

THE SERVICE OF MAN

IT ought to be possible, although it will certainly be difficult, to examine the existential—or non-historical—good of man, in a way that does not make it the rival or contrary of what we call social good, or "progress." The difficulty comes from trying to settle upon yardsticks. They are not the same. That is, you cannot measure existential good in the way that you measure social or historical progress. Most likely, you cannot measure existential good at all, although you may be able to exhibit some of its symbols, and count them.

You measure social good with statistics from yearbooks. Social good has of course numerous levels, of which the gross national product is by no means the most important. Nor is even the standard of living the final criterion. Probably the number of schools and colleges in relation to total population would be a widely acceptable index. In any event, it is not unreasonable to say that social scientists could without much bother work out a method of composite evaluation which would include components of political, material, cultural, and educational progress.

A problem, however, is at once evident, since in every one of these categories save the "material," existential values are implicit. So, we must either say that there is really nothing to discuss, or that these yardsticks of social progress are misleading. Take for example cultural values. Is the quantity of books published each year culturally significant? There are those who insist that our culture would be far better off with fewer books which are of higher quality. The statistics on high school and college graduates no doubt have some kind of social meaning, but do they measure progress in education? And how would you determine the political freedom of a society? By its constitution, or by counting the political prisoners in its jails? By the uniformities of belief

marshalled by managed political opinion or by the open contempt shown by its leaders toward the uses of propaganda?

Turning to existential values, what are they? They emerge in the approaches to the questions which arise for man in any society, simply because he is human. Who is he? What is the meaning of his hopes, his partial fulfillments and his frustrations? What sort of achievement ought a man to give his attention to?

There are of course symbols for these values in our civilization—the churches. But only a man who assigns little importance to such questions could ever claim that the churches make adequate representation of them. We do not mean to say that no religious man or church-goer has ever pursued these questions seriously, but only that the churches, as institutions which can be counted and otherwise measured, are not a reliable index to the wonder, the longing, and the hunger in the human heart to solve the mystery of existence. Actually, dogmatic religion often operates with an opposite tendency.

What is now apparent is the insecure ground of all such argument. Existential values are really the basis of all the old philosophical questions—that is, the unanswered questions. Recognizing this, we understand why men have been content to substitute measurable symbols for these values, instead of working with incommensurables and question marks. We have a range of clichés which we substitute for the existential values—"thinking for ourselves," and "creativity" are two examples. In short, we try to keep such matters in scale with our theory of progress, lest we should be confronted by unmanageable tendencies. We don't dare let our existential values become too metaphysical or too well defined, since they might

then demand control of our thinking about "progress."

There is another quite practical restraint on the development of thought about existential values. Usually, a man who goes in this direction becomes indifferent to the national state. He loses, people say, his "sense of proportion." He no longer admits that the political state is a necessary matrix not only for progress but for the cultivation of true spiritual qualities. He points to the short tether which confines the existential values to non-revolutionary, inoffensive circuits. He argues that certain of the devices of the power state for national survival amount to repudiations of existential values and he questions the intelligence, if not the integrity, of those responsible for the national welfare in these terms.

This is a peculiarly sad situation. Exactly at the time when modern man seems to be awakening from his long neglect of basic philosophic or existential questions, he is bound by a terrible fear of extinction to the institutions and mechanisms of Progress—the very ideal which cast philosophy into shadow. It is as though some dark brazen image of our past worships now addresses us, saying, "The philosophy you speak of may have its importance, but obviously you can't afford to indulge this interest *now*." So, we are told to wait, to go back to the old struggle for political progress, for "freedom," and to sink our private wonderings in the common cause.

There is no question about the fact of the awakening. In an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* for March 20, titled "The Decline of the Individual," Vice Admiral H. G. Rickover voices opinions which are no doubt shared by many or they would not appear in a mass magazine. The main offender, according to Admiral Rickover; is the growth of organization. His essential conclusions seem represented in the following:

We have allowed the freedom of the individual to shrink while permitting the freedom of the organization to expand to a point where it

overshadows human liberties. But this nation was founded for people, not for organizations. We need to remind ourselves that organizations—like technology—are not ends in themselves but means to an end. This end is a good society—a strong nation—human beings who in equal measure are assured the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." . . .

The greatest glory of Western civilization is that it alone, on its own, came to accept the idea that man as man, individual man, regardless of his particular attributes or possessions, is "the measure of all things" (Protagoras). Since the political corollary of this idea is democratic government, it is not surprising that democracy, too, is a uniquely Western invention.

There is, to be sure, a so-called "Eastern" concept of democracy: pure Marxist double-talk, of course. It defines democracy as government of the people, on behalf of the people, in the interest of the people.

In areas of the world where the individual has never been held in high esteem, where he derives his status and rights from membership in some group—family, tribe, church, etc. —this parody of Lincoln's famous words is sometimes taken as a species of democracy. In a negative way, this illustrates the point I wish to make crystal clear: Respect for individual freedom, for the autonomous individual, is the foundation of a free society. As soon as you begin to think in terms of "groups," the foundation begins to erode.

It's all there in germ—the meaning of existential values—but it stays locked up in expressions like "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." We really ought to be more explicit than that, now. We don't need to change the words in the Declaration of Independence, just give them some light. Vice Admiral Rickover is trying to give light, but while he says that as soon as you begin to think in terms of "groups," the foundation of the free society begins to erode, he also says that the good society is "a strong nation." It can hardly be denied that "strong nation" thinking is "group" thinking.

Why can't we give up our "strong nation" thinking? Mainly, because we can't imagine a life without arms. Yet the wide world is filled with people who are going to live and die without our

kind of armament; maybe a lot of them would like to have our armament, and are trying to get it, but the fact is that they don't have it, won't get it, and just possibly, in time, will recognize that they can do without it. Why can't we?

Of course, there is the argument that the strong nations with the armaments shield the weak ones and make their peaceful development possible. In a world where conflicts are settled by war, there is doubtless some truth to this. But we are not trying to find an example of some Perfect People who get along without the Military. The important point is that a lot of individuals go through life without the "security" we claim is essential to us. Probably those individuals number far more than the population of the United States. It follows, then, that when we require a Military Establishment impossible for all those billions, we are saying that we are the Chosen People who have a better society than all those other people. From the viewpoint of existential values, this is simply not true. We suspect that it is not true politically, either.

What can a man do with his life as a member of a strong nation that he can't do as a member of a weak nation?

No doubt there are some things—good things—that take strength to accomplish. But we are looking at the problem existentially, now. Who are the unforgettable figures of human history? To what extent does a "strong-nation" background contribute to their stature? Was Marcus Aurelius, the head of the Roman State, more important than Socrates, the victim of the Athenian State? What was Bach's political environment? Does anybody care? On any kind of review, it begins to appear that the "strong-nation" condition has been irrelevant to authentic human distinction.

It would be a mistake, of course, to assert that strength has never been a concomitant of human greatness. What we are quarrelling with is rather the assumption that a man cannot be a "real man" without belonging to a strong nation. This

may be a vital issue. It is at least conceivable that national strength has reached the point of diminishing returns in human history. Such changes do take place even at the material level. Right now there is a lot of talk about the shortcomings of America's arms-building economy. The little nations, critics are pointing out, are enjoying a healthier economic life than the big ones because they are making useful goods instead of military machines which cannot be used for anything except destruction.

It is unlikely, however, that a change in our attitude toward military strength will come from arguments that it costs too much. So long as we go on believing that the autonomy of the individual depends upon the capacity of the nation-state to wage a successful war, we can hardly be chintzy about the expense. Far more impressive and persuasive are the remarks of James Jones (in the same issue of the *Satevepost*) under the heading of "Phony War Films." After some scathing notes on the stereotypes of recent war movies, Jones writes:

Now, how does this compare with death in actual war? Well, it doesn't compare at all. Most deaths in infantry combat are due to arbitrary chance, a totally random selection by which an unknown enemy drops a mortar or artillery shell onto, or punches an MG bullet into, a man he has never seen before—and perhaps never does see at all! Such a death is totally reasonless and pointless from the viewpoint of the individual, because it might just as well have been the man next to him. It only has meaning when it is viewed numerically from a higher echelon by those who count the ciphers. And for that very reason it is a much more terrifying death to the individual soldier, *and* to an audience seeking meaning. About the only good thing that can be said for such a death, really, is that the individual is generally so dehumanized already, and so dulled emotionally and mentally, that being killed doesn't really hurt him half as much as he may have once imagined it would.

Why is this information not put into modern war films? It was certainly included in the original *All Quiet on the Western Front* long ago, wasn't it? Today in the United States (as well as in Russia! where the war films are even worse than ours, despite

the Eisenstein techniques) there is no such thing as an antiwar film. They all pretend to be; "nobody likes war"; but the true test of a true antiwar film is whether or not it shows that modern war destroys human character.

No such film was among those Jones inspected in order to write this article. He gives the obvious explanation that if a film like *All Quiet* were produced today, "it would be labeled cowardly, defeatist, unpatriotic, even 'pro-pacifist!'" Why? Mr. Jones answers:

The quickest and easiest answer to give is that the mood of the United States today (and of course Russia!) simply cannot afford to admit what modern warfare (and I mean pre-nuclear warfare!) is, i.e., essential dehumanization; if it did, its "citizen" soldiers (heh, heh) would not be nearly so willing to become part of it.

This is an application of Vice Admiral Rickover's objection to "group thinking," the groups in this case being the strong nation-states. Mr. Jones has a further analysis:

But I myself believe the truer, deeper answer is even more frightening, and more sad, than that. I think that modern man, victim of an impersonal, too complex society created by himself initially for reasons of safety, but now "a society grown too big to be comprehensible in human terms," as *Time* magazine wrote on Franz Kafka, has, in order to escape, reverted to the simpler "battle ax" philosophy of the Middle Ages and before. In this way he can avoid facing—among other things—the fearsomeness of the essentially organizational, dehumanizing factor, which is the quality of modern war. . . . This paradox—of willingly living and fighting as an unhuman cog in a machine because of a belief in unique individualism—is the same one which allows *Time* magazine (that same *Time* which spoke so glowingly of Kafka's concepts!) to speak seriously of an invasion of Cuba that admittedly could result in 25,000 to 40,000 U.S. casualties as an operation of "surgical speed."

How are we able to tolerate such paradoxes? Mainly, because the meaning of individuality is almost never explored. Our slogans honoring individuality are repeated for purposes of self-justification far more than for discovery of its implications. Here again we see the consequences

of letting clichés do service for the existential side of life.

It ought to be a revelation to us that the best war novels take no interest in the war as such. That is, the aims of the war as a social enterprise are not what arouse the imagination of the good writer. The war is just there, like some monstrous obscenity, while the human beings of the story try to cope with what it has done to their lives. The creative writers are no longer moved by the political means to the good society. They show man standing in the wilderness of his own making, trying to remain human. Novelists are not political philosophers; if they were, they would be obliged to develop the implications of these situations into some kind of anti-war, anti-state philosophy.

Novelists are not political philosophers, but they are *men*, and there are times when human sensibility devises an escape from the conformities of social progress and the interests of the national state. Here are some paragraphs from the unpublished writings of a British novelist, of interest in illustrating the grain of individuality which persists underneath the patterns of conventional behavior:

One day in the winter of 1916 I climbed over the parapet of a frontline trench that commanded a clear view beyond the barbed wire of Vimy Ridge, with a brother subaltern. A fog lay over the battlefield, and we left our lines in that uncanny silence which sometimes fell upon the battlefields of northern France for no more worthy a purpose than to look for souvenirs in the shattered little houses that once housed the work people who serviced a sugar refinery there. I had climbed over a fragmented brick wall and dropped into what had been a small cottage room. Across the further wall there hung, headless, but still with uniform bearing regimental badges and numbers, a dead French soldier. The skeleton of what had once been his head lay where it had come detached from the backbone below the skeleton. I had not been long in the front line. I had seen corpses lying athwart the wires where snipers had done their work on soldiers engaged on repair work. But I had not had the experience of standing, in a morning mist, in complete silence, before all that

remained of a French conscript, and that within a stone's throw of an invisible enemy strung out in trenches that walled us off from the coveted Vimy Ridge.

When that war broke out I had been in British Columbia, and I had then come under the influence of Tolstoi. I had made up my mind that I would never kill a fellow human being. And, in so doing, when the moment came, I was confronted in all my intellectual and emotional simplicity with a problem. Should I join the army forces or stay put? After a long and muddled pondering, I decided that, since I had had far less scruples when a moral issue was raised by morally dubious doings, I felt I had to go. And I went, and being English, simple-minded and illogical, I made up my mind that I would neither carry arms or bombs, or kill. I might, of course, have been court-martialled, but I went undetected, carrying only a stick wrenched from a French fascine—for we had taken over our lines from the French. Well, it was a Frenchman whose uniformed skeleton I had come upon on that misty morning. I suppose he too had felt that he was taking part in a necessary war against the traditional enemy of his country: and so had died. Maybe, when I had arrived at LeHavre months before, and stood shattered at the spectacle of city streets thronged with black-veiled widows, one of that number mourned the man that had been once the bullet riddled skeleton that hung, broken-spined over that shattered brick wall.

There is a textured fragment from a life—the life of an individual man who did what he could to extract human meaning from the overwhelming dilemmas of war. Too often, our sense of the living individual comes to us in this way—by some act of defiance, by some private alienation or withdrawal in the heart.

A question we should like to ask is this: Suppose the national state would admit of no further "progress," and had to be accepted in its status quo as some kind of "natural fact," as we accept the climate, the annual rainfall, and all the other constants of the physical environment. What then would we take as the meaning of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"—those hallowed words which embody the existential ground of our political faith?

In such a situation, we would not be able to hide our neglect of life, our waste of liberty, and the substitution of anxiety for happiness with noisy and busy resolves to tinker further with the political machine. So long as we can promise ourselves *more life, more liberty, more happiness*, we are able to extend fulfillment to the future and occupy ourselves with the furious activities we call "progress." Take away the excuse of progress, and what kind of men would we be? Pressing the question further, what if we were stateless human beings?

There are many who will insist, with Vice Admiral Rickover, that the state is for the individual, hoping to avoid the question of what an individual might be like without the state. The point, however, is this: How can we even begin to define the good state in our time, when we remain so indifferent to the nature and the good of the individual whom the state is to serve? How can we be sure that the services rendered to the individual by the state have not also rendered him unfree?

REVIEW

ON NATURE: NO HUMBLE TRACT

LAST fall we received for review a luxurious specimen of color-plate manufacture and printing which we permitted to lie around while trying to dispel the curious ambivalence it seemed to provoke. Now, however, we think we've pinpointed the difficulty and can procrastinate no longer, especially since the content of the book is Wilderness and Thoreau—both being, as MANAS readers will agree, matters of importance.

In his essay, *Walking*, Thoreau declares: *In Wildness is the Preservation of the World*. These words were made the title of the book published by the Sierra Club, which sells for \$25.00. The volume is first of all a showcase for seventy-two breathtaking color photographs by Eliot Porter, depicting the four seasons in New England. Spread out among the photographs are pertinent quotations from Thoreau. In addition there are prefaces by David Brower of the Sierra Club, and Joseph Wood Krutch. Suffice it to say that the photographs are sumptuous and illustrate how the sensitive eye of the cameraman can awaken new insights into the beauties of nature. We may have tramped the same woods many a time, but Eliot Porter easily shows us that we may also have trampled right over some hidden wonder.

Back to our case of ambivalence. There is certainly no inexpensive way to make color reproductions, and the Sierra Club is amply justified in doing the job properly or not bothering to do it at all. Yet the book brought a scurrying doubt as to how Thoreau himself might have reacted to all this technological grandeur. Things were simpler in his time. You had to experience nature first-hand, not through some artifice such as photography. He would probably have said, as he did in another context (taken also from *Walking*), "How vain, then, have been all your labors, citizens, for me!"

But today there are fewer people than in Thoreau's time who have had or made

opportunities for this kind of firsthand knowledge. We have come to depend increasingly upon the Eliot Porters to show us what goes on outside our limited bailiwicks. Mechanization and progress have removed man long strides from the intimate first-hand experience of many things, but especially from that soul-refreshing experience with nature which Thoreau so much esteemed. The Sierra Club, in its dedication to the preservation of those few remaining areas of natural wildness, is approaching its task with great effectiveness, we think, because it is emphasizing the need for "communion with nature," not as some pleasurable pastime, but as an essential ingredient of the mature human being, providing experience we can do without only at our own great peril.

Today the pressure to exploit the few remaining wildlands is enormous. Not only is there the familiar commercial pressure to reduce forests to paper pulp, but there is a more insidious pressure, coming directly from our culture itself. We have yet to assimilate into our notions of progress that either the purpose of a "progressive" activity is to enlarge the meaning of human life, or it is worthless. We are almost pathological in our haste to reduce all of wild nature to a more "manageable" condition. The existence of something untamed disturbs us. A curious lust insists that we harness the energy of rivers, bulldoze down the hills, chop highways through the most impossible terrain, and erect tramways to the highest peaks. We do all of this without much thinking about values, seldom comparing the importance of our gain in material access or comfort with the enduring values of mountains, deserts, or seacoast.

A very large part of the drive to absorb the wilderness comes, ironically, from some of the very people who seek it—via automobile and all the comforts of home. It has become a national custom to "get away from it all," which means that you take it all wherever you go. These people, in one breath praising the magnificent

natural scenery, in another propose a four- or six-lane highway to make this scenery more accessible, complete with lodges, autocourts and taverns at decent intervals to make one's stay in the "great outdoors" unblemished by any adaptation to nature. What can such people understand of the solitude, the intimate communion with our sources that Thoreau spoke of?

The trend is ominous. The Sierra Club, made up of persons who spend as much time as they can in the mountains and the wild country, and who know something of the experiences one can enjoy in wilderness, is laboring to preserve the few remaining areas in our world where this experience is still possible. To do this requires that more and more people become capable of making the critical evaluations. They must understand what wilderness means, and why it is more important than so much else.

This book, *In Wildness*, comes directly to the point and sets forth challenges and enticements enough to send the most complicated urban types running to the nearest swamp. The Sierra Club, judging from its present publishing policy, seems to have abandoned the luxury of talking to the already converted. The Club is now trying to "spread the word" far and wide. Thus *In Wildness* is not aimed at reinforcing the convictions of Sierra Club members, but seeks an audience beyond, and seems to be getting it. As an exercise in communication, *In Wildness* may be a landmark. The great commercial success which the book enjoyed through normal channels of distribution may indicate that communication of important ideas is possible if the appeal is through beauty and an imagination which leaves behind the conventions of in-group prattle.

Yes, our ambivalence arose from the fact that we are already converted, and we've become, perhaps, just a bit of the purist. Actually, we are tremendously enthusiastic about the book and what it is likely to accomplish. Appropriately ensconced on many a middle-class coffee table, it

may quietly stir long dormant longings for a life that springs from deeper roots, has more meaning, and gives greater beauty.

COMMENTARY **FREEDOM OF MIND**

WITH almost monotonous regularity, you read about teachers and professors in the United States who lose or are forced out of their jobs because they have said or done something "unseemly" in the eyes of the academic institution. These events bring the usual and wholly justified cry of protest from the liberal community. Administrators are held up to shame for being compromisers on issues of principle. The attack on academic freedom is pointed out. Efforts, sometimes successful, are made to vindicate the accused or punished individuals.

Whether, out of this continuing struggle, has come more or less freedom of mind and expression for teachers in the United States, we cannot say. We have not collected the material to make a chronicle of this experience during, say, the past ten years, and we are by no means sure that such an evaluation—showing either a little progress or a little decline—is important to pursue. Suppose you had gathered the data, classified the cases, and were able to arrive at some appropriate index of academic freedom for the year 1962—what then? About all you could do would be to say: Let us press on to a better record in 1963!

This is not a negligible goal. It needs attention, just as the preservation of our civil liberties needs attention. But what we should like to look at here, for a moment, is the fact that a pattern exists in American education which keeps on producing these crises for teachers who want to speak their minds. Why should there be such a pattern?

It is obvious that the restraint always comes from the administrative level—from men who are charged with preserving the institutional "health" of the schools and colleges. There is something about their jobs, their responsibilities, their relations with the community, which casts them in this role of policeman of academic opinion. They

do indeed want to preserve their institutions. They are enormously sensitive to the pressures which arise in the lay community. A small college must look to the lay community for subsidy; the university is vulnerable to the suspicions and prejudices of local politics. It follows that the administrator who is concerned with the practical side of institutional continuity will almost certainly reflect these pressures and prejudices in his policy decisions. Now and then there may be exceptions, but they are very few.

So, to put an end to this sort of thing, we shall either have to find heroic men and persuade them to run our schools—which may not be possible—or we shall have to devise learning situations in which the goals of education and those of institutional survival do not turn out to be bitterly opposed.

Our proposition is this: While it will be far more difficult to create and make viable such learning situations than it is to write critical editorials against time-serving administrators, the former is by far the more important task. You can't put all those people down. There are too many of them.

Take a recent instance. Last month two professors at Brandeis University resigned their posts. They were David Aberle, professor of anthropology and former department chairman, and his wife, Kathleen Gough Aberle, assistant professor of anthropology. Many readers will remember Mrs. Aberle's article, reprinted in *MANAS* (July 12, 1961) under the title, "On the Edge of Tomorrow," an account of the 1961 Aldermaston March in England, which she wrote from "the inside," as a participant. She is also author of the pamphlet, *The Decline of the State*, reviewed in *MANAS* for June 13, 1962.

What did the Aberles "do" to make trouble for themselves at Brandeis? There are probably wheels within wheels, but on the record, Mrs. Aberle (by students' invitation) made a speech last October in which she said that if a "limited war" should break out between Cuba and the United

States, she hoped Cuba would win "and the United States be shamed before all the world and its imperialistic hegemony in Latin America ended forever." The precise forms of censure applied to Mrs. Aberle by the administration are not now important to examine, since we have no interest in arguing the merits of how this case was "handled" by the university. One can readily believe that both David Aberle, who supported his wife, and Kathleen Gough Aberle, who made the speech, were given sufficient reason to resign, and we need no persuasion to conclude that the methods used were not admirable.

But how do you make such incidents *mean* something? While brooding over this question, recollections of the texture of Kathleen Gough's story of the Aldermaston March kept bobbing up in unforgettable images. We thought: How fortunate the young, the students, who could have continued exposure to such a mind, and to a psyche that reacts to human pageantry in this way. We thought: How fruitless for education to make "political" incidents more important than the *élan vital* of a teacher's mind and heart!

We thought: One can argue righteously, indignantly, endlessly about one more instance of the weakening of academic freedom, but the reason for the importance of this freedom is the ideative *substance* which comes out of the habitual use of freedom, and this may be totally neglected in the argument, when it ought to be very nearly all that the argument is about. Without this substance, the argument becomes an abstract debate about good and evil, and only that.

So, what is to be done? How are we going to get a really free educational situation where people like the Aberles can do their work without frustration?

If you think seriously about a venture of this sort, you will probably look up what you can find of the history of Black Mountain College, and various other free lance educational ventures, the latest perhaps being Emerson College at Pacific Grove, California. You soon recognize that there

are enormous difficulties and a great likelihood of "failure."

But what is "failure" in such undertakings? They say that when Nebraska was first settled, it took the labors of three successive homesteaders on a single piece of land to finally make it capable of supporting a man and his family. The first two usually "failed" in the struggle against the raw country. Only the third man had a good farm.

Just possibly, basic reform in education will involve such sacrifices. In this case, it will be accomplished by people who have lost interest in the institutional setting of education and who can no longer feel any response in themselves to institutional measures of "success." They will look for the grain of the mind in teachers and pupils and admit no other educational reality or value.

What are "we" doing about this sort of undertaking? Not very much. Our only contribution is an insistence that there is really nothing else to do, if you care about freedom and want to work in education.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves CREATIVE YOUNGSTERS

A SHORT time ago, an eminent surgeon spoke of the startling lack of correlation between the medical school success of his classmates and their actual achievements in later life. More often than not, in this man's experience, the slow learners became the best practitioners—the men who were *thorough*. But while these *now* eminent men have finally revealed their uncommon "gifts," no special educational program for the "gifted" would have reached them. A paragraph from a Childhood Education International pamphlet, *All Children Have Gifts*, is pertinent here:

As for the one child out of many who will grow up to join the world's truly great, how do we plan a curriculum and a group for him? Who can undertake to prescribe a course of study for a child Einstein, especially if the program is to be appropriate for a group including a young Mozart or a boy Jefferson? We can learn to know the truly remarkable child's out-of-school living and stay in close touch with his parents. We can show appreciation for what he cares for greatly and does exceedingly well because giftedness seems to flower with appreciation. We can work to improve conditions which seriously hamper him. We can put him in touch with people or materials of greater use to him than we can be. We can be sure that in our anxiety to provide for him, we do not stand in his way. *We cannot prescribe for him; we can only hope to learn from him the ways to help him.*

In *Redbook* for March, John K. Lagemann writes on "How We Discourage Creative Children." This surprising report is based upon research conducted at the Bureau of Educational Research, University of Minnesota. After six years of study, Dr. E. Paul Torrance, who headed the project, states emphatically that "IQ tests do not measure creative talent." He added: "By depending on them we miss seventy per cent of our most gifted youngsters." Gifted or creative children are apt to follow either of two patterns of behavior: they are slow because they are so

thoughtful, because something important within them is setting its own time for gestation; or, as Dr. Torrance puts it, "creativity involves getting away from the obvious, safe and expected." Among the most interesting observations of Mr. Lagemann are those which indicate that "time" has no relation to learning. (As Helen Gillham, of Columbia, puts it in a pamphlet titled *Helping Children Accept Themselves and Others*, "Time and opportunity to find and accept oneself is a lifelong process. Each child is born with his own timing mechanism. For some children the beat which they hear is slow and measured. Other children hear a sharp staccato beat. Each child should be allowed to keep step to the beat he hears.") Mr. Lagemann writes:

Six years of testing by the Minnesota group has revealed ups and downs in creativity which can be charted chronologically. Three to five is a highly creative period. A sudden drop occurs when the child enters kindergarten or first grade. There is a period of creative thinking during the second and third grades. Then near the end of the third grade and the beginning of the fourth comes a sudden, drastic decline that Dr. Torrance has labeled the "Fourth-Grade Slump." Only a small minority of children resist pressure at this stage and go on to develop their own creative thinking powers.

Are these fluctuations an intrinsic part of growing up?

"Not at all," says Dr. Torrance. "We find whole groups of children who go through nursery school, kindergarten and the primary grades without a break in their creative development. When children give up their creative spark it is because of outside pressures."

What are these pressures? How can you as a parent eliminate them or mitigate their effects on your child? Here are Dr. Torrance's suggestions:

Don't discourage fantasy. One of the qualities of the creative person, young or old, is his ability to move freely back and forth between the world of facts and reason and the vast realms of the mind that lie just below the surface of consciousness. The creative person's greater flexibility, depth of feeling and keenness of insight come from being open to vague feelings and hunches that others dismiss as silly.

Don't hold him back. On the theory that nothing succeeds like success, American parents are

so intent on sparing their children the hurt of failure that they deny them a chance to learn from their mistakes. American children are so conditioned to the idea of preventing emergencies that they are failing to learn how to cope with them. To learn creatively, children have to bite off more than they can chew, overestimate their capacities and take risks. "It's never too early for self-initiated learning," says Dr. Torrance. Educators have found that children can start learning long before they reach the supposed "readiness period." The trick is not to teach them creative thinking but to stop interfering with it.

Few critics are apt to be as tough on the profession as Dr. Torrance. He finds that the teacher, reflecting the mores of the society in general, is often "downright savage in treatment of creative people when they are young." The Lagemann article continues:

To find out the qualities teachers prefer—and reward—Dr. Torrance asked several hundred to rate a list of character traits in order of preference. Toward the top of the list teachers placed such traits as "promptness, courtesy, popularity, receptivity to ideas of others, ability to take criticism and good memory." Toward the bottom of the list, in the category of least desirable, they put "adventurous, always asking questions, courageous, unwilling to accept say-so, willing to take risks, and visionary."

At the heart of the creative child's problem in finding acceptance is the fact that he is never content to learn only by authority but persists in finding out for himself through constant questioning, probing and experimenting. To a large extent he is the victim of his virtues. His independence may make him appear rebellious. His capacity for complete absorption in his work may give the impression that he is antisocial. His humor and playfulness combined with his clear-eyed view of the world may strike grown-ups as mocking or disrespectful. His off-the-beaten-track ideas give him the reputation among his own contemporaries as a "screwball." No wonder his teachers and parents sometimes groan, "Why can't he be like other kids?"

Dr. Torrance and his associates at the University of Minnesota found that even parents who insisted they wanted their children to learn and think creatively were actually disturbed, irritated and embarrassed by the differences they observed in children who did so.

So much, at the moment, for the apparent obstreperousness of many "autonomous" people—who doubtless include a good proportion of the gifted. But it is also necessary to remember the ability hidden in "slow learners." An editorial in *The Summary*, a journal published by Shute Foundation for Medical Research in London, Canada (December, 1962), considers this point:

A former Dean of Admissions at Harvard recently warned that neglecting passion, fire, warmth, goodness, feeling, colour, humanity, might well produce "bloodless" students. He estimated that ten per cent of extra energy in a student is worth 150 points on the Scholastic Aptitude Test and judgment may be worth 200. Ten per cent of Williams College freshmen under the aegis of a Ford grant, will henceforth be persons with a flair, a forte, some strength of character, but with such poor grades that ordinarily Williams would not admit them. *Time*, in quoting this, remarks that Lincoln would be an obvious reject at contemporary Harvard. Indeed, the average score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test of Princeton admissions ten years ago was only slightly higher than the average score of this year's rejects.

Can we tell beforehand who will turn out to be a good surgeon or a patient accoucheur 12 years later? Can we pre-assess a man's courage or endurance, his judgment when fatigued or working under shellfire, his generosity or sympathy, his moral standards, or his aura of good cheer and humanity? To ask such a question is to answer it.

Perhaps the key to understanding the human potential is the realization that we never see much more of any man than the tip of the iceberg protruding above the waves of external circumstances. The great patience of remarkable teachers is surely based upon this perception.

FRONTIERS

The End of "War Morale"

IN almost any contemporary novel about combat in World War II or in Korea, the reader finds a basic theme of dreariness concerning both the men and the circumstances of battle. We have seen, during the confusing decades of this century, a gradual disintegration of the ideal of "chivalry," of the belief that the soul may be cleansed by participation in an ultimate struggle. Ralph Leveridge's *The Last Combat* (Pyramid, 1963) is a characteristic example of the novelist's half-hearted desire to honor camaraderie and courage in jungle fighting in the Pacific. He tries, but, it is the dreariness, the monotony, and the uselessness of the fight which take over. Mr. Leveridge's leading character, Sergeant Hervey, knows of a clarity and purity that sometimes come to men who face death together, but this is the way he feels most of the time:

"There's nothing you can do," he said. "Nothing at all. That's the god-awful part of war. Neither you nor anybody can say or do anything. You see, it's not just the fighting and the dying. It would be easy if that were all. But it isn't. Before the dying comes so much. A guy lives on fear. Not a fear of dying, but a fear that you're going to miss so much—a million things you've wanted so badly—life, humanity, and what you could do with this miracle that's you. It's so stupid that you're going to die. Makes you scream and burn inside. You know there's no fairness, no justice, no wisdom, no dignity any more. Man has nothing. And then you begin to wonder. When in God's name did he have something? Who can answer that?" He began to laugh, hysterically, "I tell you who can. The silence of the world can. And that has always been negative, positive only in its mute shamed admission—its guilt. The misery of the world can, and the tears, and the dead, and the torn. Negative that's what they'd say." His voice rose. "Negative, negative, negative." He found the word fascinating, and began to mouth it, repeating its three syllables in rapid succession. "Sounds like the rhythm of train wheels." He experimented, laughing harshly now. "There's a simile for you. Not a train, but the globe. That's its rhythm. Negative, negative, negative. Listen!" He restlessly moved his excited

body, "Can't you hear it?" Triumphantly he yelled, "There it is! There it is!"

J. B. Priestley's autobiography, a portion of which appeared in the February *Atlantic*, gives an intriguing account of the psychology of the British army in 1914. Here were men who might be called "the last of the gallants"—who not only accepted war "because it was there," but who gave all they could in devotion to the tradition of bravery. Not only the officers but most of the men found it unthinkable not to "live up" to the battle situation, to disregard personal cost and to try to reach beyond their peace-time level of striving. So Priestley feels that his generation, made up of men who served between 1914 and 1918, was "great" in a certain way, and "marvelous in its promise." Why? Because these men could still believe in "fighting for the right," still believe that unflinching courage in ultimate danger brings on a transport of the soul and has transcendent meaning. At any rate, they were very different from Mr. Leveridge's reluctant and confused heroes!

Let us listen to Mr. Priestley:

The British Army never saw itself as a citizen's army. It behaved as if a small gentlemanly officer class still had to make soldiers out of under-gardeners' runaway sons and slum lads known to the police. These fellows had to be kept up to scratch. Let 'em get slack, they'd soon be a rabble again. So where the Germans and French would hold a bad front line with the minimum of men, allowing the majority to get some rest, the British command would pack men into rotten trenches, start something to keep up their morale, pile up casualties, and drive the survivors to despair. This was done not to win a battle, not even to gain a few yards of ground, but simply because it was supposed to be the thing to do. All the armies in that idiot war shoveled divisions into attacks, often as bone-headed as ours were, just as if healthy young men had begun to seem hateful in the sight of Europe, but the British command specialized in throwing men away for nothing. The tradition of an officer class, defying both imagination and common sense, killed most of my friends as surely as if those cavalry generals had come out of the chateau with polo mallets and beaten their brains out.

Mr. Priestley was one of those who participated in the last days of valor—a valor that finally discovered its own senselessness in the context of modern technology. A final paragraph tells how an intelligent man underwent the transition and became, in so many ways, a natural pacifist; he had discovered through psychological as well as physical participation that the lessons learned while battle cries are echoing no longer constitute education for human kind. This is the mood in which Mr. Priestley departed his connection with military life:

One morning in the early spring of 1919 in some town, strangely chosen, in the Midlands—and I have forgotten both the date and the place—I came blinking out at last into civilian daylight. No awards for gallantry had come, or were to come, my way; but I was entitled to certain medals and ribbons. I never applied for them; I was never sent them; I have never had them. Feeling that the giant locusts that had eaten my four and a half years could have them, glad to remember that never again would anybody tell me to carry on, I shrugged the shoulders of a civvy coat that was a bad fit—and carried on.

The *reductio ad absurdum* on "war morale and valor" may well be in CD propaganda for the construction of bomb shelters. In a wry piece titled "The Tomb" (now a *Progressive* reprint), Milton Mayer suggests that such preparation for possible war tends to be shrouded in apathy. But how can the worried citizen of our time go forth to meet the "combat" of the future except by huddling in a pit in the ground? Mr. Mayer went to visit one shelter, a hidey-hole built by a conscientious citizen named Henry T. Babcock:

I don't know why, but I had thought that the shelter would consist of two or three rooms, at least. It consisted of one clammy concrete bunker eight by ten feet. Very clammy. My host began mopping up the dew with small bags scattered around the floor. "They're filled with chemicals," he said. "They're supposed to absorb the moisture, and then you bake them out in the oven." I said they didn't seem to work too well, and he said, No, they didn't. He'd heard there were some cans of stuff that worked better, but he didn't know what it was called or where you got it.

...

If I had to put an adjective to Babcock, I suppose it would be "apathetic." He had certainly lost interest in the shelter. (Had he ever had any?) But there was something more than apathy there. I seemed to be making him actually miserable by asking him the questions that anyone would ask about it. He had done his duty by showing me the shelter; he had done his duty by building it; but doing his duty appeared to have touched him with a deep melancholy. Even when he said, "It's nice outside," he said it without much zest.

We stood there in the summer day and said good-bye, and he said, "If there's anything else you'd like to—," and I was still trying to figure out how he felt. Babcock's trouble is that he doesn't want to die and he knows he's going to die and where he's going to die and where he's going to be buried.

I put Dicken into the car and got in myself and fastened my safety belt, and we started home. Now Dicken may not think a lot—it's hard to tell—but he doesn't say much. He didn't say much on the way home. He didn't say anything until I asked him what he thought about it, and then he said, "It's a tomb, if you ask me."

"You can say that again," I said, and Dicken said, "It's a tomb, if you ask me."