are those of us naive enough to have believed that what the U.N. failed to do could be done by four men at the Summit. At the University of Michigan we have a Center for Conflict Resolution. The men who staff it are perhaps deserving of every encouragement, but I am inclined to think there is more than a suggestion of utopianism in their goal. There is no magic formula for the achievement of peace, and there is little likelihood that a group of academicians will meet with more success than a group of politicians. Conflict inheres in our natures, and peace remains the product of a balance of existential forces. To obscure this truth is only to serve conflict, not resolve it.

A final danger I will point to is the cynicism, frustration and sense of despair that can and often do attend our failures in reaching for the impossible. One need only point to Nazi Germany to see the force of such sentiments. They are the stuff upon which demagogues feed.

I have not attempted to do more than suggest some of the chief dangers which, in my opinion, attach to a thorough-going anthropocentric orientation. I am also aware of the dangers which arise from the opposite direction, but I believe these to be negligible in today's world.

Perhaps I could do no better by way of summary than to fall back upon one of our most eminent intellectual historians, Professor Crane Brinton.⁵ As he sees the matter, the great problem facing us is how to bridge the gap between the desirable and the attainable —

how to find the spiritual resources needed to face hardship, frustration, struggle and unhappiness — all the evils [we] have been taught to believe would be banished shortly from human life.

⁵Crane Brinton, *Ideas and Men*. Prentice Hall, New York. 1950. P. 539.

Professor Brinton then suggests that:⁶

... a realistic, pessimistic democracy — a democracy in which ordinary citizens approach morals and politics with the willingness to cope with imperfection that characterizes the good farmer, the good physician, the good holder of the cure of souls, be he priest, clergyman, counselor, or psychiatrist — such a democracy would demand more of its citizens than any human culture has ever demanded.

Such a democracy as he here describes does not bridge the gap between the desirable and the attainable. Rather it takes the tragic view and accepts the inevitability of the gap. But what does such acceptance involve? In Professor Brinton's answer⁷ is to be found the essence of my remarks.

The mass of mankind, even in the West, have never been able to take the tragic view without the help of a personal religion, a religion hitherto always transcendental, supernatural, other worldly.

My concern today is that we are less well prepared than at any time in our history to take the tragic view. We may have abandoned in some measure our faith in human perfectibility and inevitable progress, but we have found no adequate substitutes.

⁶Ibid., p. 550.

⁷Ibid., p. 543.