VOLUME XI, NO. 18
APRIL 30,1958

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.]

II

3. AMERICAN psychology should be bolder, more creative; it should try to discover, not only to be cautious, and careful and to avoid mistakes.

Why is it that there has never been a great American psychologist *in the sense of making bold, new discoveries?* Our best American psychologists have been excellent scholars, excellent systematizers, excellent experimenters, but *not* great discoverers. All the great breakthroughs, the great innovations have come from European psychologists, all the brands of psychoanalysis, Freud, Adler, Jung, Rank, Fromm, Horney, all the Gestalt psychologists, Wertheimer, Koffka, Kohler, Lewin, the Rorschach test, Goldstein's organismic psychology. Even behaviorism, so specifically American, began with Pavlov.

I have been told that something very similar is true for the other sciences. The most dramatic example of course is atomic physics. Einstein, Bohr, Fermi, Szilard were all European. The United States is way down on the list in number of Nobel Prize winners when size of population is taken into account, and it would be even further down if wealth and opportunity were also taken into account.

Why is American science so essentially conventional, so hostile to creativeness, to beginnings, and innovators, to speculation, to unorthodoxy, to really new ideas? Why are American psychologists so characteristically appliers of other people's ideas? Why normally do they despise and attack the innovator for ten or twenty years and *then,* when they've finally got used to the shock of thinking unconventionally, make it conventional, and swarm in with hundreds of working-out experiments on other people's ideas? As Picasso said, "First you invent something and then they make it pretty." Why can't they recognize where they get their ideas from in the first place?

I remember how saddened I was and how irritated by an official report of a major committee of the American Psychological Association on the future of psychological science and its improvement. The recommendations amounted finally to methodological ones mostly; how to be cautious, and conservative, how to check, how not to make mistakes, how to pick out other people's mistakes, how to validate, how to be accurate and precise and sure and certain. Hardly a word was there about creativeness, new ideas, sticking your neck out, breaking out of the rut, taking a chance, *encouraging* uncertainty and confusion, exploration. It was so much like the road maps we get at a gas station, telling us how to make our way from known place to known place. Not a word about the no-man's land out ahead, the place where there are no maps and street signs and paved roads, not a word about the pioneering and trail-breaking and sketchy surveying that is necessary *before* the maps can be made.

But once admit creativeness and then you're smack in the middle of a mess of poets, artists, musicians, and other dirty people who don't have a Ph.D. in Psychology and are therefore clearly social climbers who don't have any *right* to know anything about human nature. Once you let the door open a crack, *anybody* can get in. And then who knows *where* things may lead. As one lady

once said, "The horrible danger of murder, rape, and arson is that it may lead you to smoking."

4. *Psychology should be more problem-centered, and less absorbed with means or methods.*

I have written about this at length in Chapter 2 of my *Motivation and Personality*, so will not say much about it here. The general point is this: if you are primarily interested in doing what you can about important questions or problems, then techniques, methods, apparatus, become secondary. For instance, if your question is, "What is love?" and you propose to do the best you can to find out, then you will stick with the problem even though you have to improvise. And you will have to be content with inexactness and uncertainty in the early stages of exploration. If you insist on using only elegant techniques and demand "scientific" exactness, elegance, validity and reliability, then you just can't work with this problem and must give it up, because the techniques and methods and machines now available won't help much with it.

Those who *do* insist on precision from the very beginning can therefore never begin. All they can do is to come in on the later stages of development of the problem.

Therefore if you identify science with exactness, with precision, with quantifications, with precisely defined variables, and with good control of all these variables, you have thereby repudiated as "unscientific" all the first stages of work with any problem, when hunches, intuitions, naturalistic observations, speculations and theories reign supreme.

To put it even more bluntly, it makes a senseless game or ritual out of science if it is defined primarily as method. What is it a method *for?* If pertinence, worth, goal, value are understressed, and validity and reliability exclusively sought for, this is very much like boasting, "I don't know or care what I'm doing, but see how accurately I'm doing it."

The situation in American psychology, in which most researchers do what they can do well, rather than what needs doing, is largely due, I think, to this mistaken notion of what science is and should be.

5. *Psychology ought to be more positive and less negative than it is. It should have higher ceilings, and not be afraid of the loftier possibilities of the human being.*

One major shortcoming of research psychology (and of psychiatry as well), is its pessimistic, negative and limited conception of the full height to which the human being can attain. Partly because of this preconception, it has so far revealed to us much about man's shortcomings, his illnesses, his sins and his weaknesses, but rather little about his virtues, his potentialities, or his highest aspirations. This is true for every area of the science, of all its subdivisions. In the book to which I have already referred I have a chapter full of suggestions about positive researches which we need done to balance our negative picture.

This is not a call for optimism. Rather it is a demand for realism in the best and fullest sense of the word. To identify realism with darkness, misery, pathology and breakdown as so many novelists have done in our time, is idiotic. Happiness is just as real as unhappiness, gratification is just as real as frustration, love is just as real as hostility.

However, I want to stress particularly the most important single example of this mistake, namely the contrast between our knowledge of psychological sickness and our totally inadequate attention to psychological health. Of course, now that I've tried myself to study healthy people, I can understand why this is so. It's a terribly difficult job, ringed about with philosophical reefs of all sorts, particularly in the area of the theory of values. In addition there are cultural problems, methodological ones, and clinical ones. And yet it clearly calls for doing, and therefore *ought* to be done. The best way we can. We must know what men are like at their best; not only what they *are*,

but also what they can become. The by-products of such knowledge are incalculably important. My own belief is that such a health-psychology will inevitably transform our deepest conceptions of human nature. It will wean us away from the almost universal habit of regarding normality as a special case of the abnormal, of being content to regard a healthy human being as simply "not very sick." It will teach us rather that the abnormal is a special case of the normal, and that psychological illness is primarily a struggle toward health.

Another aspect of this same mistake, this preoccupation with the negative, this stress on fear rather than courage, is the great amount of time that has been spent on the defensive processes, on self-protectiveness, on safety and security, and on homeostatic processes. The easy implication is that life is a process of cutting pain and of fighting trouble and unhappiness.

But there is another side to the human being and another set of motivations, the positive ones, the tending to grow stronger, wiser, healthier, to actualize one's potentialities, to be curious, to wonder, to be interested, to philosophize, to be creative, to have fun, to enjoy. Not only do we adjust, we also rebel.

It's perfectly true that we tend to shrink within ourselves when something threatens: we do try to avoid pain. And there is much pain in life for most people. And yet if life were simply and only an avoidance of pain, why would we not cut our throats, all of us, and thereby avoid pain forever? Clearly life has more to offer, than pain. Then why not study this "something more"?

6. *If this is all so, then therapy should be taken out of the office, and spread to many other areas of life. Furthermore it should not only be more broadly used but also more ambitiously defined to include the growth-fostering techniques.*

Some of the more elementary psychotherapeutic techniques can be boiled down to very simple processes that can be taught to teachers, parents, ministers, doctors and even to all of mankind. Support, reassurance, acceptance, love, respect, the giving of safety, all of these are therapeutic. We know also that many of the good life experiences are therapeutic *through* giving these basic medicines—the good marriage, good education, success at a good job, having good friends, being able to help other people, creative work, etc. All of these can be studied more carefully than they have been, so that we can know more about them. And whatever knowledge we do have can be much more widely taught than it has been.

In any case the conception of therapy as getting rid of symptoms and of illnesses is too limited. We must learn to think of it more as a technique for fostering growth and general improvement of the human being, for encouraging self-actualization. This means that many other techniques not now included under the head of psychotherapy actually will belong there, if only we can expand the meaning of therapy to include all the growth-fostering techniques, the educational ones particularly, and *most* particularly creative education in art, in play, and all other kinds of education that avowedly improve creativeness, spontaneity, expressiveness, courage and integration.

7. *Psychology should study not only behavior on the surface but much more the depths of human nature, the unconscious as well as the conscious.*

I am aware that this sounds silly, or even fantastic, and yet the truth is that official, academic, experimental psychology does *not* study the depths as it should. It *is* preoccupied with what can be seen, touched, or heard, with what is conscious. The greatest single psychological discovery that has ever been made was the discovery of unconscious motivations, and yet the situation is that the unconscious is still out of bounds for many research psychologists. Its study has been mostly the preoccupation of psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, psychiatrists.

Only in the last few years have some experimental psychologists begun to tackle the problem.

The consequence, as judged, let us say, by the standard texts in general psychology, is a kind of half-psychology, in which human nature is presented, so to speak, "from middle-C upward." This is like defining an iceberg as only that portion which can be seen above the waterline. Most of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* is written as if Freud had never lived.

The final product is an "official" psychology which deals with rationality but not with the irrational, with the cognitive far more than with the conative and emotional, with adjustment to external reality and hardly at all to internal reality, with the verbal, mathematical, logical and physical and hardly at all with the archaic, the preverbal, the symbolic, the illogical, the fluid, the intuitive, the poetic (what the psychoanalysts call "primary process") .

Not only do our depths make trouble for us; this is also where our joys come from. If we go about the world not knowing what's going on inside ourselves, not knowing what we're looking for, unconscious of the forces which largely determine our behavior, this is the same as being blind to the sources of both our ills, and our pleasures. This lack of understanding means a certain lack of control over our own fate.

8. *Academic psychology is too exclusively Western, and not Eastern enough. It turns too much to the objective, the public, the outer, to behavior. It should learn more about the inner, the subjective, the meditative, the private. Introspection thrown out as a technique, should be brought back into psychological research.*

Particularly American psychology is behavioristic, concentrating on watching the overt actions of others from the outside. This originates in a praiseworthy though naïve effort to be "scientific." Of course it is our hope and our goal as scientists to be able to demonstrate, to prove, to repeat the experiment in another laboratory. And yet we must face the hard fact that this is an *ultimate* rather than an immediate one. By sticking to the observation of external behavior we must thereby overlook all sorts of human activities which do *not* show themselves externally in a simple form.

Behaviorism originated in a sensible reaction against anthropomorphizing animal psychology, but the reverse sin has happened instead, of rodentomorphizing *human* psychology, of studying the person as if he were no more than a complicated white rat. It is truly a mistake to attribute human motives to laboratory animals, but is it a mistake to attribute human motives to humans?

I would like to bring back introspection for another reason that I have recently become impressed with. We are discovering, more and more of us, as we study personality in the depths rather than at the surface, that the deeper we go into ourselves or any other person, the more universal we get. At our deepest levels, we seem to be more alike than different. Therefore if you can manage to get to these depths within yourself (usually the aid of a therapist is needed), you find out not only about yourself, but also about the whole human species. The non-academic psychologists of the East have always known this; now we in the West must learn about it too.

9. *Psychologists should study more than they have, the end experiences as well as the means to ends, the pragmatic, the useful, and the purposive.*

What experiences does man live for? What makes living worth while? What are the payoffs? What experiences in life justify the pains of existence? In other words, which experiences are worth-while in themselves? We know that we reach the heights of living in the moments of creation, of insight, of esthetic experience, of mystic experience, of delight, of love-sex experience. (I have called these the "peak-experiences.")

Were it not for these, life wouldn't make any sense. We would then be living in order to. . . ., in order to . . . ., in order to. . . ., and so on with no end. We must ask, ". . . . in order to what?"

Remember too that end-experiences need not be *only* the peak-experiences of life. We get milder payoffs and rewards in simple zest of living, in having fun, in enjoying all the activities that are done for themselves and not for the sake of something else. A healthy organism enjoys just *being*. Our over-pragmatic psychology passes all this by.

10. *Psychology should study the human being not just as passive clay, helplessly acted upon by outside forces, and determined by them alone. He is (or should be) an active, autonomous, self-governing mover, chooser and center of his own life.*

The so-called stimulus-response psychology has created, without meaning to, what we might call a Stimulus-Response man, passive, responding, shaped, adjusting, learning. With this picture we must contrast the creative, active man, the one who invents, who is responsible, who accepts some stimuli and rejects others, who creates his own stimuli, who makes decisions both about stimuli and about responses.

Perhaps posing this opposition may help you understand why more and more psychologists are getting worried about the concept of "adjustment." Adjustment whether to the culture, to other people, or to nature, means essentially being passive, letting yourself be shaped from the outside, living by the will of other people. It is like trying to make other people happy, asking, "What does daddy want me to be"? instead of asking, "What am I like, really? What is my real Self?"

Then, too, this is why, increasingly, psychologists criticize the conception of learning as a passive process only. But this is a guild problem and I *won't* bother you with it.

11. *All intellectuals tend to become absorbed with abstractions, words and concepts, and forget raw experience, the fresh and concrete, the original real experiencing which is the beginning of all science. In psychology, this is a particular danger.*

My own remedy for this is to turn to (*a*) the general-semanticists, who devote themselves to this danger in particular and (b) the artists, whose particular job it is to experience freshly, to see (and help us to see) the world as it really is, and not as it looks when screened through a web of concepts, verbalisms, abstractions, categories and theories.

12. *The lessons of Gestalt psychology and of organismic theory have not been fully enough integrated into psychology. The human being is an irreducible unit, at least so far as psychological research is concerned. Everything in him is related to everything else in him, in greater or lesser degree. However this too is a technical recommendation.*

13. *I believe that psychologists should devote more time to the intensive study of the single unique person, to balance their preoccupation with the generalized man, and to generalized abstracted capacities.*

There is one great difference between what psychology studies and what all other sciences study. Only psychology studies uniqueness. One white rat is as good as another, one atom is like another, one chemical like another. Their differences don't really matter. So all other sciences really study similarities, which means abstracting. Now psychology has to do this too but it has the special task that no other science has (except anthropology), of studying uniqueness.

This has at least one very important consequence that I must mention. In his most essential core, no human being is comparable with any other. Therefore his ideals for himself, the path of growth, must also be unique. This goal for himself must arise out of his own unique

nature, *not* be picked up by comparison or competition with others. It is a horrible danger to pick up an ideal for himself from his father or teacher or some other model or hero. Essentially his task is to become the best *himself* in the world. Joe Doakes must not try to be like Abraham Lincoln or Thomas Jefferson or anybody else. He must become the best Joe Doakes in the world. That he *can* do and only this is possible and even necessary. And here he has no competitors.

14. *Finally, as we get to know more about what the person legitimately wants and needs for his growth and self-fulfillment, i.e., for psychological health, then we should set ourselves the task of creating the health-fostering culture.*

I think that this is, in principle, no more difficult a task than the making of the A-Bomb. Of course, we don't know enough to do a really good job right *now*. But part of the ultimate task itself would be acquiring necessary knowledge. I see no theoretical reason against this.

Such an enterprise, when it comes, will be the proof that psychology has matured enough to pay off, not only in individual terms but in social improvement as well.

A. H. MASLOW

Brandeis University,
Waltham, Mass

REVIEW
NOTES ON THE NEWS

FOR MANAS readers who have not yet encountered the March *Progressive,* special mention is due this issue, given over to a symposium entitled, "The Russians and Ourselves." Contributions by Chester Bowles, Louis Fischer, Howard Fast, and the *Progressive* staff, afford what is perhaps the best-rounded contemporary discussion of the world situation. This sixty-seven page issue is worth a great deal more than the fifty cents which will bring a copy to your home. It examines the "U.S. vs. Russia" problem from almost every conceivable standpoint. Articles include "Life for the Average Russian" by Daniel Schorr, "Scientists Under Fire" by Edward U. Condon, "What Soviet Children are Taught about America" by Ruth Widmayer, and former *Daily Worker* editor John Gates' explanation of his final desertion of the CP.

The dominant theme in this number of the *Progressive,* however, is not criticism of the Soviets, but rather that we must, as Walter Millis recently put it in the New York *Times,* "recognize that co-existence means the continued existence of *both* of the two great systems of social and political organization." Commenting, *Progressive* editor Morris Rubin explains: "It is this recognition, in part, that leads one of America's foremost capitalist-industrialists, Cyrus S. Eaton, to argue so firmly in this issue 'The Case for Meeting the Soviets Halfway.' When our government embraces that sound counsel, we shall have taken a great stride forward toward developing not panacea pipedream answers but tolerable relations with the nation with which we must live together or die together."

"The Case for Meeting the Soviets Halfway" is especially worth noting, since Mr. Eaton is the controlling figure in a multi-million-dollar financial empire. The article begins with the following paragraphs:

> I am dedicated to the proposition that the world's one real hope for honorable peace lies in actively striving for better understanding between nations of opposing philosophies. The idea seems simple and indisputable to me.
>
> By contrast, the belief that international differences can be composed by the hurling of threats and invective strikes me as lacking in wisdom. When this theory forms the underlying basis of national policy, I confess I become alarmed. The elusive metaphysical doctrine of our State Department that baits Russia, for instance, and forbids our American journalists to visit and write from first-hand knowledge about China, is too subtle and esoteric for me to grasp.

We agree. Mr. Eaton's argument is "simple and indisputable," but we must recognize that this sort of logic may fall chiefly on deaf ears in this country. After some deserved criticism of Mr. Dulles, Mr. Eaton continues:

> I am convinced that there will be no solution, no road to peace, as long as nobody will trust anyone else. Can any reasonable person deny the truth of this statement? It is not profound. It is only common sense. But the charges and countercharges continue. The armament race accelerates its pace to the perilous point where somebody on either side needs but to push a button, deliberately or accidentally, for full-scale war to break out.
>
> I feel confident Russia is not now trying to sell the United States on Communism. She recognizes there is no possibility of imposing the Soviet political and economic system on this country. By the same token, we must recognize that we cannot recast Soviet Russia in our own mold.
>
> Certainly there is growing disillusionment with the theory that the greatest safety for the West lies in building up the greatest pile of nuclear weapons. No doubt the clear evidence we have recently had of the Soviet lead in missile research has been mainly responsible for helping the people to see clearly that neither side can ever win the race for effective nuclear supremacy. The pattern is clear. The development of some super-weapon by one side is soon matched by the other, which is already far advanced in the development of an effective counter-weapon. And so the hopeless race for supremacy goes on—absorbing an increasingly high percentage of the resources and skill of all concerned—although we already have a weapon so powerful as to make war unthinkable.

A London dispatch to the Chicago *Daily News* (March 4) reveals some interesting developments in Great Britain. The English, apparently, are now finding excellent reasons for encouraging extension of the pacifist outlook. The dispatch relates:

> The British government is deeply concerned over the wave of pacifism and neutralism that is sweeping parts of the country. Agreement to install four bases for medium-range American-made missiles has brought home the chilling realization to many Britons that they are now "under the gun" if there is nuclear war. Britain's east coast would be hit before New York, Chicago and Detroit because it is here that hydrogen bombs will be aimed at Russia. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan is staking his own and the Tory party's political future on the belief that the British will soon get used to the idea and not worry so much as they seem to now.
>
> It is said that the British public is "going through a curious state of mind" that could harden to bitter resentment or taper off. Macmillan is banking on not having to face the electorate at general balloting for another 18 months when the temper of the public may have changed. He and his cabinet ministers are aware that an election now would sweep them out of power. Opposition leader Hugh Gaitskell pleaded with Macmillan to postpone signing a missile agreement until after a summit meeting. But Macmillan pushed ahead under Washington pressure. Missiles with hydrogen warheads will be installed later this year. The Oxford University magazine *Isis* has devoted almost an entire issue to denouncing H-bombs, civil defense and the present Western policy.

There are times when it seems plain that U.S. ambassadorial tasks should be entrusted to athletes and entertainers rather than professional politicians. Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong was warmly received on his Russian tour. American athletes, during the last Olympics, earned ungrudging admiration from the Russian competitors. After Bob Hope's recent arrival in Moscow the UP reported:

> Hope flew in from Copenhagen aboard a Soviet TU 104 jet airliner and said his real reason for wanting to meet Communist Party Chief Khrushchev and Premier Bulganin was to "explain Bing Crosby to them."
>
> The comedian was in his customary good humor. He told reporters at the airport that they served "wonderful vodka" on the transport and "for a few miles, we were ahead of the plane."
>
> Asked whether he thought his type of humor would get across to the Russians, he replied: "I'd like to find one country where I can be a hit—I won't stop—I'd go from here to Tibet."

A column by Jeanne Hoffman in the Los Angeles *Times* for March I5 discloses that tennis player and promoter Jack Kramer has received an invitation from the State Department in Washington to tour Russia between May and September of this year. Miss Hoffman quotes Mr. Kramer:

> This would be the first major invasion of the Soviet Union by a tennis troupe, and conceivably it could be as history-making as the first major league baseball exhibitions in Japan, which did much to stimulate baseball interest in the Orient. I have replied to the State Department that I am very enthusiastic about the idea of appearing in Moscow and Leningrad, because I have always contended that the greatest thing that could happen to tennis is having Russia competing on even terms for the Davis Cup.
>
> If things work out in my talks with the State Department—and I hope to see them late in March or early April—I plan to take four players and myself to Russia. This "invasion" was my original idea, by the way. I first suggested it to the State Department in 1956 because I knew the Russians are interested in challenging the world in tennis.
>
> When I was in Sweden last year, the Swedish Lawn Tennis Association asked me if I heard anything from the Russians, and possibly they want to work on my behalf, because the Soviets have since indicated this interest in having us come.

If we could develop a few more athletes and entertainers with interests of this sort, we might be able to dispense with the State Department entirely!

COMMENTARY
WAYS OF BEING HEARD

THREE stories in the New York *Times* for April 5, one with a picture, all prominently displayed on the front page, reflect the efforts of citizens of the United States to make heard their protest against nuclear testing. A four-column head, "Peace Walkers Score Nuclear Arms," introduces articles on three peace marches in the United States and one in London. The third story, originating in Washington, tells of the suit instituted by Linus Pauling, world-famous American chemist, Bertrand Russell, British philosopher, and Norman Thomas, American Socialist party leader, "to enjoin the members of the Atomic Energy Commission from conducting any more tests of nuclear weapons."

The three "peace marches" which converged at United Nations headquarters were dramatic enough to cause the *Times* to photograph the massed walkers as they neared First Avenue on East Forty-second Street, carrying signs which read, "Walk for Peace," and "Stop Atom Tests." Some of the marchers had started out a week before, as far away as Philadelphia. Others came from New Haven, and still another group from Westbury, Long Island. The *Times* report said:

> As the marchers moved toward the city, their numbers increased. There were 250 of them at 8:45 A.M. yesterday. By 11 :15 there were 700 when they lined up two and three abreast on First Avenue.
>
> The demonstration was started by a handful of Philadelphia pacifists who recalled Mohandas K. Gandhi's anti-tax march to the Arabian Sea twenty-eight years ago. The different groups met yesterday at 38 West Eighty-Eighth Street and walked to Times Square, then across to Forty-second street to the United Nations Plaza.
>
> The marchers had walked to the city as the spirit moved them, some dropping out to go back to their jobs, and others joining the trip. A count showed thirty-nine had walked all the way, others had come by train and bus. . . .
>
> Before United Nations headquarters they downed their signs and stood in silence as a committee presented petitions to Charles Hogan of the United Nations. . . . Besides the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Peacemakers, the sponsors included several regions of the American Friends Service Committee, the War Resisters League, the Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Lower Bucks County Committee for a Humane Nuclear Policy. Students from twenty colleges were in the line.

In England, the demonstration reached mass proportions. On April 4, 5,000 people gathered in Trafalgar Square to watch 1,250 Britons start their march to Britain's Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston, fifty miles away. In London, the crowd was addressed by Philip Toynbee, son of Arnold Toynbee, Michael Foot, editor of the *Tribune*, and Lewis J. Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral. The demonstration was a demand for nuclear disarmament. The marchers carried a banner saying, "Save the World." Other banners read, "Make Friends, not Enemies." Michael Foot said the over-all objective was complete renunciation of nuclear weapons for Britain.

Page two of the *Times* devoted a two-column story to Linus Pauling, Nobel-Prize-winning chemist, participant in the Federal court suit against the U.S. Department of Defense and the A.E.C.

What this April 5 issue of the New York *Times* proves is that any citizen who wants to make known his views on war and nuclear weapons can with a little effort find a way to do so.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

DISCUSSION OF A GENERATION: XI

IT is intelligent rebellion, the revolution of ideas, which gives vitality to any age—just as the courage for rebellion is a necessary ingredient in the character of any man worthy of what we call a "destiny." As various quotations in this series have indicated, there are very few signs of intelligent rebellion in the current world of youth. What is the answer? It seems to us that, as matters now stand, some sort of "conformity" must be enforced with children and teenagers, precisely because, unless the young are identified with some culture—any culture—to some degree, through the performance of duties and responsibilities, they will have no knowledge of what to rebel against, or how to fulfill rebellion. This may seem the long way around Robin Hood's barn for those who believe that societal values need rapid as well as radical transformation, but it may be that we shall have young people combining stamina and initiative only when they have been forced to make their own way. In older days, some of the worst pedagogical termagants produced, among their pupils, the best radicals. For a successful radical has to be a disciplined person if he is to plow a significant path through the prevailing currents of opinion. If only for this reason, we, as parents or teachers, may need to "force" our children to carry as much of their own weight as possible.

Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces* makes a compelling argument for the importance of "initiatory rites." These rites, in olden times, and among all tribes and peoples, afforded the young a means by which their striving towards manhood could be measured. The need for such "rites"—whether instituted by community, school, or home—seems to be one of the deepest needs of the human being. Among the Hopi Indians of today, the tests of manhood start when a child is six years old. The Hopi child then begins to leave the context of permissiveness, and the corollary reliance upon the mother image, as he feels something growing within him—the personality or "soul" which he will some day be as an adult. And so the rites or initiations take on mystic meaning. The child seeks discipline rather than trying to avoid it. Campbell makes this interesting remark: "Apparently, there is something in these initiatory images so necessary to the psyche that if they are not supplied from without, through myth and ritual, they will have to be announced again, through dream, from within—lest our energies should remain locked in a banal, long-outmoded toyroom, at the bottom of the sea."

This strikes at the core of the problem of modern youth. We must first identify, through striving, with our society as a cooperative endeavor. To do so need not mean identification with its inadequate ideas and values. But we need to place ourselves in some actual relation to our society in order to find a point from which we can launch our "radical" departure. These two aspects of the situation are well expressed by Campbell. First, the need for identification:

> In his life-form the individual is necessarily only a fraction and distortion of the total image of man. He is limited either as male or as female at any given period of his life he is again limited as child, youth, mature adult, or ancient; furthermore; in his life-role he is necessarily specialized as craftsman, tradesman, servant, or thief, priest, leader, wife, nun, or harlot; he cannot be all. Hence, the totality—the fullness of man—is not in the separate member, but in the body of the society as a whole; the individual can be only an organ. From his group he has derived his techniques of life, the language in which he thinks, the ideas on which he thrives; through the past of that society descended the genes that built his body. If he presumes to cut himself off, either in deed or in thought and feeling, he only breaks connection with the sources of his existence.

While the radical departure, the seeking of clearer and brighter values, is most important, a youth has to stand "somewhere" before he can depart. Campbell continues:

> But there is another way—in diametric opposition to that of social duty and the popular cult. From the standpoint of the way of duty, anyone in exile from the community is a nothing. From the other point of view, however, this exile is the first step of the quest. Each carries within himself the all; therefore it may be sought and discovered within. The differentiations of sex, age, and occupation are not essential to our character, but mere costumes which we wear for a time on the stage of the world. The image of man within is not to be confounded with the garments. We think of ourselves as Americans, children of the twentieth century, Occidentals, civilized Christians. We are virtuous or sinful. Yet such designations do not tell what it is to be man, they denote only the accidents of geography, birth-date, and income. What is the core of us? What is the basic character of our being?
>
> Not the animal world, not the plant world, not the miracle of the spheres, but man himself is now the crucial mystery. Man is that alien presence with whom the forces of egoism must come to terms, through whom the ego is to be crucified and resurrected, and in whose image society is to be reformed.
>
> The modern hero, the modern individual who dares to heed the call and seek the mansion of that presence with whom it is our whole destiny to be attuned, cannot, indeed must not, wait for his community to cast off its slough of pride, fear rationalized avarice, and sanctified misunderstanding. "Live," Nietzsche says, "as though the day were here." It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal—carries the cross of the redeemer—not in the bright moments of his tribe's victories, but in the silences of his personal despair.

The bright and heroic world of the future will be possible only as a sequence of further psychological discoveries. For neither the youthful conformists nor the wandering hipsters gain that necessary synthesis between the spirit of rebellion and the stamina growing from adequate assumption of adult responsibilities. "Initiatory rites" are certainly lacking, and can be supplied, we think, only by parents and teachers who are themselves living purposeful lives. There are, of course, many youths who show great promise, who are ingenious and independent as well as possessed of a natural sense of self-discipline. And there are some associations in some schools and educational enterprises which provide—entirely without ostentation—some suggestion of "initiatory rites."

Our purpose in this discursive series has not been to attempt new generalizations, but rather to present a little evidence of the many faceted complexities faced by youth in our time. We have discussed the "hipsters," not because they are characteristic of the entire generation, but because their attitudes of mind offer a clue to some of the labyrinths of the psyche prepared for this generation by those who preceded it. As in the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, it takes a good long while for someone to follow Ariadne's thread out into the light of day. We need not be told that youths exist throughout the world who are presently the adequate equivalents of Theseus. But they are the ones, we suspect, for whom the "image of the hero," no matter how concealed from public view, has not faded away.

We come back, therefore, to the conviction that, after the age of seven or so, the child should earn a place for himself. Both in the family and in the school he should be made to realize that the right to spend time and the goods of this earth is a right which, like individuality itself, has to be won. The teen-age drifter is not only useless to the community, he is also useless to himself. Nor are courage and integrity ever won save by passing through the psychological rigors of denial and discipline. To our young we give too much of little importance, and ask of them too little that is important.

And now, we suppose, we may begin to hear from readers who wish to rise and disagree with either our along-the-way proposals, or with this brief summary.

FRONTIERS
"Total" Poetry

A PASSAGE in the Winter (1958) *Partisan Review* by Lionel Abel, dealing with the nature of poetry, makes possible a further discussion of the role of the arts and of the artist. Mr. Abel writes:

> Hoelderlin called poetry the most innocent as well as the most dangerous of activities. He left out of account altogether those matters of technique which the professional poet always makes supreme. . . . But if poetry is ... the most dangerous of activities, this is because it treats of the sacred. If we now want to compare the three attitudes toward poetry we have so far discussed {that of the "amateur," the "professional," and the "total" poet}, we can do no better than describe their relation to the sacred. The total poet will treat of the sacred directly; not merely of what is sacred to him but of what is sacred to other men as well. The professional poet delimits the sacred within his own professional sphere; poetry for him becomes the sacred and also *the only means of access to it;* thus the professional poet's contact with the sacred separates him from other men. . . . Randall Jarrell is perfectly correct in charging those who condemn modern poetry as "obscure" with an incapacity to understand any kind of poetry, traditional or modern. Certainly those who do not understand Eliot are unlikely to understand Milton, or at least some passages in Milton. But what Jarrell has not faced is that for the modern poet, almost always a professional, the poem is a means of contact with a reality which the mere reader will not be able to grasp. Even if the reader "understands" it, that is, finds what it says intelligible, the poem will be unlikely to "save" or "redeem" him, as the making of it "saved" and "redeemed" the poet. Now the total poet, modern or traditional, takes for his theme that which "saves" and "redeems" and is not restricted in its "saving" and "redeeming" to poets only.

A principal reason why there is so much discussion of poetry, and of the understanding and meaning of poetry, is, it seems to us, that poetry often embodies what the writer feels is of ultimate importance. The poet bares his soul. He tells you what is in his heart. Almost of necessity, therefore, the poet tends to be extremely sensitive to criticism. His art is his religion. To challenge his art or his art-form is to question the validity of his faith, even the meaning of his life.

This would explain, perhaps, the element of sectarianism in the coteries of poets and of some readers of poetry. The feeling associated with devotion to poetry is akin to religion and is subject to both the commitments and the insecurities of religion.

The really great poet, however, probably fears criticism no more than the great religious teacher or philosopher. He is invulnerable by reason of the intensity of his conviction.

We might defend a proposition here—the proposition that the great work of art, the great poem, has little need of either defense or "explanation." This is not to suggest that such a work must lack "inner" or hidden meanings, but that the plain or obvious meaning and the majesty or beauty of the expression of this obvious meaning are sufficient vindication of the work, regardless of the riches which may be discovered through closer study.

This is certainly true, for example, of certain religious scriptures which combine rare beauty of form with depths of meaning.

What does a poem "do"? We can think of little that is more hazardous than an attempt to answer this question, yet every man who reads ought to have a try at an answer. Let us take a poem easily accessible to all readers—Walt Whitman's *To Him Who Was Crucified.* Whitman writes of the figure known to all who have grown up in the Christian tradition. The poem is not, however, a worship; it is a *greeting.* By means of sensibility rather than arrogance, Whitman declares himself as a colleague of that figure, feeling within himself what he loves and admires in Jesus. He creates a sense of reality for the idea of a confraternity of Christs. The image of man swells and expands, taking on the high proportions of a Saviour. With words which create rather than name the dignity of man, Whitman generates lines of force which give

almost tangible shape to the vision this poem achieves. The complex unity of sound, meaning, and rhythm is a literal incantation of feeling for the reader.

This man's magic touches universal notes so skilfully—one might better say so naturally—that the poem stands like a white statue against the horizon. Nothing further needs to be said. It is an ultimate human expression.

One could try to go on and give other illustrations, but whatever the poems selected, there would be others left out, of equal or perhaps more importance, while every reader may make his own applications of what has been suggested.

But one thing is certain: The poet makes of his art the focus for ideas and feelings which invite the reader to reflection, to musing, or to ecstasy. The "religious" aspect of the poetry results from the element of the sacred. When a man so expresses himself as to create a state of feeling in the one who hears or reads, he exerts a transforming influence upon others. He becomes a kind of intermediary between them and an impact of meaning. He *touches* the emotional life of his readers. This is a more intimate contact than physical contact. There is, potentially, a meeting of beings rather than of bodies. The responsibility of the artist grows in proportion.

The gift of speech, of song, of being able to move the hearts of one's fellows—what greater capacity can a human being have? So the question of the role of the artist is not a technical or an intellectual question only; it is also a moral question. A man with gifts is not free. No man is free, really, of the obligations of his manhood, and manhood comprehends many things. Simply to be human is to have inherited sacred responsibilities.

There are some poets of our time who feel the responsibility of trying to speak in more universal accents—to enter the life of the people with greater understanding, to play the role of the maker of songs as it was once played by those who sang to the people in less mechanized periods of history.

But where are the people who listen to songs today? How do you find them? Do they really want to hear songs, read poetry? And what songs shall be sung? How do these people spend their time and what commands their listening ears? We know the answers. We know what they—and we—are listening to. What shall be done about this?

Kenneth Patchen, a modern poet, is one of those who have sought the people through a new form, an experimental form, the combination of jazz concert music and poetry reading. His poetry is an intense expression of a man hurt and outraged by what the people of our time are doing and listening to; it is strong with protest and lyric with search for the innocent and the beautiful. Whether or not this medium should be thought of as a synthesis which may restore lyrical art to a place in the common life, we cannot say, but some of Patchen's lines carry the power of this man's search:

> I went to the city,
> And there I did weep;
> Men braying like asses
> And living like sheep.
>
> I went to the city,
> And there I did bitterly cry;
> Men out of touch with the earth,
> And with never a glance at the sky.

The poet grips our hearts as he calls us to account. It is the one whom Lionel Abel calls the "total" poet who earns our respect—the man who "takes for his theme that which 'saves' and 'redeems' and is not restricted in its 'saving' and 'redeeming' to poets only."