VOLUME XI, NO. 17
APRIL 23, 1958

THE MISSION OF THE PSYCHOLOGIST

[This two-part article is by Professor A. H. Maslow, who teaches psychology at Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass. It appears here by permission of Sheridan House, publishers of *Personal Problems and Psychological Frontiers,* a current book in which the article was first printed.—Editors.]

I

I BEGIN this paper with a credo, with a confession, a personal statement. I've never made it quite this way before because it sounds so presumptuous but I think it's about time for it.

I believe that the world will either be saved by the psychologists or it won't be saved at all. I think psychologists are the most important people living today. I think the fate of the human species and the future of the human species rest more upon their shoulders than upon any group of people now living. I believe that all the important problems of war and peace, exploitation and brotherhood, hatred and love, sickness and health, misunderstanding and understanding, of the happiness and unhappiness of mankind will yield only to a better understanding of human nature. I believe that medicine and physics and law and government, education, economics, engineering, business, industry, are only tools—powerful tools, powerful means—but not ends.

I think the ultimate end to which they should all be bent is human fulfillment, human betterment, growth and happiness. But these tools—industry, productivity, etc.—are all evil in the hands of evil men, and are good and desirable only in the hands of good men. The only way to heal evil men's sickness—the only way to heal evil men is to create good men. To understand them better, to know what creates them, and to know how to cure the evil and let the good come out, we must know what evil is and what good is; that is, what psychological health is, and what psychological sickness is. And this is the job for the psychologist.

Therefore I feel myself, as a psychologist, to be an important man. I must confess to you that mostly I feel fortunate at this blessing that has been bestowed upon me. I think being a psychologist is the most fascinating life there is. As a matter of fact I found myself recently (this is a confession, too) secretly, unconsciously being kind to people who weren't psychologists, like the rich man who doesn't want to be too ostentatious about his good fortune.

Psychologists must be considered fortunate for several reasons. Not only can they be officially virtuous about being peeping Toms and asking impertinent personal questions of everybody they run across. (I can ask the most embarrassing questions and then I say, "Well, this is psychological research," and then everybody answers me always.) Not only can they deal with the most fascinating objects in the world—human persons—, not only can they by their own studies, their own scientific work, more efficiently work out even their own personal problems as human beings, but most of all they can feel so important. Everything that they discover will be magnified a million times. Learn more about human nature and you thereby automatically learn more about all the works of mankind, all the other sciences, law, history, philosophy, religion, industry. All these are essentially human products. The more you know about the human being, the more you know about his products, and the more you can manipulate and better the products as well. Basic to the study of law, the study of education, the study of economics, of history, ought to be an improved study of the human being who has made the law, and made the history. Paul Valery has said it well: "When the mind is in question, everything is in question."

It must be quite clear to you now that I speak out of a special conception of the call of the psychologist, his mission, his vocation. I think that there are rules and responsibilities for him that don't apply to other scientists. I know it sounds a little Messianic, but my reasoning is quite simple. Our most pressing and urgent problems today are human problems arising out of human weaknesses—sorrow, greed, exploitation, prejudice, contempt, cowardice, stupidity, jealousy, selfishness—these are all human sicknesses. We already know that we can cure these sicknesses if we can manage them one at a time. This is the process of psychotherapy. Psychoanalysis is one particular deep therapy, that can manage these problems if it has enough time, enough money, enough skill. These are intrinsically curable diseases.

If we die in another war or if we continue being tense and neurotic and anxious in an extended cold war, then this is due to the fact that we don't understand ourselves and we don't understand each other. Improve human nature and you improve all.

But before you can improve human beings you must understand them, and there it is, just as simple and blunt and unavoidable as I can make it. We just don't know enough about people, and this is the task facing the psychologist. We need psychology, and we need it more than anything else that I can think of, whether more bombs or more religions or more diplomats or more bathtubs or factories, more productivity. Even more than physical health, more than new drugs, we need an improved human nature.

Furthermore, we need it in a hurry. I have a sense of historical urgency about this. Time's a-wasting and the dogs of history are barking at our heels all the time. War may break out about our ears any day.

The psychologist has a call then, in the same sense that a minister should have. He doesn't have the right to play games and to indulge himself. He has special responsibilities to the human race. He ought to feel the weight of duty upon his shoulders as no other scientist needs to. He ought to have a sense of mission, of dedication.

Another point in this credo, a very important one. By psychologists I mean all sorts of people, not just professors of psychology. I mean to include all the people who are interested in developing a truer, a clearer, a more empirical conception of human nature, and only such people. That excludes many professors of psychology and many psychiatrists. I would include some sociologists, anthropologists, educators, philosophers, artists, publicists, linguists, business men—anybody who is pointed in this direction; practically anybody who has taken upon his own shoulders this task that I consider so great and so important a task.

A last point. Since psychology is in its infancy as a science, and so little is known—so pitifully little—(only the psychologist knows how little this is) by comparison with what we need to know and since the weight of responsibility is so heavy upon the shoulders of the psychologist, a good psychologist should be a humble man. He should know very consciously how much he ought to know and how little he actually does know. Unfortunately, too many psychologists are not humble, but are, instead, arrogant. They've got all the answers, and there's no greater danger than an arrogant psychologist or psychiatrist who feels very confident that he knows what the game is and what the score is and how it's going to come out. We have to watch out for such people—they are quite dangerous.

1. Psychology should be more humanistic, more concerned with the problems of humanity, and less with the problems of the guild.

The sad thing is that students come in to psychology almost always with these humanistic interests. They want to know about people, what makes them tick, how they can be improved. They want to *understand* about love, hate, hope, fear, ecstasy, happiness, the meaning of living. But then what is so often done for these high

hopes and yearnings? Most graduate training, even most undergraduate courses, turn away from these subjects (I couldn't even find the word "love" indexed in any of the psychology books on my shelves, not even the ones on marriage). They are called fuzzy, unscientific, tender-minded, mystical. What is offered instead? Dry bones. Techniques. Precision. Huge mountains of itty-bitty facts, having little to do with the interests that brought the student into psychology. Even worse, they try most often successfully, to make the student *ashamed* of his interests as if they were somehow unscientific. And so often the spark is lost, the fine impulses of youth are lost and they settle down to being members of the guild, with all its prejudices, its orthodoxies. The creativeness goes, the daring, the boldness, the unorthodoxy, the sense of high mission, the prophetic sense, the humanistic dedication. Cynicism closes in, and I am horrified to report to you that most graduate students in psychology speak guardedly of the Ph.D. as the "union card" and expect not to enjoy doing their dissertation research, tending to regard it as an unpleasant job rather than as a privilege, something to get out of the way so they can get a job.

What cultivated man in his right mind would read a doctoral dissertation? or an elementary textbook of psychology? How few psychology books there are that I could recommend to this audience that have the approval of the technical psychologists? The only ones that I can think of which would help you to understand Man better, yourselves, the people that are important for you, are inexact, not precise, unscientific, clinical. They come more from the psychotherapeutic tradition than from the scientific psychologist. For instance I recommend that you read Freud and the neo-Freudians, but I doubt that Freud could get a Ph.D. in psychology today, nor would any of his writings be acceptable as a doctoral dissertation. And only a few months ago, in a standard journal of psychology, a presidential address compared Freud with phrenology. And this for the greatest psychologist who has ever lived—at least from *your* point of view, the point of view of nonmembers of the guild.

And what is offered in exchange for Freud, for Adler, Jung, for Fromm and Horney? Beautifully executed, elegant experiments which in half the cases or more, have nothing to do with enduring human problems, and which are written not primarily for the human species, but for other members of the guild. It is all so reminiscent of the lady at the zoo who asked the keeper whether the hippopotamus was male or female. "Madam," he replied, "it seems to me that that would be of interest only to another hippopotamus."

Psychologists are, or should be, an arm of the human race, a help to them. They have obligations, responsibilities, duties to every person now living, and to every one who will even live in the future. They just have no right to play little auto-erotic games off in a corner of the laboratory.

2. Psychology should turn more frequently to the study of philosophy of science, of esthetics but especially of ethics and values. I'm sorry that psychology has officially cut itself off from philosophy because this means no more than giving up good philosophies for bad ones. Every man living has a philosophy, an uncriticized, uncorrectable, unimprovable, unconscious one. If you want to improve it, and make it more realistic, more useful, and more fruitful, you have to be conscious of it, and *work* with it, criticize it, improve it. This most people (including most psychologists), don't do.

And I mean more than the philosophy of science. I mean also the study of values, of *why* science is, of what it is for. Where did science come from anyway? Why do we spend so much time on it? What's in it for us? And I mean the philosophy of esthetics, of creativeness, of the mystic experience, that is, of the highest and deepest experiences the human being is capable of. (The peak-experiences, I call them.) This is a way of avoiding shallowness and busy work, and of setting a suitably high level of aspiration. If the

priests of science themselves are small men, with limited, superficial goals then the religion of science will be petty and trivial also.

Too many psychologists have looked for their philosophy of science to the mathematician and physicists of the 19th century, and simply imitate them. Their reasoning is apparently that these sciences were successful: let us see how they did it, and imitate them, and then we too will be as successful. But this is so foolish. Psychology as a science is in its infancy, and has to work out its own philosophy, its own methodology, suitable to its own nature and problems, and goals. A little boy doesn't become a man by putting on his father's shoes, smoking his pipe, and trying to speak in a bass voice. He has to *really* grow, not make believe he's already grown.

Now I don't mean to make heroes out of professors of philosophy either. They're probably no better and no worse than the psychologists (or physicists or chemists). There are as many sterile philosophers as there are sterile psychologists (or chemists or poets). And yet here in philosophy, there are many growing points, points of penetration and improvement and advancement in human thought. Unless they know the great philosophers, the psychologists are apt to remain arrogant rather than humble, trivial rather than profound, and repetitious rather than creative. And they are apt to continue trying to live up to their "little boy" effort to "make like" a Hollywood scientist, to wear a white coat, have a stern, tough look on his face, and not to bleed when cut.

The trouble with many psychologists is that they are content to work with but a portion of the human being, indeed even to make a virtue and a desirable thing out of it. They forget that ultimately their task is to give us a unified, empirically based conception of the whole human being, of human nature in general, *i.e.*, a philosophy of human nature.

But this takes courage and demands sweep and scope and willingness to step away from the narrow platform of certainty. This certainty is and must be narrow for the simple reason that we just don't know enough about human nature to be sure of anything but small bits of knowledge.

The sad thing about all of this is that everyone, even the one year old child, does have a conception of human nature. It is impossible to live without a theory of how people will behave, of what to expect of them. Every psychologist, however positivist and hard boiled and anti-theoretical he may claim to be, nevertheless has a full blown philosophy of human nature hidden away in a concealed place in his guts. It is as if he guided himself by a half-known map, which he disavows and denies and which is therefore absolutely immune to intrusion and to correction by newly acquired knowledge. This unconscious map or theory guides his reactions and expectations far more than does his laboriously acquired experimental knowledge.

The issue is then not over whether or not to have a philosophy of psychology, but whether to have a conscious or an unconscious one.

Another truth that we have learned from the philosophers is that you must have a map if you are not to waste your time. It may sound sensible to say, "after all, facts are facts and knowledge is knowledge. Let us just accumulate facts of all kinds one by one, only making sure that they are valid and reliable and we will slowly nibble away at the unknown. Slow but sure. Let us have nothing to do with theories—only certain facts."

But we now know that most facts, maybe *all* facts, are expressions of a theory. The anthropologists, particularly the linguists, have proven that even naming an object, "that is a chair," or, "that is a man" is an expression of a world outlook and that in order really to understand the statement you must know the world outlook.

This is by no means a plea against detailed work. It is not, as my own detailed work can testify. Every clash of broad issues eventually

works itself down to small crucial experiments and these experiments of course ought to be done as well and as carefully as we know how. What use is it doing an experiment if your results tell you nothing for sure? Ultimately, the experimenter, the researcher, is the Supreme Court before which all theories are and must be tested.

Because we know so little for certain about human beings (by comparison with what we should know and would like to know) intuition, common experience, wisdom, intelligence and insight all become terribly important. Even a stupid man can understand when there are enough certain facts, but when there are not, then only the innately perceptive, wise man can know. Philosophies of human nature have been expounded by theologians, poets, dramatists, artists, statesmen, and industrialists. We should respect these—as theories, as suggestions—almost as much as we should the theories of the psychologist, and use them as frameworks for criticism, for suggested experiments, for tentative road maps to be tested and examined and squeezed for juice. We can still learn much from Marcus Aurelius, from Goethe, from Spinoza, from Coleridge, although I hope and expect that the day will come when we will know more than any of them, as today any high school boy knows more about biology than Aristotle did. This is the triumph of science, that ultimately it can take the innate wisdom of the great intuitors, correct it, test it, winnow it and come out with a better product, with more certain and reliable knowledge. Remember that when the scientists, after years of theorizing, debating, experimenting, checking and counterchecking give birth to the same conclusion that Rousseau or Shakespeare did, it is not actually the same conclusion. It is new knowledge; then it was a theory. And I remind you that we need a principle by which to select out from among the various contradictory theories which have been offered, the correct one. Not only Rousseau's theories must be checked, but also those of Rousseau's opponents. And who is to check them, who is to decide, but the scientist? And on what basis can he decide if not on the basis of empirical research?

We must pay special attention to the synoptic thinkers, the producers of theories of the whole man in his whole world. It is easy enough to develop a sound theory of the learning of nonsense syllables, or of rats running in mazes, or of the conditioning of the dog's salivary reflex. To integrate these miniature theories with the whole of psychology—that is another matter. To relate them to love and hate, to growing and regressing, to happiness and pain, and to courage and anxiety, this exposes the weakness of nibbling away at the edges of reality instead of making reconnaissance flights over the whole of lt.

A. H. MASLOW

(To Be Concluded)

REVIEW
PHILOSOPHY FOR PHI BETA KAPPA

IN our attempts to extend conventional notions as to the functions of philosophy, we often find ourselves in debt to Prof. C. J. Ducasse. In the Phi Beta Kappa *Key Reporter* for January, Dr. Ducasse discusses the meaning and function of philosophical expression. He points out that at the beginning of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, in 1776, its founders at the College of William and Mary expected to learn from philosophy the nature of political and social duties. This is hardly the contemporary view. As Dr. Ducasse explains, "although taking philosophy as one's guide through life seemed to John Heath and his fellow-students an eminently wise resolve, today the perspective in which educated people view human life is different from that of 1776; and members of Phi Beta Kappa may find themselves challenged to give reasons for adopting philosophy as the guide of life in preference to religion or to science, either of which today enjoys far more general prestige than does philosophy." He continues:

> At the time of the founding of Phi Beta Kappa any suggestion that man should take science rather than philosophy as his guide in the conduct of his life would have been hardly intelligible. The investigation of puzzling natural phenomena was not commonly thought to be a potential source of counsels for living. The justification, if any, for studying the mysteries of nature was held to lie only in such gratification of idle curiosity as it might yield to the few impractical persons who engaged in that study.

In the interests of science we have reversed this evaluation. Now the domains of philosophy and metaphysics are thought to be reserved chiefly for those who seek "gratification of idle curiosity." Yet, while the last 100 years has shown us the power of science to mold the world, it must be admitted that, "measured in terms of spiritual maturity, the average man today is still a child. And it is in the hands of that child that the natural sciences, almost overnight, have placed powers that in their magnitude and possibilities of evil, no less than of good, are to those man had earlier as dynamite is to the strength of bare hands. Great nations have risen in the past only to fall victim to destructive forces within them. But today it is the whole of life on earth, or even the very earth itself, the continued existence of which is in danger. Obviously, then, if man is to be saved, what he now needs is not more of the power the natural sciences bring, but more wisdom wherewith to direct the use he makes of the powers he already has."

We have at least recognized that religion fails to provide the answer to either psychological or philosophical problems. And while religion may be respected as a symbolic vesture of one's inner promptings, it is no longer the source from which we hope to derive truth. The average person today "realizes that if he had been born and brought up in a different part of the world, his religion would almost automatically have been the one that happened to prevail in that particular region." Dr. Ducasse continues:

> This thrusts upon him the question whether the location of a man's birthplace determines not merely which religion he *will believe*, but also its *truth, or falsity.* And of course merely to ask this question is virtually to answer it, especially in an epoch when so many of the traditional religious teachings about the place of the earth in the universe, the age and history of the earth, and the origin of life and of man, have been conclusively disproved by the knowledge that science has produced in lieu of mere creeds, pious opinions, and crude cosmological or biological fancies handed down by the religious traditions.
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> In the light of these and similar considerations, the articles of faith of the various religions—of one's own as well as of the others—are seen to be not statements known to be true or false, but essentially *psychological tools:* instruments mankind has automatically devised for performance of certain important social and personal functions. For religious dogmas to influence the conduct, the feelings, and the attitudes of men, they need not be true but need only be firmly *believed.*

So we come to the question of whether philosophy offers a better prospect than that

furnished by either science or religion of supplying man with wisdom:

> In the popular opinion at least, hardly so. For philosophy is commonly reputed to be nearly the most nebulous and impractical thing there is. Yet if philosophy were really so remote from practical affairs, it would be hard to understand either the execration or the veneration in which various philosophers have at times been held. Why, for instance, should Socrates, Hypatia, and Giordano Bruno have been put to death, Plato sold into slavery, and Campanella imprisoned, for voicing the philosophical opinions they held? On the other side of the picture, why should the same Plato have sometimes been referred to as "the divine Plato," and Kant as "the immortal Kant"? Why have their writings and those of other great philosophers continued to be read and prized through the centuries?

Dr. Ducasse concludes his article with a statement of what philosophy a man must have in order (*a*) to know anything about himself worth knowing, and (*b*) to act intelligently in relationship with his fellows. This is philosophy conceived as essential discipline:

> In conclusion let us consider briefly the term "wisdom" and note the light that philosophical analysis of its meaning throws on Phi Beta Kappa's counsel to take philosophy—that is, love of wisdom—as the guide of life.
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> Thus the counsel to make love of wisdom the guide of one's life packs together four distinct recommendations, which may be separately stated.
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> One is that when a person attempts to reach a wise decision about a difficult practical problem, he should inform himself as accurately and completely as is possible about its *objective circumstances.*
>
> Another is that with similar care he should take stock of *the powers at his disposal:* on the one hand, of the diverse means he happens to have, any one of which would enable him to achieve a particular end he might decide on; and on the other, of the diverse ends, any one of which he could achieve with the particular stock of means he commands.
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> The third recommendation is that he should then consider *the various kinds of value*—positive and negative, intrinsic and instrumental—which, for the persons who would be affected, would follow from each of the courses of action open to him in the circumstances of the case with only the particular powers he has.
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> And the fourth recommendation is that when he has thus considered as well as he can all the values at stake, he should then choose the course of action that on *the whole is best,* or *least bad:* the course that, *everything considered,* will probably yield the maximum total positive value, or the minimum total negative value.
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> Needless to say, this choice will in many cases be anything but easy or confident. And the person who makes it may well come eventually to judge it to have been mistaken. But this will be the judgment of the wiser person he will then have become by learning from his mistakes. At the time a decision has to be made, however, no way exists for any man to make a wiser one than by the procedure just described. For wisdom—so much of it as in practice happens to be obtainable by a given person at a given time—*means* what emerges out of that procedure.
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> Finally, under the shelter of the preceding elucidations I shall venture to state as a sharp choice what I take to be the gist of Phi Beta Kappa's advice to its initiates. And to formulate it I shall borrow the sharp words of the title of a book on a somewhat similar theme written by an Australian journalist.
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> That sharp choice so sharply worded is *Think—or be damned!*

COMMENTARY
NEW KIND OF PSYCHOLOGY

IT is with considerable pleasure that we present in this issue the first of a series of two articles by A. H. Maslow, professor of psychology at Brandeis University. And it is a happy accident of editorial scheduling that these two discussions of the science of psychology follow two articles in MANAS which were concerned with another kind of "science"—the irresponsible, value-ignoring psychology which models itself upon physics and takes flight from any suggestion that psychology may learn from philosophy.

Dr. Maslow is of course a crusader. He is a crusader for the idea that psychologists should take human beings as given in experience, and not as given in the abstractions of physics, chemistry and biology. He writes as a man who is hungry for knowledge and who assumes that other people are able to feel the same hunger.

He is a crusader for the proposition that psychology is a very young science and that it must make a beginning at formulating its own rules. It cannot use the rules of physics, chemistry, and biology, for the reason that those rules don't apply to human beings, and psychology is concerned with human beings. He has the temerity, the absolute daring, to insist that psychology is about human beings.

This is a real break-through for the psychological sciences. For a generation and more, bright-eyed young men and women have been signing up for courses in "psychology" in the hope of learning something about human beings. You meet them, ten years later, and get the vague echo of the systematic evasion of knowledge about human beings to which they were exposed. Now, there is some hope that the young people who take courses in psychology are going to be fired up with a genuine passion for knowledge about human beings. This is a great thing.

We are not historians of the things that are happening in universities and in the psychology departments of universities. We don't know what "caused" this breakthrough. The first rumble, perhaps, came from Prof. Henry A. Murray, of Harvard, who back in 1940 told of his contact with psychoanalysis and invited his colleagues in academic psychology to wake up to the fact that psychotherapy was rapidly taking their field away from them. As he put it (in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, April, 1940):

> . . . psychoanalysis is entirely concerned with man's inner life and everyday behavior, and academic psychology but faintly so. The analysts spend eight or more hours of the day observing, and listening to what a variety of patients say about the most intimate and telling experiences of their lives, and they spend many evenings at seminars exchanging findings and conclusions. The professorial personologist, on the other hand, spends most of his time away from what he talks and writes about. He labors over apparatus, devises questionnaires, calculates coefficients, writes lectures based upon what other anchorites have said, and occasionally supervises an experiment on that non-existent entity, Average Man. He makes little use of the techniques that analysts have perfected for exposing what occurs behind the stilted laboratory attitude. In addition, the analysts have read more and to better profit in the great works of literature (collections of the best guesses of highly conscious men), and this practice has served to sensitize and broaden their awareness.

Today, there are at least a dozen men who have recognized, by this or similar means, that the study of psychology means the study of human beings, and who have openly declared that this is their understanding of psychology and the way they are going to practice psychology.

Dr. Murray warned the academic psychologists some eighteen years ago. It is now time for somebody to warn the academic philosophers. For if they don't watch out, the new psychologists like Dr. Maslow are going to take their field away from them.

It so happens, by another happy coincidence, that there is such a warning noted in this issue. In Review, Dr. C. J. Ducasse is quoted as reminding his contemporaries in the Phi Beta Kappa Society of times in the history of philosophy when

philosophers were men with a mission. "Why," he asks, "should Socrates, Hypatia, and Giordano Bruno have been put to death, Plato sold into slavery, and Campanella imprisoned, for voicing the philosophical opinions they held?" Are there any philosophers around today who cherish their opinions with conviction of this sort? We can think of two—C. Wright Mills, and Lewis Mumford—who are not, of course, academic philosophers, but men who understand their times and who are publishing what they think.

These two are saying what Maslow is saying, what Ducasse is saying in another way—what the Australian journalist quoted by the latter said to all of us: *Think—or be damned!*

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

DISCUSSION OF A GENERATION: X

THE hipsters, one may feel, are receiving literary and critical attention out of all proportion to their number or importance. However, there is a reason for this. We are familiar with other types of young persons—the ambitious candidate for the rewards offered by business or profession, the dutiful follower of parental guidance, or the enthusiastic young apostle of a religious credo. We have seen youngsters wanting to be heroes and youngsters determined to be rebels. But the hipster is something new, fitting into none of these patterns. Not only that, but those who still represent the familiar categories seldom conduct their activities with equal verve. The hipster splashes bright color around and makes loud noises. We look because we are intrigued, perhaps a little frightened, but at least we look—because we are seeing something new.

It would be desirable, however, to establish some sort of common denominator for the hipster—who is a displaced person—and the colorless representatives of other attitudes, for they seem rather displaced, too. Last year the *Nation* (March 9, 1957) published a revealing symposium entitled "The Careful Young Men." Sixteen teachers from sixteen widely separated campuses across the country commented upon the present student generation. Summarizing their findings (in the *Nation* for Feb. 8, 1958), William Graham Cole remarks that "the comments from small colleges and large universities, from private institutions and public, and from North, South, East, West and the Midwest, painted a surprisingly consistent portrait. The colors were uniformly pastel; this generation of students has no heroes, embraces no causes, professes no creeds, displays no great passions."

Mr. Cole also recalled that the contributors to "The Careful Young Men" admitted that they could understand "the tepid temperature of today's students." The reasons may be plain enough, but we should review them to avoid underestimating the effect that they have upon the lives of young people. First of all, the doctrine of inevitable progress—the faith that reason and science together will build a better world—has been swept away during the years of international fratricide inaugurated by World War II. What of religion? Here we shall quote Mr. Cole:

> The faith of our fathers, or perhaps more accurately of our grandfathers, incurred a fatal infection in the Age of Reason. It managed to survive the crisis of the nineteenth-century conflict between science and religion and to stagger into our own time still alive, but scarcely able to walk. The current "religious revival" is more a sociological than an intellectual or spiritual phenomenon. It is simply one more evidence of the stampede to conformity, of the search for security. People are going to church and synagogue because it is the thing to do. But by and large "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed." The multitudes who join the houses of worship today have little profound religious conviction. They are pagans with a fringe on top. Nietzche's announcement of the death of God was a trifle premature, but God is only barely alive for the majority of our generation. Our Judeo-Christian heritage provides no real faith, no power for living to any but a very few.

Mr. Cole is chairman of the Department of Religion at Williams College. We take it that when he says that "God is only barely alive for the majority of our generation," he speaks out of no disrespect for the religion in men's lives. He is rather looking for the locus of present youth's faith, and he is compelled to list the faiths which have broken down—all of them connected with the weakening of the professed values of parents and teachers. Mr. Cole continues:

> One other idol of the American past has been found by today's young to have feet of clay: the gospel of work. Previous generations looked for fulfillment and meaning in a job, whether it was as butcher, baker or doctor. The Protestant ethos of the sanctity of labor blended happily with the American dream, and men readily achieved a sense of selfhood and identity in office or shop or field. Life took on meaning and direction in earning one's livelihood, in working long and hard to better one's status and to

> boost one's children a rung or two higher on the ladder to success. But today's generation has little sense of vocation, little eagerness to enter the highly competitive and obviously insecure "rat-race" of business, whose hazards have been so eloquently enumerated by William Whyte and David Riesman, so dramatically symbolized in such works as *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and *Death of a Salesman.* The *sine qua non* of success, according to the editors of *Fortune,* is willingness to sacrifice one's self on the altar of the corporation. The prospect is not beguiling for many young men.

For "average" young men and women, there seems to be only one recourse, and that is to a world of personal experience which they can create among themselves. Mr. Cole's article happens to be a discussion of the reasons for early marriage, and is so titled. What he has to say goes a long way to explain the statistics of early marriages:

> The one remaining locus of meaning in life seems to be the home. The real goal of young men and women in the mid-twentieth century is to find the right mate, to make a good marriage and to rear happy and well-adjusted children. Few college students today are able to project any consistent adult image of themselves in vocational terms. They are rather at a loss to know what they will do to earn a living. But they *can* imagine themselves as husbands and wives, as parents. Arnold Toynbee has suggested that as the demands of military security and technological production increasingly reduce individual freedom in the years that lie ahead, it may be that man will once more turn to religion as a realm where the state can allow a certain latitude. Religion may serve as the escape valve of the twenty-first century as science did in the fifteenth and sixteenth. Today, however, the young generation views the *family* as an escape from the increasingly totalitarian demands of business and profession. Here, with the right mate, a man can be himself, delivered from the compulsion to conformity, the perils of depersonalization, the emptiness of Babbittry. The old saw about a man's home being his castle takes on new meaning.

The hipster is not, apparently, seeking a home, nor is he apt to be impressed by the ceremony of marriage, but he is certainly seeking an escape from both the boredom and perils which contemporary adult life seems to impose. As one teen-age hipster put it recently: "We've got our own world, we've got our own rules, and we take care of things our own way. We don't ask anyone to help us because we want to belong with the other cats. We've got crazy ways of doing things but at least they are ours, and if we beat on some cat it's because he broke the rules." Here, we believe, is a basic key to the problem represented in these "Discussions of a Generation." Youths, like men, have to discover their personal identity in relation to some set of standards or values. The rules define the values. What they are matters less than the fact that they exist.

Recently the *Autonomous Groups Bulletin* (see MANAS for Nov. 6, 1957) printed the results of research on New York street gangs, considered as "autonomous groups." The researchers concluded that no parent or social worker could do anything to redirect the energies of these dangerous roving bands until they learned the rules the boys had adopted and showed a measure of respect for them. But the rules of the gangs are in a vacuum, just as the "homes" created by late teen-agers are apt to be in a vacuum, so far as the rest of society is concerned. Moreover, what both the hipster and the participant in early marriage are looking for is something more than they can find without some variety of hero-image, some conception of ideal value transcending immediate personal experience. The missing factor—directly relevant, we think, to both the erratic and the dispirited reactions of members of this generation—lies in the failure of our culture to provide any sense of "magic," or any of the symbolic rituals which have helped the members of primitive cultures to believe that there is something significant about growing up to be men and women. Joseph Campbell, in his *The Hero With a Thousand Faces,* makes this lack dramatically clear in his discussion of "The Function of Myth, Cult, and Meditation." He writes of a sort of experience which few members of this generation know anything about:

> The tribal ceremonies of birth, initiation, marriage, burial, installation, and so forth, serve to

translate the individual's life-crises and life-deeds into classic, impersonal forms. They disclose him to himself, not as this personality or that, but as the warrior, the bride, the widow, the priest, the chieftain; at the same time rehearsing for the rest of the community the old lesson of the archetypal stages. All participate in the ceremonial according to rank and function. The whole society becomes visible to itself as an imperishable living unit. Generations of individuals pass, like anonymous cells from a living body; but the sustaining, timeless form remains. By an enlargement of vision to embrace this super-individual, each discovers himself enhanced, enriched, supported, and magnified. His role, however unimpressive, is seen to be intrinsic to the beautiful festival-image of man—the image, potential yet necessarily inhibited, within himself.

FRONTIERS

Reply to Kenneth Patchen

[The Frontiers article in MANAS for March 19 concluded with a statement, written by Kenneth Patchen in 1945, on "Ezra Pound's Guilt." Pound is an American poet who spent the war (World War II) on the side of the Nazis and the Fascists and who, as an anti-Semite, supported them in the war. Pound was returned to the United States under arrest and, being adjudged insane, was placed in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. He is still there, having recently been the subject of an interview-article in the *Nation* (Dec. 28, 1957). Since Pound is commonly acknowledged to be (or have been) one of the most eminent of American poets, the question of the relation of his guilt as a fascist and apologist for fascism to his art was widely discussed. Kenneth Patchen's statement formed a part of this discussion. The editors of MANAS reprinted this statement not so much by reason of an interest in Ezra Pound and his poetry as for its attack on oversimplifying distinctions between the innocent and the guilty.

This "Reply to Kenneth Patchen" touches somewhat on the issue of guilt but seems mostly to question whether an anti-Semite is capable of writing good verse. Some reflections by the editors are added at the end.—Editors.]

TRUE, we are all guilty—but not in the same measure. Some commit petty theft, others grand theft. I was not pleased when they "proceeded to herd Japanese-American citizens into concentration camps." They emerged alive and well, somewhat hurt financially and somewhat psychologically cowed. It was a different story for the Jews in the German concentration camps, although Patchen may not have known this when he wrote his 1945 statement.

To decide about Pound, it is necessary to understand racial prejudice. The Jews have given the West both the Old and New Testaments, and the West has never forgiven them for that. The shocking treatment accorded them by a great nation, Germany, constitutes a remarkable admission of inferiority to the Jews. The latter produced, for better or worse, a Marx, a Freud, an Einstein, and too many professional men of Germany for their own safety. The case is similar with the Japanese-Americans: they were superior farmers, and this is an economic reality of California. The Negroes have superior strength and sense of rhythm; given equal opportunities, they would surpass the Caucasians in many fields, as they already do in some. Racial prejudice is simply racial egotism; in terms of the individual, it amounts to the desire that oneself be better and in better circumstances than another.

"Pound was anti-Semitic"; and in this sense he is inferior. This does not augur well for his poetry. Our native language, English, has an incomparable tradition of great poetry, and it is easy to ascertain that the truly great poets had broad sympathies with mankind. Is modern poetry so desperately poor that Ezra Pound must be read in order that one may read modern "great poetry"? Fortunately, those who merely wish to read great poetry, irrespective of when it was written, have plenty to occupy themselves with in the English language. Kenneth Rexroth, in a recent advice to young poets delivered over Berkeley Station KPFA, holds that one should either read all the modern poets or none at all. If this is good advice for the would-be poet, the general reader may well be advised to adopt the latter alternative.

Look at Picasso's Oil "Guernica" (Paris, May, 1937) and see the downtrodden face! The face is a symbol of the eater, experiencer, chooser. The eyes ingest sights, ears sounds, nose odors, mouth morsel food. They take some things, reject others. The beast in the picture represents what destroys that individuality of man to choose. Pound sided with the beast. So have many others in all parts of the world. The most reprehensible are those who have sought to dignify the beast with whatever talent of speech or art they may possess.

By all means leave Pound's books on the shelves! But the ones who would ban them or who would "spit on his work" are not Hitlers. The victims of totalitarian government would be

relieved to get off so lightly! Again, we need not hate toadstools to avoid eating them.

I am writing in defense of the face, and the right of the face to reject the inferior, the corrupt, the useless—whether or not it is beautiful.

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It does not seem to us that Patchen wrote in "extenuation" of Pound's guilt or in any sense held Pound the anti-Semite and fascist less offensive by reason of his capacity to write poetry. Patchen's statement was an impassioned demand for consistency. He said, in effect, "If you prosecute or condemn this man for what he did, then prosecute yourselves, also, for see what you have done!"

What of the less distinguished American writers who came out during the war for sterilization of the Germans? Had we lost the war, would their "guilt" have been less than Pound's? How do you balance these relativities? But that, one may say, was "talk" and literary bloodthirstiness, while the Nazis, whom Pound championed, succeeded for a time in their hideous designs. So let us admit that Pound's guilt is "objectively" greater. But where does this line of reasoning take you? Into trouble, it seems to us, since the element of guilt by association is unmistakable, here. If it be admitted—as it must be admitted—that there were evil energies on both sides of the war (is there *any* war of which this is not true?), then the guilt of each individual has to be assessed regardless of the enormity of the crimes of one side and regardless of the victory of the other. *Who will assess this guilt? Who has the right to punish?* These are the questions Patchen asked.

What about Pound's poetry? How could a man with such an evil in him write good verse?

We cannot answer this question. It may be, as Alex Wayman suggests, that he couldn't write good verse with this evil in him. We have it on good authority that even Pound's most devoted admirers admit that when he made his work the vehicle of his racial or cultural animosities, its quality departed almost entirely. It seems to us, as no doubt to Patchen and to Wayman, that an artist who harbors a complex of hates and antipathies like anti-Semitism has taken on a cancer which will eventually consume his being. This, at any rate, seems a proper theory to go on.

At the same time, as people who are not infallible—as people who are subject to delusions and confusions, ourselves—we have to hear other people out; to judge what they say as a human expression, and not as the elaboration of a psychosis. We cannot say, in other words, that men with bad and even criminal attitudes are incapable of saying anything worth listening to. We are not ourselves sufficiently established as impartial judges, free from aberration, nor are our theories sufficiently tested, for us to prejudge the expressions of other men on the basis of what we take to be their moral character.