

BOOKS

Brian V. Hill, *Education and the Endangered Individual*. New York: Teachers' College Press, Columbia University, 1973. Price \$(U.S.) 6.50, Pp. 322.

Professor Brian V. Hill's book, *Education and the Endangered Individual*, is a study of the concept of the "sanctity of the individual." It is divided into two main parts. The first part deals with the works of various thinkers that discuss the "sanctity of the individual." Such thinkers include Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Karl Marx, labelled the "prodigal sons of Hegel"; T. Percy Nunn and Karl Mannheim, social scientists; John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead, representing philosophy and education; and on the philosophicoreligious front, Martin Buber, Jacques Maritain, and Reinhold Niebuhr. The samples exhibit geographical diversity and attempt to be representative of the thinking on the problem. Each writer is introduced by a comment on his life, times and general ideological views. These sections are necessarily brief, nevertheless, they rightly serve the purpose of situating ideas, points of view, in short — ideologies, in a social context, suggesting that they are not mere abstractions drawn out of a vacuum.

Professor Hill's method of study in this section is to employ a set of questions to find out whether or not the different definitions of "individuality" could be upheld when examined "against other aspects of (the authors') thought" (p. ix). These questions are: "(1) On defining 'individual': What distinguishes the individual from nonhuman entities? And from other individuals? (2) On the sanctity of the individual: On what normative grounds is respect for the sanctity of the individual commended? and (3) On society and the individual: How is society defined in relation to the individual? Does this preserve the sanctity of the individual?" (p. 17). The answers to these questions, in turn, would indicate whether or not there is sufficient agreement with regard to the "sanctity of the individual" to provide "clear guidance for educational theory" (p. 12).

Professor Hill, treating the authors with respect and at the same time subjecting their works to critical analysis and interpretation, concludes that when discourse has its roots solely in scientific explanation, it fails to grapple with man as man. Acclaiming the worth of the individual as a practical notion, the thinkers nonetheless exhibit shortcomings in defining "human individuality" and misjudge its relations in society. Failing to maintain theoretical consistency in their handling of normative data, they, once again, either drown the particular individual man in the mass, isolate him from meaningful social relationships, or encapsulate him within himself. In the end he becomes a stranger even unto himself.

There is much readable information here that Professor Hill offers to the readers. It may, however, be fair to Professor Hill to say that despite his

attempt to treat the authors impartially, still there are hints and indirect suggestions that, on the whole, he favors the modern religious thinkers. The other thinkers limited themselves to the biosocial level of man and talked exclusively in the language of science. Buber, Maritain, and Niebuhr, on the other hand, managed to employ other vocabularies, even as they recognized and employed the scientific discourse; such languages, for example, as those of philosophical anthropology (Buber), speculative philosophy (Maritain), and existential theological explanation (Niebuhr). For them, the individual is more than biosocial and the stress is on his "human consciousness" (p. 243) and "personal and purposive categories" (p. 241) and "agreement through personal assent rather than published result" (p. 241). It is admitted, however, that there is enough evidence of the author's sincerity and honesty in grappling with the issue that mattered to these thinkers.

Given the limitations and inadequacies that Professor Hill finds in the different thinkers' views on the "individual", evident in their failure "to recognize several different levels of discourse," (p. x), he proceeds in the second part of his book to elaborate his own view on the "sanctity of the individual." He argues that "the shortcomings of ideologies as regards the sanctity of the individual usually stem from a defective view of man." (p. 259). He, therefore, sets out to isolate what he considers the "essential elements in a balanced view of human nature," elements which reflect what is "distinctively human in the individual" (p. 259). Having done this, he directs his attention to the main concern of his book, which is to develop a "more adequate statement of educational theory in the light of the sanctity of the individual" (p. 17). As a philosopher of education, Professor Hill believes that one of his responsibilities is to translate certain agreed upon propositions into "practical statements of purpose" (p. ix) or to define them in such a way "that we are provided with a guide to practical actions" (p. 257). "Education," says Professor Hill, "has to do with values in action" (p. x) and "the standing of the individual to be educated" is a major problem of values in educational theory.

On his attempt to develop an educational theory guided by the principle of the "sanctity of the individual," what comments may be made? Professor Hill is knowledgeable about the problems that beset the expressions "philosophy of education" and "educational theory." Whatever criticisms may be made of his "recommended actions" he himself has anticipated and has properly noted (see pp. x, 4-12, and 271-273). Professor Hill disarms his readers. Having done so he challenges them to ". . . stimulate clearer and more effective theorizing at the normative level in education" (p. x). This, his book attempts to do.

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