VOLUME XII, NO. 49
DECEMBER 9, 1959

ALWAYS WEAR A SUIT AND TIE

[This article reprints from *Transfer* (No. 5, Spring, 1958), a San Francisco State College literary magazine, a symposium on Conformity, by John Martinson, a student, and Charles Garrigues, editor of *Transfer* No. 5.]

IF you consider the following propositions and recognize some truth in them, I think you will agree that it isn't difficult to run afoul of the law. I would suggest that:

> Selection of one's enemies is a personal matter. Mass murder is quite as immoral as the individual variety. Those who fight evil in this world are not likely to succeed if they use the tactics of evil-doers.

Furthermore,

> Creation is generally to be preferred over destruction. The role of government in matters of sex, religion and art should be severely limited. And it is better to fight hunger with hydrogenated peanut butter than hydrogenated atoms.

Finally,

> The twin ideals of personal moral responsibility and community or civic spirit are mortally threatened by the spectre of "military necessity" and the prospect of a "Garrison State."

There are a number of ways by which you can find yourself in a courtroom if you should be so indiscreet as to put into practice any of the above principles. For instance, you can refuse to pay income tax on the grounds that 70 cents or so of every tax dollar is used to pay for past, present and future wars. Or if you happen to live in New York City you might object to compulsory attendance in bomb shelters during mock air raids. One very common way of getting into court is to refuse to be a member of a conscript army. Or if you're willing to be conscripted for something useful like working in a hospital, conservation, or overseas relief work you will still end up in court if you balk at the idea of affirming allegiance to some "Supreme Being," over and above any human relation.

Personally I used a combination of the last two methods mentioned. Three years ago I was working as an orderly and ambulance driver in a small Minnesota hospital. I had been assigned there under the alternative service program for conscientious objectors. After working there almost a year I began to realize how unfair the law is to men who don't possess the proper religious credentials. Agnostics, socialists, humanists, anarchists as well as religious objectors to war don't belong to a particular church, are denied status as C.O.'s and usually spend time in prison. On the other hand, naive religious objectors [such as Martinson saw around him] who may never have considered the implications of war and militarism for society in general can easily get C.O. status if they are lucky enough to have parents who are members of the right religious groups.

I notified my draft board, and left my job . . . In my letter to the board I said, "I no longer consider myself a conscientious objector *as you define the term."* It was the terms on which a man is defined as a C.O. that I wanted to test in court . . . The wording of the 1948 Selective Service Act exempts men who are opposed to war by religious training and belief (as did the 1940 act), but then it goes on to state:

> Religious training and belief in this connection means an individual's belief in a relation to a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation, but does not include essentially political, sociological or philosophical views or a merely personal moral code.

To me this is a violation of the idea of Separation of Church and State, in that it sets up an agency of the government to make religious decisions and discriminations. It violates Freedom

of Religion (including the freedom *not* to believe) in that it inquires into a relationship that should be inviolable. And it constitutes a kind of religious test of office, since obviously no other group of citizens must present religious credentials in fulfilling their obligations to the government. . . .

But don't imagine for a moment that these issues, or any faintly resembling them, were ever raised in court. . . . The government reclassified me I-A and ordered me to report for induction in September 1954 and March 1955. Both times I reported but refused to submit. In January 1956 they got around to arresting me. [Bail was posted by a committee for defense of conscientious objectors and Martinson moved with his wife to San Francisco.] In November 1956 the trial began in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It recessed after one day, and in February 1957 [just after Martinson registered as a limited student in English at San Francisco State] I received a letter from my lawyer saying that I had been found guilty.

. . . . For a person caught up in that vast complex of ritual and verbiage known as the Judicial branch of government there is a basic question to be answered. It is, "Shall I argue the basic issues that have brought me into conflict with the law, or shall I concentrate on technical points of law and use every possible legal tactic to show the government's case is out of order." I suppose the necessity for making this decision arises from the fact that judges, as a rule, hesitate to decide basic issues, especially constitutional ones. Judges are experts in the skilled technical business of interpreting the fine points of a complex body of existing law. The lawyers realize this, of course, so very often the lawyer will want to argue a technical case while the defendant wants to raise issues in public debate. . . .

We decided to fight a conventional case. MY lawyer prepared [for the trial in 1956] a lengthy and proper brief citing many cases to show that I had not been afforded "due process of law." . . . And the case was lost. Now if the case had been won I probably would have a different view of the matter. One thing seems clear to me, however. If you fight on principle and lose you have the consolation of sitting in prison and saying, "Well, it was a good fight anyway." When you fight strategically and lose it doesn't help much to say, "Well, I guess we were outsmarted."

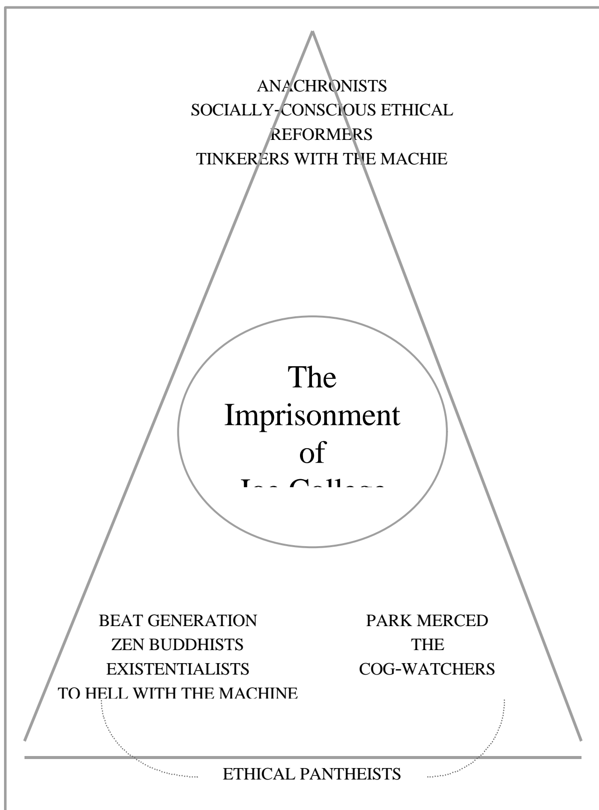
I happen to enjoy disputation and debate. It was neither easy nor pleasant to deliver myself to the legal machine and then sit silently by while the wheels of justice ground away. Perhaps I suffer from an overdose of movie courtroom scenes. . . . As the trial began I was asked if I knew the nature of the charges against me, if I had counsel of my own choosing, and whether I pleaded guilty or not guilty. Then I went back to my seat and listened while the lawyers, selective service officials, and the judge acted out the little drama.

At the end of the afternoon the judge called for additional briefs. He allowed my lawyer two weeks to submit his brief and the District Attorney ten days after that in which to answer. I returned to San Francisco prepared to go back in a month to hear the verdict and expecting to make a final statement before the judge. Three months later the judge sent my lawyer the note informing him that I was guilty, and my lawyer notified me by mail. At this writing a pre-sentence investigation is going to determine the possibility of probation. [Martinson left school and San Francisco for prison the day after Easter, 1957. The editors do not know his present status and whereabouts.] [Ditto MANAS editors.]

. . . Having a lawyer prepare a brief is an expensive process even when you're lucky enough to have a lawyer who volunteers much of his time, as mine has done. . . . There is a psychological price to be considered as well. Before I left San Francisco for the trial a lawyer told me, "Be sure you don't say a word without checking with your attorney. You have a way of talking that's bound to antagonize the judge. And be sure to always wear a suit and tie." I do own a suit. I bought it five and a half years ago for our wedding, and I put it on so rarely that I feel like I'm getting into a

costume. So is it true that if you're fitted out in the accoutrements of middle class respectability you're more likely to receive justice? And do you give assent to this cultural more when you take advantage of it? The morning of the trial my lawyer looked at the windsor knot in my tie (which I'm sure I started using at least ten years ago) and he said, "Could you tie your tie with a little smaller knot? I don't want the judge to think you're some sort of zoot suiter." Perhaps these are not major considerations . . .

After all this, what advice do I have for any future lawbreakers of America? Frankly, not much. I tend to be long on conversation but short on advice. It does seem to me though that unless you've got the time and money and have the



government dead to rights in a flagrant violation of their own regulations, it's better to stick to principle and go down swinging. . . . Going to prison doesn't do society much good, but at least it does less harm to it than packing thermonuclear warheads into guided missiles.

Don't forget that the wheels of justice grind fine but exceedingly slow. For more than six years my life has been intimately tied up with unknown decisions of unknown men in government. It would be so nice to be able to plan ahead for more than a month at a time and have some feeling of being able to fulfill those plans. There was a period of over 18 months when we literally did not know from *day to day* when I might be arrested. Of course a person adjusts to this situation but it tends to be an adjustment of isolation. That is, there can be no commitments to group activities like the theatre when you can't guarantee to fulfill your obligations. [Martinson has a B.A. from Denison University in EnglishTheatre-Psychology and an M.S. from the University of Wisconsin in Soil Science.] Naturally plans for having children aren't to be considered. So it shouldn't be hard to understand my reluctance to appeal the decision with the consequent expense and period of waiting it entails. Whatever the sentence is my attitude now is, let's get it over with and get back to the serious business of raising a family and trying to do something creative in a world largely devoted to destruction and irresponsibility.

JOHN MARTINSON

OVER a hundred short stories and nearly a thousand poems have been considered by the *Transfer* editorial board in the past five issues. The moral content of our magazine accurately reflects the moral content of the mass of submitted material.

So far the voices of our generation have shown little indication of any sense of dedication to anything exterior to themselves. We have been called anarchistic, rebellious, flippant. But never could we be called socially responsible.

The single exception to this is the article printed above. Yet this article was rejected by the

staff of *Transfer Three,* because it was considered to be of poor literary quality, and because it was "1948 thinking."

The first accusation I shall ignore in this article. It is with the second that I want to begin my exploration.

Let us start by admitting that the accusation is true. John Martinson's thinking is old fashioned. Martinson is an anachronism, out of his proper place in time. He is not typical of this generation's thinkers.

What is surprising is that there are so many anachronisms like Martinson around. No generation is purely one thing. We are not all silent or beat or watchful or uncommitted.

I think that there are at least three main groups in the present generation that we might consider. I have given them nicknames and submit a diagram [see page 2] to show, in an admittedly over-simplified way, how they relate to each other.

THE ANACHRONISTS

The few remaining anachronists are socially oriented—but the best of them have never lost sight of themselves as individuals.

"It used to be," said one of them, who is a mother in her thirties, "that many people felt this: that there is no greater satisfaction in life than studying facts, thinking about them, talking with other people and then, together, deciding on a course of action. That's what dedication was then. The individual was felt to be a real force, *and each enjoyed the emotional rewards of being effective in a social setting.* What has happened to this generation?"

The Anachronist says, "The machine (i.e. the system) is not constructed to include me, therefore it is imperfect. And therefore I must change it to take every individual in mankind into account."

In his effort to understand the machine better, the Anachronist develops great shrewdness in being able to perceive dangers to the individual from areas not immediately connected to himself. From this group come the passive resisters in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi, the CO's like Martinson, and the defenders of civil rights like Carey McWilliams.

Currently the most overt action being carried out by the Anachronists is the campaign of the ketch *Golden Rule* by Albert Bigelow, who wants to sail into the H-Bomb testing grounds in mid-Pacific to protest against activities there.

Is it possible that these men are anachronisms because they don't know that they have already lost the fight? We must all realize that the catastrophe of this age has already happened. I mean the second world war, a six-year nightmare in which 30 million people died. Civilization was dealt a staggering blow by this slaughter. It is possible to see our present moment as being a continuation of this same nightmare. The nightmare of a man who has been brutally knocked down by an implacable enemy. He lies stunned and helpless, hearing his enemy approach and knowing dimly that he is going to die. But in the few seconds he has left, in the pause between the blow that knocks him down and one that will kill him, he dreams he is safe in a big soft bed, dreaming of flowers and love and jazz.

THE BEAT GENERATION

Many of the intellectuals of our time are in what is called the Beat Generation. They have a nightmare too. This is it:

The machine is running by itself. There is no way to find headquarters because there is no headquarters. There is no way to fix the ultimate responsibility for any act of physical or spiritual death committed by the machine.

"Remember again when you were a child. You thought that someday you would grow up and find a world of real adults—the people who

really make things run—and understand how and why things run. People like the Martian aristocrats in science fiction. Your father and mother were pretty silly and the other grownups were even worse. But someday, somewhere, you'd find the real grownups and possibly even be admitted to their ranks. Then, as the years went on, you learned, through more or less bitter experience, that there aren't and never have been, any such people, anywhere. Life is just a mess, full of tall children grown stupider, less alert and resilient, and nobody knows what makes it go—as a whole or any part of it. *But nobody ever tells."* (Kenneth Rexroth's introducing *Nights of Love and Laughter*.)

The Beat Generation accuse the Anachronists of being tinkerers with the machine, not true Revolutionaries. The Beat Generation say to hell with the Machine. The Revolution will have to be made entirely aside from it.

The solution to the problem, they say, is to dig the scene, intensely experience the current moment, tend to your own garden, make your life as happy and meaningful as you can.

The world is full of death. The communists are full of death, the socialists, the republicans, the democrats, the americans, the phi beta kappas and the alpha phi omegas and any people who hope to find life and truth any place exterior to themselves. It is only by confronting yourself, face-to-face and separate from all your names, tags, labels, desires, and ambitions, that the world suddenly has meaning. To do this you must reject society, which is an organism that names you in a thousand different ways. You must throw off each name in order to find your own nameless self.

The poets published in *Transfer* show this tendency. The push is in the direction of personal explication—never in the direction of social explication. It is only rarely that a completely pure personal revelation is approached, for these men and women are only human, and personal revelation is the most frightening act in a human's experience.

The spokesmen for the Beat Generation owe a great debt to Zen Buddhism for their inspiration and theory.

One of the characteristics of Zen is that it attempts to move closer and closer to the truth of life by closely observing the particulars of life. By passing through the pinhole of particularization into the void of ultimate realization.

The Haiku is a good example:

> In these dark waters
> Drawn up from
> My frozen well . . .
> Glitterings of Spring.

Generalization becomes a thing to avoid. The Zen master beats the questioner, or answers with nonsense when he is asked a question demanding a generalized answer. There is no road to experience save through experience itself.

I met a man once who, I realize now, must have been a pure Zen. He was a detonator expert in the army, specializing in land mines and booby traps. It was a hobby with him and he was a real artist. There is a real trick to designing a booby trap so it will only seriously injure a man, shatter the bones in his forearm or destroy his face with tiny steel pellets. (The idea, he explained, is that a wounded man occupies the energy of two other men to take care of him, so that way you put three of the enemy out of action.)

This man, who was friendly and loving to his wife and children, becomes a kind of horrifying monster to the Anachronist because he completely lacks the ability to generalize anything from his special interest. In this class we must put men who invent bombsights.

PARK MERCED

The remaining corner of my diagram is labeled *Park Merced.* Park Merced is a symbol for the large section of this generation that is not in revolt against the culture. And although all

three corners of the diagram occupy the same space on the page, we must not be deluded by this. The Park Merceders out-number the Anachronists and the Beat Generation 10,000 to one. They constitute the majority of the school.

But it must be emphasized that the Beat Generation and the Park Merceders are contemporary and spring from the same soil. They have much in common.

Both have resigned their right to change society.

Both have the same aversion to looking up and away from their immediate environment.

While the Anachronist wants to improve the machine, and the Beat Generation repudiates it, Park Merced refuses to look at it by fixing attention on its cogs. That is, upon automobiles, rotisseries, motion picture personalities, the newspapers, their jobs and careers, their neighbors' acquisitions, etc.

The primary need of these families is to fit securely into their niches. These niches are defined by what neighbors do and think, and what the culture as a whole expects of them in terms of success or failure.

It is much more important for them to be a *cultural suc*cess than a personal success.

Park Merced practices what Deneal Amos calls *ethical pantheism.* As the pantheist believes that each river or tree or mountain has its own local god, the ethical pantheist believes it natural to subscribe to a different code in different places. In church he believes one thing, on the job another, with the boys at the American Legion post he has one ethic, and flying high over a German city, his finger on the bomb release, he has still another.

I believe the truly ethical man is not confused by his environment. He carries his ethics with him as part of his own uniqueness, which does not change when his surroundings do. The moral pantheist is suffering from a lack of sense of *himself as an individual.* He is so weak that he allows his surroundings to define him: church-goer, father, sergeant, proprietor.

I am sure that many of you who have come this far with me are mentally composing letters-to-the-editor deriding my clever little diagram, with its over simplification and easy generalities.

Hold off a moment, I beg of you. I know that human beings are a mixture, and that none of us exactly fits into somebody else's preconceived pattern. That is our beauty and our hope.

Hold off long enough to play the game of trying to find where you are in my triangle. For this paper would have no purpose unless you can find yourself in it.

Are you the girl who said, *"What can we do? We're too small. The men in charge of our lives are too far away. People look at us funny if we speak up. We may all die soon. I want to have some children and be happy as long as I can."*

Where are you on my clever diagram, girl? Down at the bottom, slightly to the left?

Are you the devout Christian who wears the blue uniform to school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, studying to be a bombardier, officer and gentleman with good pay and advancement?

Where are you on my diagram, bud? Down at the bottom far to the right?

I'll play the game too. Perhaps if I reveal myself, it will make you less afraid to play. I'm about three quarters of the way up to the top, slightly to the left. I haven't got the courage to go clear to the apex, or the courage to go clear to the lower left corner, or, God help me, the courage to go way over to the right hand corner. I am like most of you, confused, uncertain, unable to find a place.

The moral anesthesia of our generation became crystal clear to me last year when Jim Garner was trying to get blood to stay alive. The Garner case has preyed on my mind ever since, for

let us not deceive ourselves, the man was rejected by the students at this college, most of whom pay lip service to religion and morality. I remember you social tinkerers were busy planning a demonstration in front of the British and French embassies protesting the "barbarous and inhuman" attack on Egypt. Consequently you didn't have time to give blood to a dying man.

Where are you on my triangle, tinkerers? Way up toward the top, far over to the right?

Let us face facts, friends. We are all afraid. Martinson isn't. Many of us are ashamed. Martinson isn't.

It isn't that we are afraid of going to jail. We are afraid we wouldn't be able to stand by ourselves if we did.

Let it be clear that this is not an essay about the virtues of the antimilitarist. The issue is perhaps more important in our everyday lives: our marriages, our jobs, our educations. Can we find ourselves in the midst of all the pressure to be "successful," "socially oriented," and "adjusted"? How long can we go on selling our pride and self-confidence for the gewgaws that society offers? Never mind. I know the answer. It is *all our lives.*

We don't have the confidence in ourselves to test our own integrity. We are afraid we would let ourselves down. So we carefully arrange it so that our integrity is never tested. We do this in spite of our secret hope that someday we will be strong enough to stand for ourselves. We realize that at present our real needs are not being satisfied.

We can't stand for ourselves unless we test our integrity. We can't test our integrity unless we first decide what we believe.

But we must realize that it wouldn't really be a test if we knew in advance how it would come out. There is some excitement in this idea. Somebody once said that in order to be really free a man must risk his life once every thirty days.

The "life" that we protect so tenaciously may be only our reputations or our careers. And these things may well be the chains that keep us from being free.

CHARLES GARRIGUES

REVIEW
ORGANIZED BUT UNRELATED

THE WAY WE LIVE NOW, a novel by Warren Miller (Crest Books), describes that peculiar sort of worldly-satedness which is characteristically American among the most literate segments of our society. It has taken Americans a long time to develop sophistication, and a longer time to see that the sort of sophistication we are able to achieve declares its maturity only when it can laugh at itself; or, at least, our sophisticates, if they are in any way to enjoy their position, must resort to whimsey for interpretation of their own lives. *The Way We Live Now* contains many passages such as the following—a series of wry insights:

> I am looking at the skin of myself, he said.
>
> There you are, looking at the skin of yourself, the how-you-say Outer Man.
>
> He knew it meant nothing, was certain it revealed nothing; the dark-hard-boned face; dark hair cut ascetically close, monk-like; the dark suit, striped shirt, quiet tie. It was as much a game as Amelia's playing at marriage. A masquerade.
>
> Dressed up like an adult.
>
> No, but I mean, he said. It's all a sham. That is the way it is. There is marriage without love, and love without marriage. Churches without religion and religion without a church, Law with no ethics and ethics with no laws.
>
> He sat down again with Amelia and Martha. "There's taxation without representation and—" He stopped; he had not realized he was talking aloud.
>
> "Such an interesting conversational gambit," Amelia said.
>
> "I had been thinking," he said, with something like dignity.
>
> "Ah."
>
> "About? Might one ask?"
>
> "What is the question?"
>
> "What were you thinking about?"
>
> "About how fake everything is," he explained.
>
> "Then you've noticed," Martha said, portentously.
>
> "It's not only the palms and the gaslights. But everything. The bartender, for example. The bartender is a fake. I'm sure he says things like 'And how are we today, sir?' "

Mr. Miller gets across one point effectively, which is that among the sophisticates, appetites for the pleasures of the senses are not so much jaded, or outworn, as they are unrelated—unrelated to what Dr. Viktor Frankl calls "the Will to Meaning." Devotion to what some psychologists call "the pleasure principle" tends to lead men to seek positions in life which are least exacting, and which provide the greatest opportunity for indulgence. And it is only when indulgence becomes engrained habit, a part of the structure of daily living, that men in the position of our most worldly wise discover that there is nowhere to go from where they are.

Organizing, in other words, serves the needs of men devoted to "pleasure" in lieu of any other orientation. This approach also makes it extremely difficult for human beings to relate their lives with seriousness to the lives of others. But sharing of destiny is precisely a sharing of some sort of striving which unites the ideals of both. Lionel, in *The Way We Live Now,* is a very well organized man, from the standpoint of those who feel that the smart life is the easy life. But Lionel has no background, no encouragement, for developing the means to relate his life even to that of a dearly loved daughter. So, from time to time, despite himself, he gets drawn into philosophical evaluation such as this:

> Lionel thought that big business, while it is not a child's game, is a game for children. Grown men with matured and searching minds, with a sense of what is important and what is not, could not devote themselves with all their energies to the amassing of monies for someone else. Stewards, they called themselves in the annual report, the stockholders' stewards. There was no real excitement in corporate life. Lionel could understand business being exciting, but it would have to be a small business, small enough so a man could see an immediate response

when he tugged a string. There was still something piratical, free-booting, in the idea of a small business of making money for yourself. But not here. One man made no difference. A corporation's personality was a corporate personality and it did not change with one man's coming or going, whatever else a man might like to imagine. But he could see it all going that way; the big ones growing bigger and the small ones disappearing and the medium-sized swallowed up. Even these men, executives, having the power to make small decisions and even to guess wrong at times, were already coming close to the level of the men who worked on a factory's production line turning one screw as a metal plate paused briefly before them. The end product was never seen. No pride in labor was possible. Still, he supposed, all this had its benefits too: refrigerators, pressure cookers. And yet, he was not satisfied with this answer. He knew that most of what are called the Good Things are not the necessities they are thought to be. The point is, buddies, the point is—something's been lost and the tray of ice cubes, which still, after all, sticks, hasn't made up for it.

So much for the sophisticates. And, of course, the unsophisticates, particularly when faced with active service in the armed forces, are pushed to some of the same depressing realizations. Price, the hero of Rex K. Pratt's *You Tell My Son* (Signet) was a professional soldier who for a long time had felt security in organization. But the trouble was that the organization accomplished nothing that conveyed meaning to Price. The horrors and brutalities of war simply pointed up conditions which he saw inherent in his connection with his age:

Now, the shame of what he was doing there began to fill him. It seemed almost as though he held himself responsible for all the brutal acts of the war.

He plodded forward, thinking that his entire life had been useless. As he looked back over all the years, he could not remember a single decent act. He looked upon himself as the shell of a man devoid of all emotions. All of the old gods were dead and nothing was there to take their place. As he thought, he knew that there had to be something more to life than the killing and dying. Something more than the filth and the dirt. Suddenly, Price wished desperately that he had something to hold on to. He wanted to believe in the powers of a Supreme Being but, as he tried, his mind refused to accept the thoughts. Very little mattered to him any more. About the only thing that was important was survival. Long ago, Reverend Simpson had told him that he should always live so he would be prepared to meet God, but Price wasn't so sure now that there was a heaven. He heard himself speaking to himself. "We'll all be in hell before this day is done."

Slowly, perhaps, the "Will to Meaning" will emerge and combat its hostile environment. Meanwhile, it is likely that, unless one fights "organization," he will continue to drift along, "unrelated."

COMMENTARY
"WHO AM I?"

BY dire editorial miscalculation, the symposium on Conformity reprinted from *Transfer* No. 5 pushed the second half of Frontiers off page 7. Accordingly, we have used this editorial space as a means of salvaging an excellent quotation from the *Nation* for Nov. 14.

Another contributor to this issue of the *Nation,* George P. Elliott, writes of the responsibility of the novelist to endow with intimate reality the social scene in which his characters move. By this effort at a faithful portrait of society, the novelist makes discoveries about society—for example, he may discover that the project has become almost impossible. This tells him—and us—something about our times and the sort of problems which confront all men. Mr. Elliott writes:

> Nothing is harder than to have a clear, steady and sound idea of what society is and what it should be. I must speak for myself: I realize that I could not define the word to anyone's satisfaction, like many, I sometimes in desperation identify society with the state—whence horrors ensue. The word "democratic" has ceased to have any more independent meaning than the word "united" in United States. We have no good analogy by which to comprehend our society. It is not a body whose head is the President, nor an army, nor a corporation, nor any sort of religious body, nor any sort of machine. The commonest analogy is to an organism; but which sort of organism? A tree? It is not mobile enough. A Portuguese-man-of-war? No centralization. An eagle, as the dollar says? Too small. One of the dinosaurs? That sounds pretty good—a vast, bewildered, terrifying, vegetarian, self-extinctive creature. Yes, it will serve. Our new totem: the brontosaurus.
>
> Perhaps this very difficulty in conceiving American society coherently helps account for the importance in contemporary fiction of the theme of alienation. In any case, while some of the fictional characters you come across nowadays are pretty well outside any social scheme, on the bum with the beats, a lot more of them are in various sorts of social organizations and yet do not *feel* in them. They don't necessarily hate their family, whether the family they were born into or the one they created by marriage, but they do want to be shed of it or are so already. They don't much like their work and do not feel a sense of community with their fellow workers. They are without church. Solitude means nothing to them, loneliness all. They collect in coffee houses, in the Army, at games, wherever, and feel all the more alienated for the falseness of the community they are in. Sooner or later, these characters, or their authors for them, are likely to get around to asking "Who am I?"—that question which can hardly be answered unless you are in a strong social, moral order, and which is not likely to be asked if you are in one. But the reasons for the characters' alienation are seldom made very clear. Often it is suggested that they are too fine-grained and sensitive for the Winesburg-O they were born into, and frequently they belong to a minority group. But there is more, I believe, to this social illness than sensitivity or being a Negro; what is more, it is for writers to investigate in their fictions.

This passage helps us to understand why we are often so impressed by the occasional essays of novelists and playwrights. They sit down to write their essays fresh from a wrestling bout with the obscurities of human behavior. They have been studying human pain and the things and situations which seem to cause it. They have been studying particular human beings and trying to understand specific kinds of suffering and agony. This sort of activity makes them insistent upon clarity and integrity in writing about people. They want no easy answers, preferring an honest darkness to lights which may glitter but give no real illumination.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
DISCIPLINE vs. ADJUSTMENT

RICHARD M. WEAVER, who teaches English at the University of Chicago, years ago wrote a small book, *Ideas Have Consequences,* which was reviewed in MANAS for July 28, 1948, Lately Mr. Weaver has offered an interesting distinction between "discipline" and "adjustment." The following is taken from a paper prepared for the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists. Mr. Weaver writes:

> "Adjustment" has an immediate kind of appeal, because no one likes to think of himself as being "maladjusted"; that suggests failure, discomfort, and other unpleasant experiences. But as soon as we begin to examine the phrase both carefully and critically, we find that it contains booby traps. It is far from likely that the greatest men of the past, including not only famous ones but also great benefactors of humanity, have been "adjusted" in this sense. When we begin to study their actual lives, we find that these were filled with toil, strenuousness, anxiety, self-sacrifice, and sometimes a good bit of friction with their environment. This is characteristic of the life of genius. And when a culture ceases to produce vital creative spirits, it must cease to endure, for these are necessary even to sustain it. . . .
>
> When we begin to elicit what they [the "adjustment" educators] have in mind, we begin to wonder what kind of thing they imagine "life" to be. They do not contemplate adjusting students to life in its fullness and mystery, but to life lived in some kind of projected socialist commonwealth, where everybody has so conformed to a political pattern that there really are no problems any more. Adjustment to real life must take into account pain, evil, passion, tragedy, the limits of human power, heroism, the attraction of ideals, and so on.

It is certainly true enough that both the idea of *abstract* discipline and the idea that a fulfilled human destiny requires genuine self-sacrifice, have nearly dropped out of sight in contemporary educational discussion. Yet, as Weaver points out, "nearly all of the great lives have involved some form of sacrifice for an ideal; nearly all great individuals have felt the call for that kind of sacrifice."

His central point is this: If a human being can *be* adjusted to his society, through the kind offices of teacher, clergyman, or sociologist, he is only an appendage to that society. He doesn't select values, but rather learns to make value judgments according to the appraised worth of his choices to the social and political organism. Neither theology nor science has encouraged the transcendentalist view that within the social man there is a "mysterious entity," engaged on some kind of adventurous pilgrimage—one which may or may not coincide with the destiny of the existing society. So, Mr. Weaver arrives at a metaphysical affirmation which he feels to be important to the philosophy of education. He says:

> Mind is something more than brain. Many anatomists and surgeons have seen a brain, but nobody has ever seen a mind. This is because we believe the mind is not merely a central exchange of the body's system, where nerve impulses are brought together and relayed; it is a mysterious entity in which man associates together the various cognitive, aesthetic, moral and spiritual impulses which come to him from the outer and inner worlds. It is the seat of his rational faculty, but it is also the place where his inclinations are reduced to order and are directed.

When all educational problems come to be regarded as "practical" problems, we fail, in Weaver's terms, to tap those resources of the human soul from which individual judgments, on a basis of principle and self-sacrifice, arise. This point is also found in some "asides" contributed to the July issue of *Think* by Jack Schaefer, who is explaining why we need to do everything we can to get outside the conventional social context, if we are ever to begin educating ourselves "from within outwards." Schaefer is speaking appreciatively of the American Southwest, but this is only an illustration. He writes:

> Is man losing control of his destiny at the very time he thinks he is gaining greater mastery over it? Are Americans, in their all-too-voluntary and now necessity-driven reliance upon the machine, losing

sight of the fact, for a single example, that integration in the schools is of far greater significance to the American dream, the American journeying, than a helicopter in every backyard and a successful round trip to the moon?

If I were an American dictator, benevolent of course, I would ordain that all Americans in key positions, political and economic and educational and sociological, spend a certain portion of each year in the Southwest. Not at the dude ranches, not at the plush resorts, not in the clotted crowdings of the few cities; but out where, as Mary Austin once said, the land itself sets the limits, and the souls of little men leak away like water from an old wooden bucket warped asunder. Doing nothing—nothing but wandering through the weathered ruins of Indian pueblos that were staunch republics long before Columbus set sail, sitting on red-rock, eroded hillsides looking into the distances of the huge indifferent land, watching the many-hued shadows slide across the bare blown sands. The subsidiary goals fade into proper perspective in the distances that breed serenity of soul and stretch the muscles of the mind.

The essentials emerge, felt as much as thought, the stripped clean outlines of the dream, the idea made partial reality in this America and always to be journeyed towards, the individual man, not the organization man, not the mass man of modern manipulations, the individual man multiplied by his millions through the nation, but always the individual man journeying towards fulfillment.

Neither traditional theology nor conventional science has provided, nor is ever likely to provide, a vision of "fulfillment" which satisfies the deepest yearnings of the human soul. Neither the greatest of "wide open spaces" nor, for that matter, the greatest of educators, can teach that only those goals deserving of some self-sacrifice lead in the direction of a distinctively human destiny. But what educators can do is to create something of an atmosphere of a striving that is beyond self-seeking.

FRONTIERS

The Work of Novelists

THE novelist sometimes comes the closest of anyone of our time to being a philosopher. The professional philosophers, for the most part, have devoted themselves to teaching the history of philosophy, and to attempts to be "scientific" in their approach to the problem of knowledge, with the result that contemporary philosophy has little if any touch with actual human problems. Something similar, probably, could be said of poetry and the arts, but the novel is an exception. Periodically, pessimists predict that the novel has exhausted itself as a form, but it keeps coming back to life.

The Fall Books number of the *Nation* (Nov. 14) is chiefly concerned with the novel. One article is Dan Jacobson's answer to the question, "Why Read Novels?" This discussion makes plain the enormous areas which are left completely untouched by modern theories of knowledge. The life of feeling, for example, is by far the greater part of man's experience. Only in literature do we encounter a conscious awareness of this experience and are led to muse upon its values. Scientific theory is wholly silent on the subject, and so is political thought. These coarse measures deal only with the externals of man's existence—with what is, actually, the least part of our lives—yet we have allowed them to claim coverage of all that is important or "real" in our lives. Occasionally you meet someone who says that he does not read "novels." He has time only for *facts*. There are of course trivial novels, but the drama of human lives is the subject-matter of the novel, and the insight and understanding of an exceptional novel may have greater value than a knowledge of any particular "facts." The novel remains the only human expression, today, which has the quality and character of wholeness. Mr. Jacobson says:

> Ours is an age of specialization, as everybody knows; and everybody knows, too, that the only way to win respect from other specialists is by showing them that one's own specialty is just as special as theirs. But respect is something very different from attention, and it is attention first, and attention always, that the critic should be trying to gain for the work he is discussing. It seems to me that one obvious way for the serious critic of fiction to gain this attention would be to make it plain that his specialization is not all that special and private, after all. Indeed, one of the first answers to the question, "Why read novels?" is that in an age of specialization the novel remains singularly un-special. So far from this being anything for critics or novelists to be ashamed of, it is one of the glories of the form.

We do not mean to suggest that the novel easily takes the place of philosophy, but that it assembles the raw materials used in the work of philosophy; only incidentally does the novelist do the philosophizing. But who else, these days, is even assembling the materials?

Mr. Jacobson writes:

> The novel really is knowledge: the recorded knowledge of than a single art form; they are half-hoping that the sort of the states of consciousness of different men at different times. For most of us, for most of the time, one kind of knowledge or way of knowing excludes every other; we know abstractly or we know intuitively, we know sensuously or we know mentally. But the novelist, ideally, knows simultaneously what we know only in alternation, and within any single work he is able to deploy one kind of knowledge against another, to imply one when he is writing about others, to remind us of the others when we would prefer to read about only one. In his creation of character, the novelist is continually shifting, moving, comparing, remembering, uniting his knowledge. The characters in a novel are the novelist's individual foci of consciousness; they, ultimately, are what the novelist knows, and the greater the novelist the more people will he be able to create and the more he will know about each one of them.

Mr. Jacobson has the courage to call the novelist's perceptions *knowledge.* It is almost a fresh idea, in our culture, that knowledge can have a form which is not expressed as numerical "data" or as technical description. This is a sort of knowledge which many men may possess, although hardly in the same way, and they could not put it into the same words, nor would one of

them say it the same way a second time. Yet it is *knowledge*. It illuminates our understanding of human beings.

Mr. Jacobson continues:

> Already, here, we can see why the novel is so supremely important in this "age of specialization," when we feel the multiplication of abstract "knowledge" of all kinds to be, not liberating, but frightening and discouraging; when every publisher's crammed list and every learned journal is an invitation for us to give up the struggle for consciousness, with the feeling "It's too much, it's beyond me." The novelist—to put it very simply—can remind us again and again that what is important for us to know, outside our specialties, is not too much, is not beyond us. The novelist cannot be expected to know about the latest developments in physics or medicine, say, but he can be expected to know, as he has known in the past, what it is to *be* a physicist or a doctor. The novelist knows, or should know, what it is to be practically anybody: this is why he can so much help to restore to us that sense of community which nowadays is broken not only by radical and ideological strife, but also seems to be shattered anew by every advance that is made in the accumulation of knowledge about the physical world.

How shall we "prove" the knowledge of the novelist? What folly to ask for proof! This sort of challenge is an invitation by the questioner to be bludgeoned by a display of "facts" into accepting what he does not want to accept. But the sort of knowledge possessed by the novelist is not gained in this way. It has little or no relation to syllogisms. It is not added up like a column of figures. Yet it is at the root of all the dignities, graces, and generosities of human life.

Mr. Jacobson concludes:

> I cannot help feeling that when people prophesy the demise of the novel they are looking forward to the demise of more power which is the novelist's will go out of existence. They no longer believe (or want to believe) that it is possible to try to know the human truth of every situation in which people find themselves; they resent the novelist's claim that we can be known, and shown, in our weakness and strength, through all the changing forms of our changing societies. If it is true that the novel is dying, then so too is modern man's ambition to know the truth about yourself. If the novel lives it will be because that ambition lives still.