

ORIENTATION



Pieler





Welcome
Class of
'70



by Gary Edwards





I.
I am.
I am shy.
I am satisfactory or unsatisfactory.



Photograph: Dworkin

I am four to six type-written pages.
I am nothing new, uninteresting to read.
I am two weeks of first sentence revision-stages.
I am punctuation, letters, and margined-cages.
I am a copy of someone's values from '63.
I am a hurry-up-poem, as fast as can be!





Photograph: Sturkey

And now--

You want to know what I think?

Well,

I am a Wonder Bread potential scale.

I am an F if I argue and an A if I fail.

I am a two-gun, triple-breasted, chicken marine.

I am the sterile jinni in your washing machine.

I am Alexander the Great if some people choose.

I am the Liberty Bell on a weekend cruise.

I am jelly bean juice for your bookworm thirst.

I am the last to ask a question; to leave, I'm first.

I am the Jolly Green Giant, worth twenty million.

I am dragged around your campus by your great White Stallion.



Photograph: Martin



Photograph: Chickiris

I am Tom Mix, Tim McCoy and early Hoot Gibson.

I am the late state of Motel hate on your television.

I am Uncle Tom's Cabin and Abe's White Chalk.

I am trained to sing, dance, memorize, fear, bribe, and talk.



*I am everybody's friend while sitting in the street.
I am flattened by your weapons and left there to bleed.
I am a ping-pong game on Hollywood Boulevard.
I am multiplicity's city-rat, chasing gold cars.
I am a dissected, reckless, unemotional war.
I am preconceived rehearsed history.
I am everywhere brotherhood and nowhere free.
I am sneaky, just a faster form of hoodwinking freak.
I am a horny, horrid, hungry form from old Mother Sea.
And now--
You want to know what I think?
Well,
As you can see,
I just ate.
Don't you think your question's kind of late?*

Letter to a College Freshman

By JUDSON JEROME

AS I TRY to imagine what you are, what you think and feel, what you demand of the day and what you ordinarily receive, I have to search a long way back—more than twenty years—and I come to a blank wall. Or it is not so much a wall as a kind of fuzz, something like a butterfly must remember when he thinks back to his cocoon.

It was in 1943 that I seem to remember breaking the last web-like strands and crawling, sticky and weak, into the sunlight. The United States was deeply involved in war all over the globe. I was ridiculously far from the manhood I should have been approaching: sixteen, a runt, five feet tall, weighing a hundred pounds, looking no more than thirteen, finishing up high school in Houston with summer courses, entering the University of Oklahoma that fall as a freshman. Though few at exactly that age, weight and height will enter that particular university this fall, I think much of what I experienced will be endured



Photograph: Martin

this year—and each year—by thousands of others. I try to think what it means—to be a freshman again after you have just been a senior.

Of course we are always freshmen in one way or another. I remember the games in which, ka-pow ka-pow, I was dead, staggering and falling gruesomely, lying still a few moments until rigor mortis set in and my posture was appreciated; then I would leap to my feet, shout “New man!” and, ka-pow, lay out the other fellow. I could be an army in an afternoon.

Ten years after I started college I was a freshman at Antioch College, with the shiny title of Assistant Professor of English. Another ten years and I was a freshman at the College of the Virgin Islands—where we were all freshmen, as the college was just beginning. I am a father now, of four red-haired daughters, which accounts for several freshman years right there. I am a writer, and in the twenty-odd years since my first frail publications, my name

has come to be known to a lot of strangers. Thousands of students, by now, are out there in the world repeating my mistakes. I have the security, the reputation, the responsibilities, the family, the possessions that one associates with maturity. And yet I don't feel very adult. Each New Year's I feel like a torero between passes: made it that time! But already the bull is wheeling. And in spite of my experience I have no idea of what the next charge will bring or how to deal with it.

I tell you that because you may think—as I once thought—that one becomes something and then stays that way: a grown-up, a father, a teacher, an engineer. I remember thinking, when I received my first acceptance from the magazine *Poetry*, well, now I am a poet. As though it had been certified, and that took care of the matter. But the truth was that I had *been* a poet when I wrote the poem which was accepted, and whether I would be a poet again re-

mained to be seen. I have never sat down to the typewriter with any sense that a poem would come out of it. It is always a risk—a rather frightening risk. Here I sit, the sum of my experiences and thoughts, and there is always the possibility that nothing will happen, that poetry will not emerge. If it does, and if I like it, keep it, I get a moment or two to sigh in relief, like that torero, before I realize that the risk must be run again, and then again.

If you understand how fluid your life is apt to be even twenty years from now, that will have a lot of bearing upon the decisions you make about your education now. You are beginning to make distinctions and see differences you haven't seen before. If you compare life in the cocoon with life outside it you will begin to distinguish between training and education, between a pupil and a student, to sense your allegiance shifting from the world of childhood to the world of adults.

And I think all those differences can be described best by one central difference. I once wrote: "When a person without a college education looks at a cow, he thinks of a beefsteak; when a person with a college education looks at a beefsteak, he thinks of a cow." That, of course, isn't literally true—but it does express, I think, one of the paradoxes about college: college, in large part, leads one to look away from use, away from practicality and application, to more general ideas, without regard to whether they make money.

That paradox is implicit in the word *education* itself, which comes from a Latin word meaning "to lead outward," suggesting broadening, new horizons, freedom from limitation—the very opposite of training and specialization, which terms refer to a narrowing, a concentration on a limited area. The boy yearns above all to become a specialist, an expert; he goes to college yearning to be admitted to the mysteries of a technology or profession. But in his first year, his first months at college, he is apt to become confused in regard to that goal. The opposite of expertise is wisdom.

No one will ever admit that he is wise, though many will admit they are experts. No college course will ever promise its students the acquisition of wisdom or of happiness or of goodness. The college pretends to be just what the high school boy wanted—an elegant vocational school devoted to creating expertise in a variety of disciplines. Our catalogs and publicity material all tell prospective students (and their parents) that you can come to college to learn a trade or profession, that, in short, we will teach you how to make money. But consider those who stay with it longest—the professors, the scholars, the writers, musicians, artists, the research scientists, the priests and philosophers—these are almost never rich. Somewhere there is a contradiction.

AS THE budding college man discovers, the secret life of the college is moving quite the opposite direction from worldly success. Though he may have no terms for what he wants, and though the qualities he seeks are very vague and unverifiable, the college man comes to want of his education not expert technical knowledge, but wisdom, happiness, goodness. The college, on the other hand, has lured him into its walls with the promise of money and professional success; but what it really wants, surreptitiously, is to turn out its students wiser, happier and better people than they were when they enrolled. And the weary experience of the world demonstrates that wisdom, happiness and goodness are very rarely associated with wealth and worldly success.

I remember sitting on our living room floor with my mother in the summer of 1943, studying the University of Oklahoma catalog. She would turn to the pages pertaining to geology or engineering and say, "Oh, look at all *these* nice courses." Singlemindedly, I would turn to the journalism section and say, "But these are the ones I want to take." Though we were selecting different professions, we were both selecting professions—as though we were going to order a uniform from Sears. It would not have occurred to me to major in English. I knew what a journalist was—but what was an Englishist? Actually, I did not last more than a semester as a journalism major; I switched to something called the School of Let-

ters, which was a combined major in English, philosophy and history. That switch shows how quickly I was seduced. I became one of us. I learned something about what liberal education meant.

The term liberal, as used in "liberal arts" or "liberal education," refers to liberation from use. The liberal arts were originally those thought appropriate for a free man to study—that is, a man who was not a slave. It was the slaves who did the work, the engineering, the journalism and other useful arts—even teaching. In the Middle Ages grammar, logic and rhetoric were the only subjects studied for the bachelor degree. They were all English majors—except the language was Latin. For a Master of Arts degree those students might go on to the more advanced subjects: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Period. That was all. Those seven subjects, which they called the trivium and quadrivium, were thought to be sufficient to liberate a man finally and completely from usefulness.

My mind was fixed upon journalism because I had recently read a book by Clyde Brion Davis called *The Great American Novel*. This was the melancholy story of a newspaperman who never got around to writing the great American novel, but the implication seemed to be that his life was, in fact, that novel. Life is a novel, I thought. Experience is art. What one must do is suffer beautifully and unostentatiously, and his heart will become an epic. At sixteen one has a fearful need of committing himself to the tragic way of life. Or at least I had—and that was why I did not major in engineering.

My parents encouraged me in writing, but they had even less conception than I did of what literature might mean as a way of life. It didn't seem very manly, or a contribution to the war effort. They must have regarded me, puny and immature, as unable to understand what life was all about (namely engineering and geology, the oil business, which was the only commercial, serious, adult world they really knew). But they did not obstruct my choice, and when I arrived with baggage and innocence intact at the university, it was with the clear intention of majoring in journalism and equipping myself to fail tragically to write the great American novel.

My journalism course was chiefly concerned with writing the same news story over and over with different leads, emphasizing in turn what, who, where, when, why and how. I wrote for the campus newspaper, being assigned the Agricultural Science Department barn as my beat, where I was to pursue regularly the status of various pregnant cows. I became associated with the newspaper crowd, the upperclass journalism majors. They seemed to me a noisy, pushing and vulgarly tough-minded bunch. I was rapidly becoming disillusioned with journalism.

Meanwhile I was having some surprises. I remember especially Professor Müller, my withered, tiny philosophy professor, with his giant hanging pipe, giving as his first assignment the first paragraph of Plato's *Republic*. Read a paragraph? I could read it in a minute. Philosophy appeared to be enormously easy stuff. But the next day we tried to discuss it and Professor Müller, inexplicably, was outraged that we hadn't found anything. He sent us back to read it again. As I spent a couple of hours that evening asking myself what the little man wanted me to see in that short narrative paragraph—involving, I still remember, festivities and religion—I began to com-

prehend something of what it means to think—just to sit down and think. Scrawny Professor Müller, with his thick accent and erratic humor and jerky gestures, replaced Clyde Brion Davis' journalist as my ideal. I spent many fall evenings walking up and down outside the professor's house, hoping that he would just happen to come out for a walk and on the way to the corner drugstore tell me the Meaning of Life.

I also wrote short stories for campus magazines and a daily radio program for the campus station. "Today in History" was a five-minute account of some historical event which had occurred on a given day of the month. Although the program was short, it required hours of research in the library, as I tried to find material to make various obscure events seem dramatically significant and intriguing for our times. Though my radio program consisted mostly of patriotic cant, I was coming to see the function of the writer in a different way. Instead of the melancholy, ineffectual journalist, I wanted to be Jean Paul Marat, the French revolutionary, who wrote in sewers, against all authority. My dormitory mates called me "the little radical," by which label Marat was also known. I cannot remember all the things I was against in those days, but among them were government, society, proctors, industry, commerce, manners, creamed dried beef, military science, girls (I said I was immature) and journalism.

One of the faculty was a Professional Writer. This stout man, with a grey moustache, red cheeks and a pen name something like Red River Joe, referred to literature as "the writing game." His courses were characterized by realism about markets and slick techniques (I heard; I never took one). They studied ten different periodicals at a time, ranging in intellectual quality from *Woman's Day* to *Satevepost*. Adrift from journalism, finding the heights of Professor Müller inaccessible, the sewers of Marat romantically distant, in search of a model, I went to see this man to find out whether I should study to become a Professional Writer. I left his office with two or three of his books on how to write, which I could return or pay for at my convenience, embarrassed and cringing. Without really looking at them, I gave the books back to his secretary the next day. Whatever it was I wanted to do or be, I suspected, it wasn't very Pro.

SOMETIME that first semester I wrote a poem. Now, I know I had written poems before, as everyone does, at about the age of eight or nine, but poetry did not seem to me a very natural means of reforming the world. I am not sure what impelled me to write this one, but judging from the vocabulary I remember, it must have resulted from an incessant study of the dictionary. I remember being proud to have worked the word *ephemeral* into it. And I learned that *rime*, besides being an alternate spelling of *rhyme*, was a term for the hoarfrost on winter windows. That pun, used in the first stanza, probably prompted the poem:

*A finger on the window pane
Sketches in rime that follows rain
The idle thoughts of a youthful brain.*

Bad as the poem was, it was accepted by a little poetry magazine called *Red Earth* and appeared in print (red print, as a matter of fact), with my name—not in a campus newspaper or magazine but in an

honest-to-goodness, real live adult public periodical. I had tasted blood.

Meanwhile I had dropped my daily program and was writing, instead, a weekly quarter-hour dramatic show, "This Week in History." It had the same general idea as the daily program, only now I was able to spread the same amount of research over a longer time and to give more attention to problems of presentation. I was reading such experimental and poetic radio writers as Norman Corwin, Arch Oboler and Archibald MacLeish. These scripts, too, as I look back at them, were dreadful, but the experience was invaluable. I was writing for a deadline, getting the show into production each week by the skin of several people's teeth. Writing became an extremely unselfconscious process. I was never permitted the paralyzing luxury of thinking, "Now I am Writing—and it must be Immortal." I could only think I have a couple of hours before dawn and they are crying for the script.

What for? I am certain that I never thought that I would eventually become a radio or movie writer (television was yet to come), or any other kind of writer. I was not thinking about my career—which had been the great concern of everyone before I came to college—but about present tasks and wider implications of the ideas involved. That is, my mind was on my work and not on what was to become of JJ, the little radical. As the courses piled up—ancient history, Spanish, algebra, physics, and geology—there was little sense that they were *for* anything, that they were leading anywhere (except out). I will not pretend that I felt much wiser, better or happier. I only knew that someone had let me loose, like a weak-kneed pony, in the bewildering rolling fields of thought. I was less interested in facts than in ideas, less interested in skills than in wonder. And I wanted to say, say, say it all—often before having it very clearly in mind.

I must digress to say that a great crisis in every freshman year is Christmas vacation. A fellow leaves his parents in the fall with solid ideas about what career he will prepare himself for. Suddenly in the first weeks of college he finds out, for one thing, that there is more in heaven and earth than salesmanship, that there are fields of study he has never heard of: sociology, anthropology, philosophy, economics, biochemistry—what *are* all these things? And unless he knows, how can he be sure that he wants to be a radiobacteriologist like Uncle Ned? Other fields which he thought he knew about—such as English, physics, civics (known in college as political science), mathematics—prove to be as strange in their collegiate incarnation as the others. There seems to be almost no continuity between his high school education and college. Consequently it is a rare freshman who goes through his first semester without doubting his choice of a major or of a career.

He begins to get the scuttlebutt in the dorms, to find the upperclassmen and professors he admires or wishes to be associated with, and he comes home at Christmas with the announcement that he is going to be, say, a history major, or is going to major in English or economics. Well, actually, economics isn't so bad, when one is confronted with aunts and uncles. Most people know there are such things as economists, though few know what they do. And it sounds economical. Similarly, if the student announces that he is majoring in chemistry or biology or psychology or



business administration, his assembled aunts and uncles may let that go by with a knowing nod. If, however, the student has by mischance aligned himself with anything in the humanities, he is in for trouble. If it is the arts he has chosen, sure, the aunts and uncles know that there are actors and painters and musicians and dancers in the world, but very few aunts and uncles like to think of a member of the family becoming one of those. If it is history or philosophy or literature the freshman is interested in, they are not so much indignant as baffled. But what are you going to *do* with it? they ask. Half of Christmas vacation is spent in answering that question.

It is particularly hard to answer because, of course, the freshman hasn't the least idea of what to do with his new major. Since he left home he has stopped thinking about doing something with his education. He has devoted himself to the process of being led out of his limitations, of liberating his mind, specifically of liberating it from direct, purposeful, practical, technical application to a trade. Inarticulately he has come to realize that education isn't *for* anything. It happens. It is for itself. But, of course, he couldn't say that to the aunts and uncles, even if he had words for it.

A more realistic answer would be, "I'll use it to get into graduate school" for, increasing, in all fields, the bachelor's degree is not enough. You might look at the problem as one of deciding where to cut off growth. You made one such decision in high school when you chose a vocational curriculum, which would prepare you to begin applying yourself to remunerative work as soon as you graduated, or an academic curriculum, which would not prepare you for employment but for further study. Similarly, some majors in college are primarily vocational: education, engineering, business administration, home economics—though even in these fields graduate degrees are common and valuable. The counterpart of an academic curriculum in college is a liberal arts major—one of the humanities or sciences. These prepare you for no specific profession, but for further study in graduate school. Some graduate schools (e.g., law, medicine, social service) are vocational, but it is possible to go right on to the doctorate without taking a single course of applied knowledge. After all, the degree is called Doctor of Philosophy, and philosophers don't *do* anything—they are specialists in thought. All such study prepares you for further study, implying endless growth.

REGARDLESS of his major, he is apt to find that some two-thirds of his college time will be spent in required courses in a variety of fields, what is called general education. Just as more than two-thirds or more of a person's life is dedicated not to a job but to being a person—a parent, citizen, friend, companion, a productive and stimulating mind in an exciting and frightening civilization, so are two-thirds of college devoted to developing one's general human capacity and knowledge of the world. General education is often perplexing to the new student, as it is to the aunts and uncles. The pressure for practical and applied courses is very great, and a college must be strong and confident of its own wisdom to resist it. But consider: an animal is much more practical than a person. We are born specialists—specialists in the operation of the alimentary canal.

The process of growth and maturation is very largely one of enlargement of vision. If, when you choose which college to attend, which field to major in, even which course to take or which book to read, you resist application as long as possible, you will be maximizing your human capacity. If you say too soon that after all, a fellow's got to eat, you should remember how well fed the family dog is and ask yourself what you value most. Or you should, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin."

Or consider Hamlet's wisdom, "The readiness is all." Since few of us can know with any certainty what we will be called upon to do with our education, we will be wise to make it as comprehensive and profound as possible. However practical I might have wished to be, how could I have chosen twenty years ago the courses which would be most useful for me today? And my own field has changed much less than most in twenty years. Readiness comes not of studying the latest thing but the oldest, so that recent developments, when you need them, can be absorbed quickly and easily. You cannot ready yourself for a particular technical assignment, which, anyway, you can learn more easily on the job than in college. But you can attempt, at any rate, to ready yourself for life, which requires learning about everything you can.

There is, of course, some danger of dilettantism—of knowing a little about everything and a lot about nothing. But dilettantism is the product of luxury and idleness, of vacuity of mind. Don't worry—life will force you to specialize sooner or later; but you needn't help it along; you can resist that force as long as possible. Actually, most dilettantes I have known were people who specialized too early, got out there in the world and got rich, piled up security, a fine house with picture windows, and then found they needed to buy books for their empty shelves and experience for their empty souls, desperately searching for some Culture of the Month Club which would supply in capsule form the education they missed in college.

Suppose our hypothetical freshman were to have the courage and imagination to answer his family this way: "I am preparing to be a human being. I am seeking wisdom, goodness, happiness. I want to develop a habit of free but careful, disciplined inquiry. I would like to have the courage to be myself, to dissent, to think independently. I am learning to distinguish truth from hokum, to respect the mind and its achievements. I am learning the beauty and significance of form. I am developing a compassion for others, an understanding of people and ways of life radically different from my own. I am learning the grounds and the means and developing the character for intelligent, significant social action. I am contemplating the structure of the universe and yearning to discover its meaning. I am learning responsibility. I am learning what personal integrity is. I am trying to become honest—more deeply and fearlessly honest than I ever dreamed possible. I am finding out what it means to be dedicated, to commit my whole sensibility and force to something larger than myself, to truth, to the defeat of evil. I am learning to expect more of myself, to develop a certain reverence for human capacity and a sense of shame and indignation at its waste—in others and in myself. I am



Photograph: Martin

learning how to love—to value myself and others, to love ideas and institutions as well as people. Above all, I am learning to love consciousness, awareness, to love being alive in a various, overwhelmingly beautiful, complex, dangerous and bountiful world. I am learning to appreciate the worth and frailty and brevity of life, to be jealous of my time, to be desperate that no moment or experience be lost on me. Dear aunty, dear uncle, I am waking up! I am leaving my cocoon!

Well, uncle would probably want to know whether they offer a course in all that, and aunty would still want to know what the young man was going to do with it, by which she would mean where he expected to report for work every weekday morning and how much did he expect his check to be for.

We cannot blame aunty and uncle. This world tends to define people by occupations. When someone asks you what you do for a living, you cannot answer, "Why, I eat and breathe and sleep. I think and talk and sing. I exercise and read books," although that sort of thing surely accounts for more of your life than your job. You are, however, expected to say where you work, where you draw your salary. If asked what you are, you do not say, "I am a biological miracle! I am an embodiment of a vital spirit and mind; I am a warm and loyal friend to many persons, a great observer of the night sky and lover of rainstorms, a kind and wise parent, a responsible citizen and a wonderful guy to have at parties." No, you do not answer that way. Rather you say that you

are an accountant, or "I'm an English teacher." That is what I answer, though teaching and English seem to me the least significant things I do. I don't even dare answer, "I am a poet," for if my questioner were to discover that I also worked for a college, he would think, "Ah, he's *really* a teacher. He lied."

COLLEGE, as I remember it in those first couple of years, was only incidentally classes. I joined a swimming team; I got expelled (for a day) because of a battle with the Military Science Department; I tried dating but wasn't very good at it. I tried smoking and got sick, tried drinking and temporarily gave it up. I worked for meals, chiefly washing dishes at a sorority house and learning to detest lipstick-tipped cigarets squashed in gravy. I played too many hours of pool. I acted in a play (which we took around to army and navy bases, so that I was at last doing something for the war effort).

But above all I read. I suppose I read the things assigned me in courses—for I made good grades (except in military science)—but that is not the reading I remember. Rather, I relished the odd books pulled off the shelves deep in the stacks, read squatting in the aisle under a weak ceiling bulb, that opened the universe for me.

My first encounters with the library were filled with suspicion and fear. But then—I can almost remember the day—I caught on: you can find out anything in the library—*anything*, nearly. I looked up *Sex* and found a whole drawerful of cards on the sub-

ject. I had learned a new word, *pornography*, looked that up, found D. H. Lawrence's brilliant essay on "Sex and Censorship," and was liberated from pornography forever. When, in connection with my radio program, I began to discover the intricacies of reference and cross reference, how buried in a dusty and unlikely book in a strange part of the stacks was apt to be the very fact or idea which would open a new experience for me, I became insatiable.

I learned, for example, that you don't necessarily read books. You use them. Oh, of course, there are books to sit down and read straight through. But much more fun came from approaching books through the back door, the index, finding the bits and pieces I needed and putting them together for myself.

I discovered magazines. I found that the most exciting and important current work in all fields appears first in periodicals—that literary magazines, reviews, quarterlies, scholarly and professional journals, kept one abreast of the world. A couple of hours browsing among the periodicals, reading now something from *Harper's* or *The New Yorker*, now something from *The Nation* or *Progressive*, now something from the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, or *Scientific American*, or *Politics*, or *The American Anthropologist*, or *Theater Arts*, or the more exotic little magazines of those days such as *Golden Goose* or *Mainstream* or *Circle* or *Accent*—such reading gave me an elated sense of being in communication with everyone, and it also depressed me as I realized how little I knew, how little time I had to find out, with these periodicals flooding the world day by day with the bewildering and thrilling products of the human mind.

Aside from reading I suppose that my next major activity was talking. Dormitory bull sessions lasted there, as they last everywhere, on through the night. Is there a God? What is Communism all about? And what about Existentialism—yeah, what? Well, what about it? And some poorly informed one of us, usually I, would advance some half-baked theory with great eloquence and dogmatism and the others would fall to and pool their ignorance. In spite of our misinformation and bad reasoning, I am sure we all learned more in bull sessions than we ever learned in classes. We learned to express ourselves, to hold the floor, to find holes in the other fellow's argument, to qualify and define and theorize. These are the tools of intellectual communication. The content can be supplied later.

I remember concerts, exhibitions of paintings, foreign films with naked ladies—and discussions of these on through the night. Luckily, the fraternities were closed down because of the wartime shortage of males, and so I do not remember the agonies of pledging and hazing, or competition in clothing, cars and riches, of files of examinations and papers for cribbing, of the phoney comraderie of boys of favored families seeking out one another as contacts, of drunken balls and campus queens. There was a sort of football team representing the University, and I went to a couple of games, but, I am grateful to say, its activities seemed as remote from the campus atmosphere as might that of a stable of horses performing at a nearby track.

But I was learning that there was a good deal more to college than classes and textbooks. It was people,

conversation, reading and writing. It was the vigorous exchange of ideas and continuous process of expansion as the walls obstructing the mind fell away and areas of vacancy were opened. I doubt that I enjoyed it—I certainly do not remember much pleasure. It is no joy to find day after day, hour after hour, whole new expanses of one's own ignorance and inadequacy. Like most people experiencing intellectual insecurity, I became intellectually arrogant; I remember myself as an insufferable little snout. But colleges are fairly tolerant of excesses of that sort. They are intolerant only of lassitude, of surrender, and I saw a number of my peers sinking into the morass around me, into sullen indifference, silence, into mental torpor and obliviousness. They didn't care. Doing assignments was the extent of their mental efforts, and they whiled away the time till they flunked out. As the bull sessions went on, they would shuffle past contemptuously, toothbrush in hand, sleeping too much, thinking too little, dawdling and shrugging and letting it all go by. They never learned to take ideas seriously. They never learned they didn't have to be there—and soon enough they weren't.

Most, of course, never graduate: this is fairly normal, at least for state universities. But the difference between those who stayed and those who left was not one of intelligence. My years of college teaching have convinced me that it is not lack of intelligence which causes students to fail, but lack of character. Those who make excuses for themselves, demand too little of themselves, and, above all, those who fail to get excited, who fail to open their minds and hearts and awaken to the world of thought, these are on their way out. Unfortunately, a chimpanzee could make a C average at a good many colleges if he looked earnest and turned in all his work. But many human beings fail to see the meaning or purpose of it all, begin to escape into long naps and griping and self-indulgence, and sooner or later they either drop out or simply force their teachers to fail them.

I would like to end by saying, "Well, anyway, it's fun." Unfortunately, college is not much fun—or not for very long. It is not only that one's personal insecurities and efforts are painful, but that education leads one more and more to a sense of responsibility for the world. Uselessness, which makes you human, ultimately has its day of reckoning, its use. People begin treating you like an adult—and you discover that sure enough you *are one*. It leaves no one to blame anything on—until you get a little older and can start blaming things on the younger generation. The world is your job. If you don't like its direction, it is up to you and your fellows to change it. If you don't like war, you have to figure out how we can have peace. If you don't like disease and poverty, you have to set about curing them. If you don't like injustice and corruption and prejudice and hypocrisy, well, there is your job cut out for you. That is much more discouraging than recognizing merely that your job will be to design a bank or build a bridge or manage a hotel or take dictation.

In our egalitarian age, every man is both slave and freeman. A portion of your life will necessarily be dedicated to labor at a trade or profession, and I hope you can do it with love. But beyond your job you will be a freeman, too, to some degree liberated from ignorance and servitude, with the incumbent responsibility to take charge of the world.

Colleges &



REINHART BRAUN

COLLEGES have problem parents as well as problem students. Faculty and students are frequently overheard saying: "If Susie's mother would just leave her alone," or "If Betty's father would give up the idea that she must be a chemist," or "Robert has never been allowed to exercise his own initiative at home," or "Jean did not want to come to college. She is the victim of her parents' social ambition."

The direct interference of parents in the lives of students is often the exasperation of the administration and faculty and the largest obstacle to the effective performance of their educational responsibilities.

Much is being said these days about the college functioning or not functioning *in loco parentis*. Those who say that the college should take over the responsibilities of the parent usually misunderstand the function of the parent. And most who deny that the college stands in the place of the parent misunderstand the function of the college.

The college of course stands *in loco parentis*, but it is important to understand what *parentis* means. It is as much the function of a parent to conduct his child to the point of being able to take full responsibility as it is of this same parent to assume full responsibility during those earlier years when the child is too immature and too inexperienced to take care of himself.

In the spirit of Hegel one might say with complete, if shocking, accuracy that true parenthood is self-destructive. The wise parent is one who effectively does himself out of his job as parent; he delivers his

Parental Tyranny

By ROGER W. HOLMES



child over to society. The silver cord must be broken. The child must cease to be a child.

One important function of the American college is to assist in this transition. It is in this sense that it stands *in loco parentis*. Most freshmen do not know how dangerous their world is, nor do many possess the total discipline adequate to control their impulses. Yet when they leave at graduation, they must not only come to terms with their environment, but they must possess that self-discipline essential to wise behavior in it. There will be no parents, actual or collegiate, at their elbow. There will be the policeman on the corner, but he steps in after trouble has begun. Socially and intellectually the college sets the standards for incoming freshmen: the outgoing seniors should be able to set their own standards.

There are unwise parents of two extreme types: abdicators and tyrants. The former are either selfish or cowardly; the latter, selfish or unimaginative. The abdicators give their children too much freedom too soon: victims of this type of parental failure seldom knock at college doors. The parental tyrants, who supervise too much and too long, seem incapable of remembering the years when they were growing into adulthood. Either extreme seems to have insufficient imagination to see their child's problems from the child's point of view. The harm that results largely depends upon the course of action chosen by the child.

One kind of reaction is the student who busts loose when he gets to college. His parents may be the cause of his rebelliousness but it is the faculty

and administration who have to cope with it. The revolt may be social or intellectual. Faculty are concerned chiefly with the latter. Typical of this form of insurrection is unwillingness to learn the facts and disciplines on which reliable inquiry and knowledge are based. It is the same unruly impatience that makes some students rush into marriage before they know what manner of adults they are going to be.

The worst of these rebels do not stay in college: the best wake up in their junior or senior year to wish that they had not wasted so much time. However, since what we in the faculty try to do for students generally receives parental approval and cooperation, radical objection does not often arise.

But faculty are frequently at odds with parents whose children are enchained by parental domination. And as a teacher in a liberal-arts college, I feel that it is our responsibility as faculty to free such students from intellectual indoctrination. Like Thomas Jefferson, and by the nature of our professions, we have sworn eternal hostility to all forms of tyranny over the mind. And many parents *are* tyrants.

PARENTAL tyranny reaches out in various directions. It can dictate the choice of a college (or of going to college at all), or the election of courses or the selection of a major, or the choice of a career, or the manner of living a life. Parents may in fact know more about students than they know themselves, yet to act tyrannically on this wisdom is to miss the function of parent during the final years of active parenthood.

Why is a student at college? Certainly he shouldn't be there just for the parents' convenience or because of their tastes or convictions or ambitions. All of the reasons for being at college should have to do with the students' tastes and convictions and ambitions.

Consider the convictions that are central to your conduct of life. To what extent do they, like all custom and example, show geographical correlations? The parents of most people reading this article are predominantly Christians and Jews. If I were in an Asiatic country, the parents might be Hindus or Moslems or Buddhists. Most of the fathers who may read this article believe in a free-enterprise system and behave accordingly. Their counterparts in Russia accept the communal principle. Most of the mothers exhibit uniformity in their beliefs about the place of women in organizations and social life which is quite at variance with the beliefs of a South American mother.

This is not to argue that one set of convictions is better or worse than another. The point is that the correlations are accidental. Human knowledge does not know political or racial or religious barriers. The ground of the opinions that guide our lives in their relations with the lives of other people must *not* be custom and example. One of the major struggles of an institution of higher learning is against accidental and provincial correlations.

This disturbing correlation is compounded in another one which more directly concerns the liberal-arts college. From the time Socrates was made to drink the hemlock for "corrupting" the youth of Athens it has been the source of misunderstanding between parents and teachers. This is the inevitable and natural correlation between the students' convictions and their parents. Most Unitarian students come from Unitarian families; most of the undergraduate followers of Barry Goldwater came from Goldwater families; most of the students active in the civil rights movements come from families active in the civil rights movement.

There are of course also undergraduates who embrace joyfully and blindly every doctrine that contradicts their parents' convictions. They are the same in their difference. The central and disturbing fact is that the ideas a student brings to college do not belong to him.

WHY are you at college? The answer is both simple and difficult. *The unexamined life is not worth living.* What is the examined life? It is that life in which the individual weighs and tests against the most responsible criteria of his time

all of the major principles in terms of which life may be conducted. It is that life governed by convictions which the individual has made his own and can defend reasonably. Why is it the only life worth living? Aristotle would say that it is the peculiar and essential virtue of a human being to stand on his own intellectual feet, that this indeed is what it means fully to be a *human* being. A more pragmatic philosopher of our time might insist that it is only within an atmosphere of free and unrelenting criticism that even the most practical knowledge is made available. It is not difficult to maintain that both answers are correct, but you may find the second argument more telling.

The examined life is important because knowledge depends on it. Santayana said that the undergraduate in a liberal-arts college should maintain "the chastity of the intellect." He meant by this principle what you have been advised by your parents to do: examine without prior commitment the variety of persons from among whom you will some day choose your mate. Intellectual prejudices are as much obstacles to knowledge as are immature infatuations to happy marriages. The prejudice *may* favor the wisest principle and the infatuation *may* be directed toward the best mate, but the odds are against blind fortune.

Even the patient and fair examination of the various modes of living a life is not a guarantee of a wise choice among them. But it is the best we know to do. This, fundamentally, is why the final and most important function of a parent is to encourage a child to stand on his own feet.

And this is why the liberal arts college must be undogmatic and uncommitted. Precisely because it stands *in loco parentis* it may not impose its convictions on its students any more than a parent may impose commitments on a child. Absence of commitment is the very soul of a liberal arts college.

It does not follow that the individual members of the faculty should personally be uncommitted, or that the administrative leaders should hide their convictions. Nor above all does it follow that the liberal arts college should not establish standards of conduct for its students and insist that they be obeyed. Students frequently fail to appreciate this fact. They confuse the process of liberalization with the condition of license. A liberal arts college must be willing to entertain any idea but it may not condone any conduct. It has not only its reputation to protect, but must also guard the health and safety of its students.

The examined life is also important because it is a political ideal. Our Bill of Rights guarantees free press and free speech. These are not just pretty

dreams. They reflect the hard facts of life. In any government, decisions will be wise in proportion not simply as information is available (free press) but even more as there is free exchange of arguments and a full display of the varieties of opinion (free speech) among men. Most important of all, these decisions will be wise only as new (not necessarily better) ideas are brought forward. They will be wise to the extent that we are willing to be critical of the ideas that have come to us from the past. We tend to forget that "the past" quickly means those of us who are teachers and parents. History is strewn with the corpses of nations that have tried to survive by enthroning dogma. We have so long survived as a constitutional government precisely because we learned from the Greeks the importance of the examined life.

EACH new generation has the right to conduct its own examination. The sharpest way to realize this is to acknowledge that your parents' prior to you were the new generation. They, too, differed with some of their parents' values and many of their convictions. These same persons now must grant to the young the right and necessity of their own integrity. A wise friend of mine used to say that it is the function of the older generation to put the new generation on stage. He was, because of this insight, one of the finest educators of his generation.

I remember my own vast enthusiasm for his dictum when I was young. But when I had daughters, I began to experience dreadful fears. Suppose they were bored by Gilbert and Sullivan? Suppose they became John Birchers? Suppose 1,000 incoherencies with my values and convictions? But my daughters have every right to question both. And they would properly and responsibly exercise this right if they were "corrupted" by their college educations for which I had to pay so much. This is parenthood.

Suppose they believe false ideas? Suppose they face the wrong horizon? There are two answers to this objection. In the first place, who is to say what is wrong? No human being knows with certainty the true answers to the major problems connected with the conduct of life. No man can *with certainty* be a socialist or a capitalist, a states-righter or a federalist. As of now some answers may be demonstrably better than others. But we cannot absolutely assert of any person that he has a false idea or is facing a wrong direction. Even *in loco parentis* we may not tell students what to believe, but we should be very fussy indeed about how they arrive at their beliefs.

The second reason why it is better for students to be humans rather than puppets, why we must risk the possibility that they will come up with false

ideas, is given by John Milton in *Areopagitica*. He pointed out that truth, whatever it may be, can only survive on the open market of the free exchange of ideas. A liberal arts college should be willing to permit on its campus anyone, repeat *anyone*, who agrees to submit to unrelenting debate and questioning. How else can we make progress in ideas? This means, of course, that students will be exposed to heresy; this means that they will be exposed to danger. But there is plenty of heresy and even more danger in the world into which students go after they leave college, and we would be delinquent if we did not prepare them to meet these heresies and dangers.

What do parents give by sending you to college? Having been brought safely through the perils of childhood, you are now facing the world of human experience as found among books and among teachers committed to the revelation of the world of ideas. Above all, students are being given two special gifts: the gift of freedom and the gift of respect.

At this stage in a person's life, the liberal arts college, acting *in loco parentis*, is perhaps a better parent than the parent. It is less emotionally involved and it has a wider perspective. The liberalizing of the individual is as much a profession as medicine or law. We, the faculty, are trained to carry out this responsibility as members of an institution designed to liberate. We ourselves possess strong convictions about the conduct of life. We would not otherwise be responsible human beings. We should not hide these convictions from students.

The breath of life in a liberal arts college is the variety of opinions held and defended by its constituent parts. It was this disagreement among his teachers that awakened Descartes to his intellectual responsibilities. Students should seek out the disagreements among the faculty and be stimulated by them.

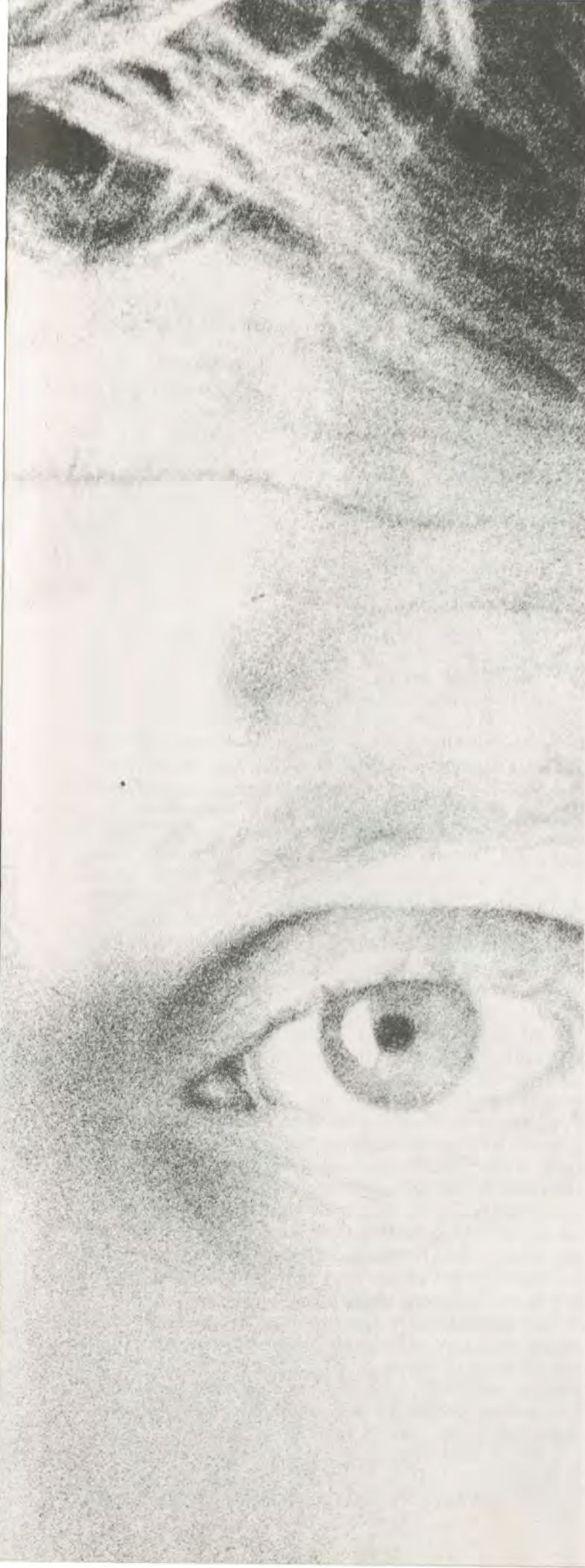
Today the gift of freedom is no longer entirely within the power of parents. Wisely or unwisely, young people are now taking freedom whether their parents give it to them or not. But the gift of respect is always there to be given and received. If freedom is not to sow ashes of discontent and resentment and disappointment, it must be accompanied by respect.

Students today are intelligent persons. They are the most intelligent we have had on campus in our entire history. These students will live lives vastly different from that of their parents, and on convictions that are entirely their own. We must each—student, parent, faculty—respect these convictions because no one of us knows *The* answers. But we who teach hope to enable each student to find *his* answers. This is the way of generations.



*The
Unteachables*

By PAUL GOODMAN



THIS IS a hard generation to teach what I think ought to be taught in colleges. This is not because the students are disrespectful or especially lazy; in my experience, they respect us more than we usually deserve and they work earnestly on much too heavy schedules. Of course, many of the students, probably the majority, ought not to be in academic settings at all (they ought to be getting their education in a variety of other ways) causing overcrowding, dilution, and standardization. But there are some other difficulties within the very essence of higher education which I want to discuss in what follows: (1) the culture we want to pass on is no longer a culture for these young; (2) the young are not serious with themselves; (3) and the auspices, methods, and aims of many of the colleges are irrelevant to the actual unprecedented present or the foreseeable future.

The culture I want to teach (I am myself trapped in it and cannot think or strive apart from it) is our Western tradition: the values which come from Greece, the Bible, Christianity, chivalry, the Free City of the twelfth century, the Renaissance, the heroic age of science, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, early nineteenth-century utilitarianism and late nineteenth-century naturalism. To indicate what I mean, here is a single typical proposition about each of these: The Greeks aspired to a civic excellence in which mere individual success would be shameful. The Bible teaches a created world and history in which we move as creatures. Christians have a spirit of crazy hope because we are always in the last times. Chivalry demands, in love and war, a personal loyalty, upon which honor depends. The Free Cities invented for us the juridical rights of social corporations. The Renaissance affirmed the imperious right of gifted individuals to seek immortality. Scientists carry on their disinterested dialogue with Nature, regardless of dogma or consequence. The Enlightenment decided once and for all that there is a common sensibility of all mankind. The Revolution showed that equality and fraternity are necessary for liberty. The economists assert that labor and enterprise must yield tangible satisfactions, not merely busy-work, profits, and power. The naturalists urge us to an honest ethic, intrinsic in our human condition.

Of course, these familiar crashing ideals are often in practical, and even theoretical, contradiction with one another, but that conflict itself is part of the Western tradition. And certainly they are only ideals—they never existed on land or sea—but they are the inventions of the holy spirit and the human spirit that constitute the University, which is also an ideal.

As a teacher, naturally, I rarely mention such things. I take them for granted as assumed by everybody. But I am rudely disillusioned, for both the students and my younger colleagues take quite different things for granted. For instance, I have heard that the excellence of Socrates was a snobbish luxury that students nowadays cannot afford; that we know the created world only through "communications," like TV; that personal loyalty is appropriate only to juvenile gangs; that law is power; that fame is prestige and sales; that science is mastering Nature; that there is no such thing as humanity, only different patterns of culture; that education and ethics are programs for conditioning reflexes; and that the

purpose of political economy is to increase the Gross National Product.

I do not mean to belittle these views, though I describe them somewhat bitterly. They make a lot of theoretical sense and they are realistic. It is better to believe them than hypocritically to assert ideals for which you do not strive. The bother with these views, however, is that they do not structure either enough life or a worthwhile life; that is, *as ideals* they are false. I think this is felt by most of the students and it is explicitly said by many young teachers. They regard me, nostalgically, as not really out of my mind but just "out of joint"—indeed, as a little enviable, because, although my values are delusions, one is justified by them if one believes and tries to act upon them. The current views do not seem to offer justification, and it is grim to live on without justification.

There is no mystery about how the thread of relevance snapped. Our history has been too disillusioning. Consider just the recent decades, overlooking the hundreds of years of hypocrisy. During the first World War, Western culture disgraced itself irremediably (read Freud's profound expression of dismay). The Russian revolution soon lost its utopian élan, and the Moscow Trials of the 1930's were a terrible blow to many of the best youth. The Spanish Civil War was perhaps the watershed—one can almost say that 1938 was the year in which Western culture became irrelevant. The gas chambers and that atom bomb exposed what we were capable of doing. Since the second war, our American standard of living has sunk into affluence, and nobody praises the "American Way of Life." Throughout the world, initiative and citizenship have vanished into personnel in the Organization. Rural life has suddenly crowded into urban sprawl, without forethought for community or the culture of cities. And the Cold war—deterrence of mutual overkill—is normal politics.

In this context, it is hard to talk with a straight face about identity, creation, Jeffersonian democracy, or the humanities.

But of course, since young people cannot be merely regimented, they find their own pathetic, amiable, and desperate ideals. The sense of creatureliness reappears in their efforts, to make a "normal" adjustment and a "normal" marriage. The spirit of apocalypse is sought for in hallucinogenic drugs. Pride is physical toughness and self-aggrandizement. Social justice recurs as helping marginal groups. Science recurs as superstitious scruples about "method." Art regains a certain purity by restricting itself to art-action. Pragmatic utility somehow gets confused with engineering. Personal integrity is reaffirmed by "ex-

istential commitment," even though without rhyme or reason. None of this, nor all of it together, adds up to much; nobody's heart leaps up.

Perhaps my difficulty in teaching students now comes down to one hard nugget; I cannot get them to realize that the classical work was *about* something; it is not just part of the history of literature; it does not merely have an interesting symbolic structure. When Milton or Keats wrote, he was *for real*—he meant what he said and expected it to make a difference. The students do not grasp that any of that past excellence was for real and still is—for some of us. Their present goes back to about 1950. Naturally they do not have very impressive model heroes.

SINCE there are few self-justifying ideas or impressive models for them to grow up on, young people do not have much confidence nor take themselves very earnestly—except for private conceits which many of them take very seriously indeed.

In fact, adults actively discourage earnestness. As James Coleman of Johns Hopkins has pointed out, the "serious" activity of youth is going to school and getting at least passing grades; all the rest—music, driving, teenage commodities (more than \$10 billion annually), dating, friendships, reading, hobbies, need for one's own money—all this is treated by the adults as frivolous. The quality of meaning of it makes little difference. Of course, many of these "frivolous" activities are those in which a child would normally find his identity and his vocation, explore his feelings, and learn to be responsible. It is a desperately superficial society if the art and music that form tastes are considered unimportant. Nevertheless, if any of these—whether a "hobby" that interferes with homework or "dating" that makes a youth want to be independent and to work through his feelings responsibly—threatens to interfere with the serious business of school, it is unhesitatingly interrupted, sometimes with threats and sanctions. And astoundingly, for the majority of the middle class, this kind of tutelage now continues for sixteen years, during which the young sit facing front and doing preassigned lessons. At twenty-one, however, the young are responsibly supposed to get jobs, marry, vote for Presidents, and bring up their own children.

The schedule and the tutelage are resisted; teenagers counter with their own sub-culture; there are all kinds of youth problems. But by and large the process succeeds, by *force majeure*. But it is not a generation notable for self-confidence, determination, initiative, pure taste or ingenuous idealism.

The favored literature expresses, as it should, the true situation. (It is really the last straw when the adults, who have created the situation for the young,

try to censor their literature out of existence.) There are various moments of the hang-up. There are the stories that "make the scene"—where making the scene means visiting a social region where the experiences do not add up to become one's own, with friends who do not make any difference. These stories, naturally, do not dwell on the tragic part, what is *missed* by making the scene. As an alternative, there are picaresque, hipster, adventure-stories, whose heroes exploit the institutions of society which are not their institutions, and win triumphs for themselves alone. Then there are novels of sensibility, of very early disillusionment with a powerful world that does not suit and to which one cannot belong, and the subsequent suffering or wry and plaintive adjustment. Finally, there is the more independent Beat poetry of willed withdrawal from the unsatisfactory institutions and the making of a world—often apocalyptic—out of one's own guts, with the help of Japanese sages, hallucinations, and introspective physiology; this genre, when genuine, does create a threadbare community; but of course it suits very few.

In order to have something of their own, in a situation where they are rendered powerless and irresponsible, many of the young maintained a fixed self-concept through thick and thin, as if living out autobiographies of a predetermined life. And it is this they nourish in the heroes of their literature. They defend the conceit with pride or self-reproach; it comes to the same thing, whether one says, "I'm the greatest" or "I'm the greatest goof-off." They absorbingly meditate on this fiction and, if vocal, boringly retell it. In this action of affirming their self-concepts, they are, as I have said, very earnest, but it is an action that prevents awareness of anything or anybody else.

Such tutelage and conceit are not a climate in which to learn any objective subject matter. They are also a poor climate for love or any satisfactory sexual behavior. In my opinion, the virulence of the sexual problems of teenagers is largely caused by the adult structure of control itself, and the consequent irresponsibility and conceit. (Of course this is hardly a new thing.)

If students could regulate themselves according to their own intuitions and impulses, there would soon be far more realism, responsibility, and seriousness, resulting in consideration for the other, responsibility for social consequences, and sincerity and courage regarding one's own feelings. For example, a major part of attractiveness between two people normally is fitness of character—sweetness, strength, candor, attentiveness—and this tends to

produce security and realism. Instead, we find that they choose in conformity to movie-images, or to rouse the envy of peers, or because of fantastic ideas of brutality or sexuality. In courting, they lie to one another, instead of expressing their need; they conceal embarrassment instead of displaying it; and so they prevent any deepening of feeling.

Normally, mutual enjoyment leads to mutual liking, closer knowledge, caring for. Instead, sexual activity is used as a means of conquest and epic boasting, or of being popular. Soon, if only in sheer self-protection, it is an axiom *not* to care for or become emotionally involved. Even worse, they do not follow actual desire, which has in it a lot of fine discrimination and organic prudence; but instead they do what they think they ought to desire, or they act for kicks or for experiment. There is fantastic, excessive expectation, and inevitable disappointment or disgust. Much of the sexual behavior is not sexual at all, but is conformity to gang behavior because one has no identity, or proving because one has no other proofs, or looking for apocalyptic experience to pierce the dullness.

In brief, adults do not take adolescents seriously, as if they really *had* those needs and feelings; and so, finally, the adolescents cannot make sense of their own needs and feelings.

THE chief obstacle to college teaching, however, resides neither in the break with tradition nor in the lack of confidence and seriousness of the students, but in the methods and aims of the colleges themselves. My book, *The Community of Scholars*, is a modern retelling of Veblen's account in *The Higher Learning in America* of the cash-accounting mentality prevalent in administrators, professors, and the students themselves, the mania for credits and grades, the tight scheduling, the excessive load, the false economy of huge classes, the lack of contact between teacher and teacher, and teacher and student; the lust for rank, buildings and grounds, grants, and endowments; the mobility for advancement and salary hikes; and the overestimation of the "tangible evidence" of publication. All this adds up to no educational community at all.

It is impossible to look candidly at the present vast expansion and tight interlocking of the entire school system—from the graduate schools to the grade schools—without judging that it has three main functions: apprentice-training for the government and a few giant corporations, baby-sitting of the young during a period of rising unemployment in which most youth are economically superfluous, and the aggrandizement of the school system itself which

is forming a monkish class greater than any since the sixteenth century. It is this unlucky combination of power-drive, commercial greed, public and parental guilt, and humanitarianism that explains the billions of federal, corporation, and foundation money financing the expansion. Inevitably, the functions are sometimes in contradiction: *e.g.* the apprentice-training of technicians requires speed-up, advanced placement, an emphasis on mathematics and sciences, and incredible amounts of testing and competition for weeding out. But the unemployment requires the campaign against drop-outs, and some are asking that the compulsory schooling age be raised to eighteen—even though in some high schools they now station policemen to keep order.

These motives appear on the surface to be hard-headed and realistic but they are disastrously irrelevant to the education of our young for even the next four or five years. For example—with regard to the apprentice-training—Robert Theobald, the economist, quotes a Rand estimate that, with the maturity of automation only two per cent of the population will be required to provide the present hardware and routine services and the college-trained, middle-management position especially will be unnecessary. At present, for the average semiskilled job in an automated plant, no prior education whatever is required. And my hunch is that throughout the economy, the majority of employees are “over-hired,” that is, they have more schooling than they will ever use on the job. The employers ask for high school and college diplomas simply because these are to be had for the asking.

Nevertheless, we live in a highly technical and scientific environment and there is a crucial need for scientific education for the majority. But this is necessary not in order to run or devise the machinery—which a tiny fraction of the highly talented will do anyway—but in order to know how to live in the scientific environment. Thus, the educational emphasis ought to be on the intrinsic interests of the sciences as humanities, and on the ethics of the scientific way of life, on practical acquaintance with machines (in order to repair and feel at home with them), and on the sociology, economics, and politics of science (in order that citizens may not be entirely ignorant in this major area of policy). These purposes are very like the program that progressive education set for itself at the beginning of this century. But these purposes are radically different from present scientific schooling which is narrow and directed toward passing tests in order to select the few who will be technical scientists.

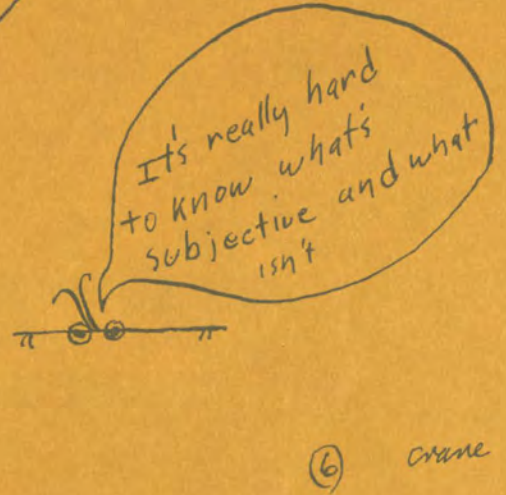
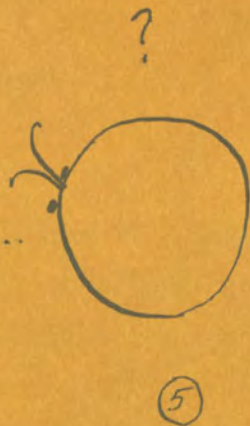
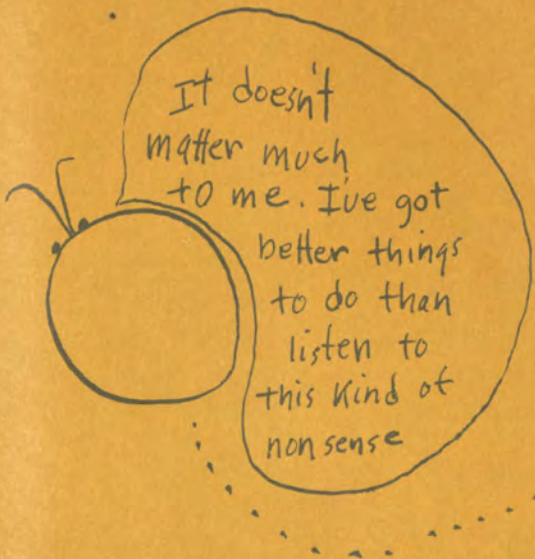
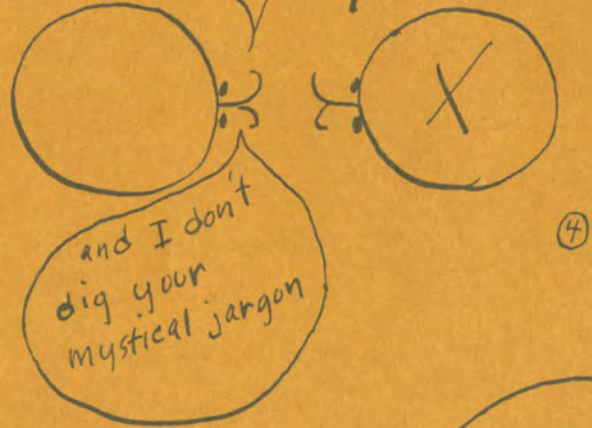
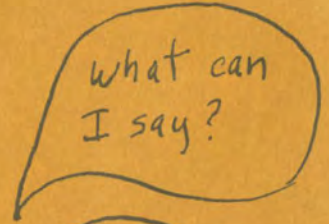
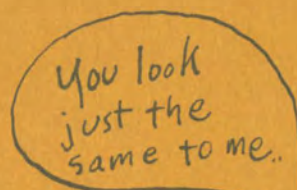
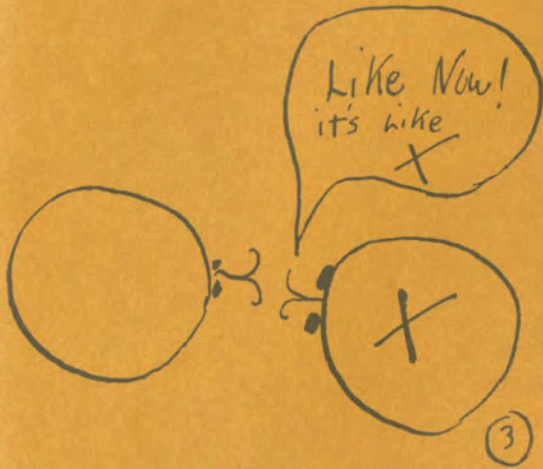
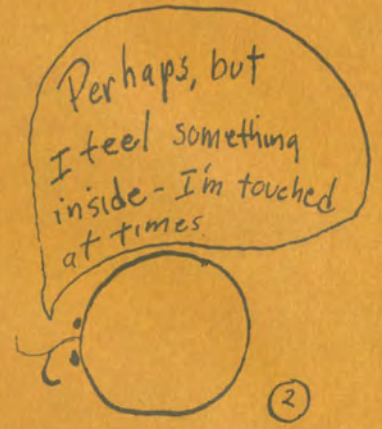
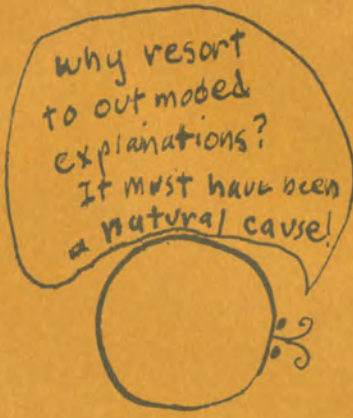
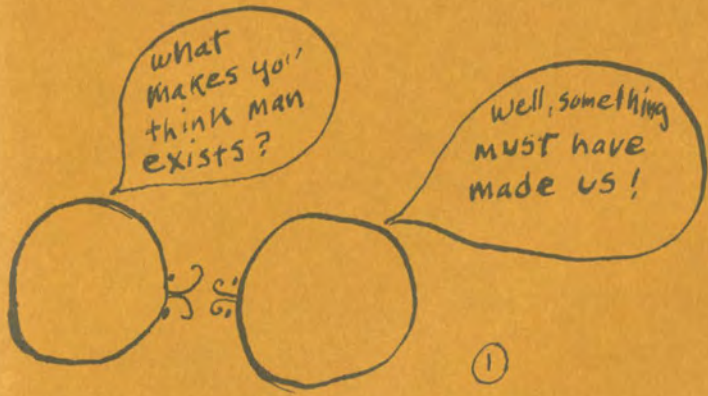
Unexpectedly, this pressure and narrow specialization are having another baneful effect: they put a

premium on immaturity of emotional development and age. Students who have done nothing but lessons all their lives (and perhaps especially those who get good grades) are simply too childish to study social sciences, psychology, politics, or literature. It is possible to teach mathematics and physics to them, for the subjects suit their alert and schematizing minds, but it is difficult to teach them subjects that require life-experience and independence. (I have suggested elsewhere that prestigious liberal arts colleges should lead the way by requiring two years of post high school experience in some maturing activity such as making a living, community service, or travel before college entrance.)

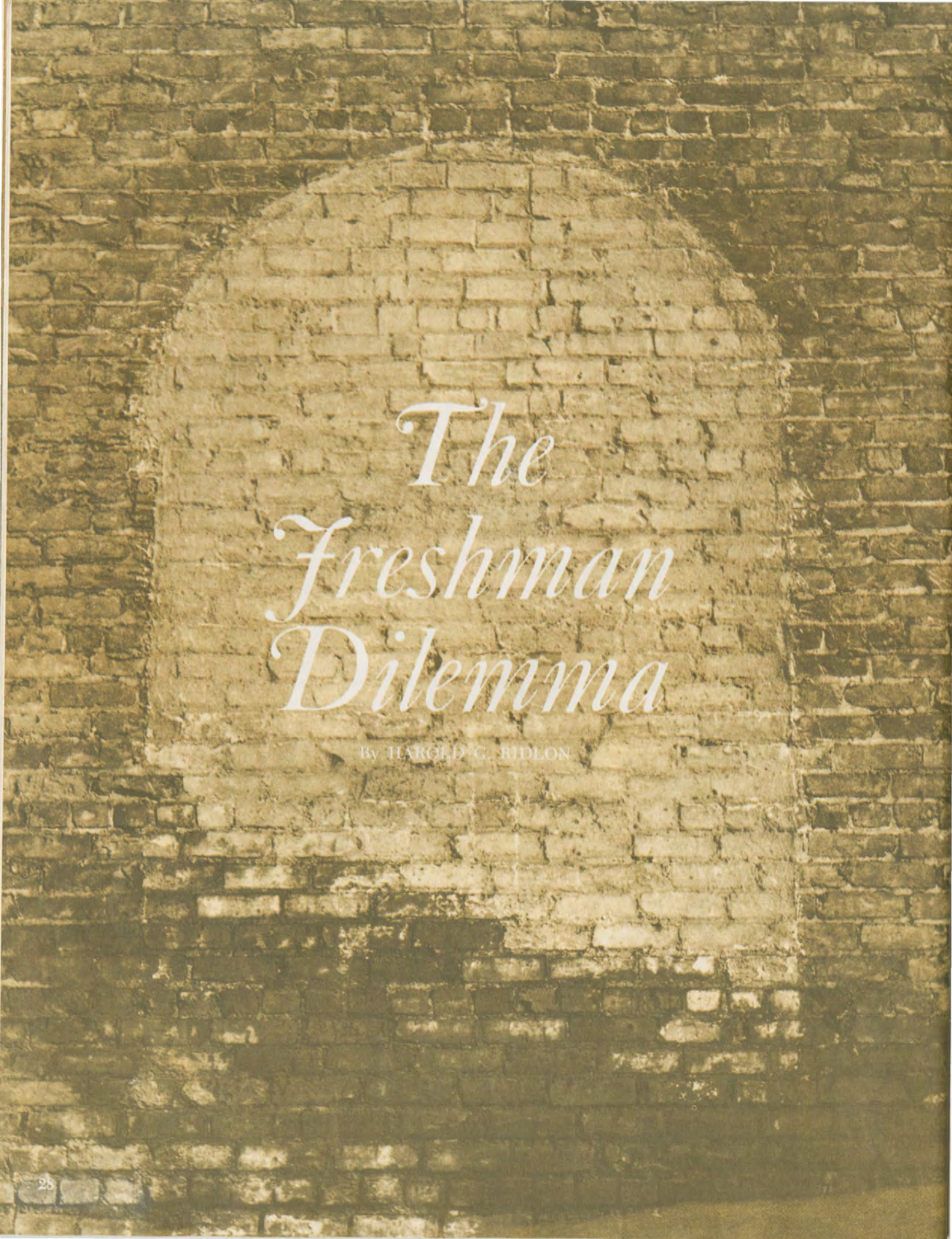
But undoubtedly the worst consequence of the subservience of the colleges and universities to the extramural aims of apprenticeship and baby-sitting is that the colleges become just the same as the world; the corporations, the colleges and the grade schools have become alike. Higher education loses its special place as critic, dissenter, stubborn guardian of standards, *sub specie eternitatis*—which means, in effect, looking to the day *after* tomorrow. The students have no way of learning that the intellect has a function, that it swings a weight of its own. Professors rarely stand out—crotchety—against the consensus. The “important” men are more likely to be smooth articles and grant getters. The young seldom find impressive model heroes in the colleges.

WHAT THEN? In spite of all this, we obviously cannot contemplate a future in which the bulk of our youth will be “useless.” This very way of phrasing it is absurd, for the use and worth of society is measured by its human beings, not by its production of goods and services. It is this generation’s great good fortune that it may see these goods and services produced with astonishing ease and abundance, but we must get rid of the notion that the automatic techniques appropriate for producing hardware, for logistics, or for chains of commands have any relation whatever to education or to any other personal, humane or creative action.

What ought education to be for, at present? The foreseeable future (I am not thinking of a distant utopia) *must* provide us a world in which we will go on making an effort from inner necessity, with honor or shame depending on it, because these goals of the continuing human adventure are worthwhile—community culture, community service, high culture, citizenly initiative, serious leisure, and peace. Education toward such a world is the only kind that is realistic. When students and teachers break out of lock step and insist on such education, the colleges will become themselves again.



2-D and me.



*The
Freshman
Dilemma*

By HAROLD G. RIDLON

STUDENTS beginning a college education this fall are faced with the most exciting challenge that ever confronted a college generation. Never has the need for well-educated people been greater; never have the stakes involved been higher; never have the intellectual and physical resources of education at his disposal been more abundant. But the beginning student will likely be so elated at his acceptance that he will—momentarily at least—fail to consider the larger problem of adjustment to the college environment. Amid the flurry of frenzied departure from home and the emotionally awesome arrival at “the college of his choice,” he may even forget the primary goals of college education and the personal commitments necessary for success.

What are the goals, the commitments, the rewards of college today? Now, as always, college provides for the qualified student that opportunity to identify with his peers—those who, like himself, endowed with a capacity for self-realization, self-fulfillment—are on the threshold of achievement. No longer will students need to draw apart intellectually from those around them, or be drawn sheeplike into a fold of conformity. The great opportunity of college today is the provision it makes for one to be wholly himself while at the same time sharing with others common aims, common problems, common solutions.

Initially, students face a rigorous schedule of study, beginning with freshman orientation. Like the draftee encountering for the first time the regimen of meals and meetings by the clock, you will be herded into this auditorium, that classroom, and subjected to a barrage of tests and measurements.

But most freshmen survive those first harrowing days and weeks. Almost not one flunks out of college before the first term is over, and it is this fact which helps produce an ominous sense of uneasy well-being that flows through the blood and creeps over the skin of the beginning college student. He is not only *in* college but he seems to be staying. He is attending all his classes (freshmen are far less blasé about cutting classes than are upperclassmen); he is taking voluminous notes, so many in fact that he hardly has time to look up at the lecturer; and he is applying himself conscientiously to his homework. But here the first real problem of academic life begins to make itself felt.

At college, as in high school, home study provides the link of learning between what occurs in the classroom, lecture hall, or laboratory. This is the portion of learning to which the student himself can relate in so vital a way as to produce genuine understanding. From the very beginning, the responsibility for effecting such a reconciliation falls directly upon the freshman.

Surprisingly, despite the breadth of his program—almost incomprehensibly far-ranging—the average freshman often finds himself ill at ease early in the fall because he cannot focus sufficiently on what to do when, and thus does less actual work than he may have been doing at times during high school. He is spending perhaps fifteen to twenty hours a week actually attending classes and laboratory sessions. Where a four-course program is normal—and evidence indicates a general movement toward fewer courses—perhaps only twelve to fifteen hours are so

utilized. He has been accustomed to confinement at school for from twenty-five to thirty-five hours a week. Much of the social life he has enjoyed has suddenly been curtailed, and he has not yet become involved in organizations or surrounded by friends. Such conditions tend to create for many students a curiously inhibiting kind of frustration and boredom.

The freshman may well have heard the rule of thumb about two hours spent outside of class for every hour in, a relation much at variance with the prevailing high school pattern. Thus for an eighteen-hour week, thirty-six hours, theoretically, should be devoted to outside. Since the weekly five-hundred-word theme still required in most freshman English courses demands considerably more than two hours if it is to be done at all well, the total work week, at least in theory, amounts to almost sixty hours—forty hours of which is self-directed and self-budgeted. This is a tremendous responsibility for a freshman to have to accept, and new experiments in education anticipate even more student independence.

If the student were being paid for such a long work week at the minimum wage rate including time-and-a-half for overtime, he would receive for the two-term school year about what it is costing his parents to keep him at my university. Yet the assignments themselves and his attitude toward them often seem to belie the necessity for such protracted and concentrated effort. Perhaps some of the discrepancy arises from general student failure to realize fully how much will be expected of them.

Added to this is the problem of courses meeting only two or three times a week, and the fewer-but-longer meeting pattern seems to be gaining favor. A student accustomed to meeting a class five times a week, and now freed from a 3:00-5:00 Thursday class that will not meet again until 3:00 on Tuesday, five days later, may, in his immaturity and naïveté, be excused for thinking he has “world enough and time” in which to do the assignment. The danger is, however, that for every hour’s delay after the assignment has been given, the real purpose of the assignment becomes more and more obscured. The first contact is the prelude to initial interest, so important is motivating a new college student.

MOTIVATION itself becomes a serious problem for freshmen. Parental concern, however overt and undesirable it may at times have become, was one efficacious form of motivation. Teacher-student relationship, often so warm and personal in high school, was another. Even the incentive to get into college may well have acted as a powerful force in stimulating effort. Not to be disregarded either as a vital source of motivation was the climate of acceptance, the social milieu that had been developing through high school. It was expected by classmate and teacher alike that one would maintain a certain quality in work. Finally, short-term and easily digestible motivations were provided such as grading on homework assignments and frequent tests and quizzes covering modest amounts of material.

Now, suddenly, all this has changed. Parents, favorite teachers, friends, all have evanesced; the climate of acceptance has become chilly. Homework

is rarely graded except in relation to student improvement. More rigid objective criteria are introduced. Even the weekly theme is, and ought to be, treated as a means to an end, an exercise calculated to promote logical and technical skill. Any reasonable teacher of rhetoric would evaluate student writing on the basis of the level of achievement.

Yet such humane evaluation is too remote to impress the beginning freshman whose English teacher, taking the long view, fails flatly a first theme the student has labored on long and diligently. In response he may wail plaintively, "But I spent fifteen hours on it"; more often, however, he simply projects mentally the amount of time he believes it would have taken him to write a "B" theme, the astronomical proportions of which projection might well unnerve even the hardiest of freshmen. College students need to develop more qualitative sense than their culture prompts them to acquire.

The lecture class proves inhibitive to the close questioning and recitation so beneficial in cementing ideas and in providing self-confidence. Even those courses providing one section meeting a week often miss because there is a time when young people want to ask questions and there is also a time when, no matter how they are organized, cajoled, prodded, galvanized, or Socratized into activity, their hearts are not in it.

Even the small recitation group may be discouraging if it is dominated by those bright and articulate students who serve more to intimidate than to stimulate the average student. More and more the competition within college itself will parallel the more ostentatious competition to enter college.

Many of the new college crop are products of high-g geared preparatory schools, while many come from public high school programs which have been radically revamped to accommodate the sharp changes taking place in high education. Advanced placement courses, accelerated courses, and new subject courses have all put a new complexion on the college entrance picture and in some cases, have prodded the colleges themselves into revising the philosophy and content of some of their most cherished basic courses. Insofar as much interaction has been comprehensive and forward-looking, it has been salutary. But it has simultaneously imposed on the entering student a great responsibility for early and mature perception.

This is not to say, of course, that even in the best colleges one will not find himself in the company of the average or below-average student. Some of these are still admitted because of athletic achievement; some are borderline cases accepted because of strong family ties with the college; still others are there as calculated risks.

BUT one prominent change has occurred. Long has the myth about the relation between economic well-being and acceptance potential colored the image of higher education in America, and myths have their origin in substance. Increased tuitions have, in many cases, now provided scholarship assistance to able but relatively indigent stu-

dents; industries and foundations have lent their support; and now governmental aid of one kind or another is helping to locate in colleges and universities those most able to benefit from the experience. Moreover, many of the places they have taken were formerly occupied by the affluent incompetents.

The effect of this increased pressure on students is, I believe, easily observable. I have recently been teaching a group of unusually gifted freshmen whose talent and ability enabled them to be placed in an advanced English section. Any one of them would have stood well above average freshmen in an average freshman section. Brought together, however, in a situation created expressly to stimulate productive exchange of ideas, most of them displayed a surprising mixture of emotions. They clearly appreciated the privilege of participating—it was a volunteer group—and were excited by the possibilities, but at the same time they were frightened by the competition. Several of them, and not the least able at that, were actually intimidated by the pressure. One by one as they appeared in my office for conferences, they confessed to genuine, not feigned, feelings of inadequacy, and many of them were students who had scored in the 700's on their college boards.

Where, then, does this place the high school "B" or even "C" students who (studies reported in the March, 1961, *Changing Times* reveal) often not only survive college to enter shortage professions but also sometimes succeed in taking academic honors at commencement? Often the high achiever in high school is the one who possesses considerable native ability and has been able to accomplish much with relatively little effort because of the heterogeneous ability groupings. On the other hand, the "C" to low "B" record may well have been achieved by one who worked very hard for his grades and is thus more accurately geared to the college demands of consistent hard work. Psychologically, too, such a student may have some advantage: he has probably experienced disappointment and even failure. Although he has been accepted at college he and perhaps his family and friends are keeping their fingers crossed, a not unhealthy prelude to any college experience. Nothing is more depressing to a very good student than to begin receiving poor college grades while the hearty congratulations of well-wishers are still ringing in his ears.

NOW what constructive attitude can the beginning student take toward the grades he receives? First, he can recognize them for what they really are: an evaluation of achievement in analyzing, comprehending, and utilizing the data and implications of a certain discipline, and in so correlating such data with previous learning as to produce genuine intellectual growth. The freshman's first grades on quizzes and the like may dribble in, conveying little reliable indication of progress. Even the first hour examination may be unreliably high because of a burst of effort difficult to maintain or even to duplicate; or it may be uncharacteristically low because the student simply did not realize how much he would have to know. Here the student's

quandary can best be illustrated by citing the cynical "typical essay question" on a first-hour exam: "Describe the universe, and give two examples!"

My work with both very able and below-average students, and my experience on committees both to recommend for academic honors and to recommend for warning, probation, or suspension, have convinced me of the relative value of grades. Knowledge of several aspects of the grading situation might be helpful for freshmen to consider.

First, contrary to what students often believe, grades are distributed not as rewards or punishments from the tyrant administering the course; they are the outward and visible signs of an inward and almost spiritual covenant entered upon by teacher and student alike in their mutual search for understanding. Nothing amuses me more than to have a student thank me for a grade he has received on a paper or an examination. Even such courteous gratitude betrays an erroneous conception of the college teacher-student relationship.

The college teacher, underpaid and overworked though he is, enjoys an enviable position in his own little academic world. Particularly to the freshman, he represents the vested interest. He it is who holds the key to the tower of knowledge, and will open the door slowly and tantalizingly. The piety with which freshmen copy down every word the instructor says testifies to his exalted position in their eyes.

An initial lesson of the new freshman, however, is to transfer such awe and reverence to learning itself. Truly wisdom is, as Proverbs tells us, "more precious than rubies . . . a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her." I read nothing there about grades.

I like to think that the proper relationship between teacher and student in the academic community is one of cooperative endeavor. In the words of Kenneth Brown, it is a partnership "wherein the student becomes a junior associate in the adventure of learning."

Given this conception of apprenticeship, the perceptive freshman will use whatever resources offer themselves in order to train himself to accept wholly the junior partnership. And so much is available that many students fail to utilize at all. Whether it be a counselor, an instructor, or a member of the administration, the student should feel from the beginning the accessibility of all who are organized to help him in his search for truth. No matter how remote, eccentric, or even downright unpleasant some adult may seem, the student can relate to him if he looks beyond the barriers that separate to the unity that binds.

The sense of sharing will also permit the student to move out beyond himself constructively. He will be able to respond vigorously to new ideas and new experiences if he does not expect everything to conform to him and his wishes. He can even find a satisfying place for himself in a large class where otherwise he would seem insignificant.

This new detachment leads to a second important consideration about grades, namely, that they are not properly seen in a vacuum. Many other factors such as motivation, degree of improvement, and achievement in major field must be regarded seri-

ously. Even if one might insist that grades often determine graduate or professional opportunities, it would still be the general pattern of performance and not the isolated grade that mattered.

Even if the pattern itself should prove detrimental to one's future goal, a sound attitude could help to compensate for the loss. The poor grade, at any point in one's college career, may be a warning signal to "stay off this track!" It may even, to adopt the long view again, be an indication that college is not the right place for an individual, at least at that time. Those who have failed out of college only to return again and succeed when time and training had awarded their benediction could testify to the wisdom of this view.

Furthermore, graduate schools and prospective employers, like admissions officers in undergraduate colleges, are paying more and more heed to the recommendations of those who have worked most closely with the applicant. A modest academic record accompanied by a strong recommendation which specifies areas of achievement and promise may well carry more weight than a better grade record qualified by, let us say, some reservations as to the applicant's ability to relate harmoniously with other people.

Moreover, some grades take on more or less importance as the total college picture becomes pieced together. I once recommended to a classmate of mine—a business major and good student generally—a "gut" course in aesthetics to make his last term easier. He failed the course completely, but I cannot see that his life has been blighted by the incident or that he is totally unable to appreciate the beautiful. I suppose I have suffered more for the blunder than he has.

Nor does a relatively poor freshman year record have such a disastrous effect as students close to the situation sometimes imagine. Frequently students do not really find themselves until the sophomore year, if then; but by then they think they have committed irremediable errors. The not-uncommon upsweep of grades in the second year when many required courses have been completed and the major is begun evidences the true direction of the student's progress.

Like all other college experiences, grades need to be seen in perspective. The student should welcome evaluation at any point in his academic career. He should neither fear it nor take immoderate pride in it. Instead he should use it to help determine where he is going, how he is getting there, and what he is gaining en route.

Such an inventory made regularly and candidly can help in all areas of adjustment to college. The beginning college student embarks on a great adventure which becomes increasingly valuable as our culture continues to deprive us of many other traditional modes of self-discovery. At times he is almost certain to be threatened, harassed, and depressed by the encounter. As in all other worthwhile engagements, commitment, perseverance, and vision are essential. Given these qualities, or at least the potential for their development, the student can discover himself, his responsibility to others, and his God-given inheritance as a complete person.

Tyranny of



Teammanship

BY JAMES GARDNER, JR.

Views are always taken from viewpoints and the following is written from the vulnerable fortification of an upstart faculty member who has had six years of college teaching. He confesses that he is "young enough to still be a starry-eyed graduate student in the eyes of older colleagues, and yet in the eyes of students, still a member of the enemy camp (the faculty). This position between no-longer student and not-yet-established teacher is precarious, but like many vantage points affords a sometimes dizzying sweep of the academic landscape."

THE ugliest sight I presently see from my observation post is the destruction that the common and seemingly harmless idea of teammanship is working on the tradition of liberal learning. To attack so honored an old American cliché as teammanship may seem as ill-tempered as attacking the "Flag, Mom, and the Bible," but attack I intend to do for this metaphor of the faculty or the student body as a team is currently eating like acid into the tender core of liberal education.

Is there a single student who has not in recent days heard himself and his faculty superiors referred to in one way or another in the sweaty language of teammanship? Not only is the new student on campus naturally enough pep-rallied into support of the real teams on campus—football, hockey, tiddlywinks, etc.—but he is urged to get on the Freshman Class Team, to help "carry the ball" for the student Christian association, to "follow the rules of the game" in his academic work as laid down by the coaches in the dean's office, or to be proud of the new fame some brilliant faculty research team has brought to this or that department on campus.

Well, I can assure this freshman that on many of our campuses today his new English or math prof no sooner had his bags unpacked a few weeks earlier for his orientation session than the administrative captains and coaches attacked his sensibilities with much the same jargon of the playing field. It seems nearly universal that the whole delicate, intricate work of the faculty's side of campus life is put into either the sentimental diction of the family or the rough similes of the football squad. With dreams of a Socrates-like relationship with his students fading in his head, the new teacher listens to endless presidents, deans of faculty, department heads, and faculty committee chairmen lay down the rules of the new game he is to play, the goals the school wants to score in coming semesters, and the wearying succession of teams he is to be on now that he has his Ph.D. sewn, like a varsity letter, on his soul.



So what's wrong with all this talk of teammanship on campus? Is it so bad to confuse the Attic and the Olympic? Let's look first at the problem as it touches the faculty and then explore the tyranny of teammanship among the student body.

First, the metaphor as a metaphor is noisome. It must have been misleading figures of speech like this one that have led Robbe-Grillet and a whole school of contemporary French writers to reject simile and metaphor entirely as legitimate devices in fiction. All metaphors tell lies. But the good ones—and I still believe in some metaphors—justify the fact that they lie. Robert Burns of Scotland's love was not in chemical truth a red, red rose. Nevertheless, the truth of his feelings for his Scot's lass which this comparison caught made his lie worth it. The faculty of President Muckety-muck Burnseymeyer's XYZ College is not a football team, and there's no new truth to be caught in calling it one. In fact, if it ever starts acting like one, it probably won't make the Rose Bowl nor will it be any longer a real faculty.

NOT only must good metaphors lie creatively and revealingly if they are to justify their dishonesty; they must also lie consistently. If one's love is a red, red rose, then she must smell good, be lovely to touch but very easily bruised. She must fill a room with her presence as a single rose can do, and she may even have a thorn not far from her petals. She may wilt after a time if plucked; but while she is a red, red rose, she is intensely lovely. We may explore every hint the metaphor suggests and at the end of our exploration be rewarded with the discovery of a new and exciting meaning. But what happens if we explore the implications of calling a college faculty a football team? The formula that worked so well for the girl and the rose suddenly leads us to the ludicrous when we think of teachers as a team. What is the ball this team carries? I hope we do not as a faculty carry the student tucked under our metaphoric arms or throw him on passes or let the other side take him away from us in good sport. Who is the team captain? Any faculty meeting that turned into a huddle would be a conspiracy and not the open forum it has been traditionally. For amusement's sake there are a hundred other fallacies in this metaphor and you can give yourself a good long week to write them down if you're all caught up with your class assignments.

To find out why this metaphor so quickly stumbles, we must know something about the nature of teams and of faculties—real faculties that is. Since grade-school boys can understand the mysteries of football—and sometimes so well as to remain grade-school boys and become professors of physical education—I'll not rehearse here the facts of the game nor the nature of the team that plays it. But the facts about what a real faculty is are not so easily learned. These are mysteries beyond grade-school boys, nor can they be learned in the armed services nor the business corporation (two lamentable sources of college administrators in recent years). They are learned best by being on the campuses of richly established universities or by reading one's way through the exciting history of education in the West. Even then they are

complicated mysteries, and it is obvious that the teammanship metaphor has been sought out as a simplifying shortcut to understanding them.

Let's take only one or two basic facts about what a faculty is or should be and use these facts to show how false and tyrannical it is to think of a faculty as a sports team. The first concerns the purpose of a faculty. Its purpose, roughly, is to seek the truth and encourage others to do so. What about the football team? Its purpose in American society is to provide a spectacle which will amuse enough people sufficiently to make them buy tickets. Secondly, such a team helps form an image of the school in the fuzzy minds of the football spectators so that they will think of old Ivywall College's Rams or Bears or Tigers with warm autumnal nostalgia in their hearts and loose fingers on their pocketbooks when fund drives begin. That the football team has any other serious purpose than to please specators remuneratively is a romantic notion held only by a few grand old men and no currently employed coaches. Medical expenses for any winning team would suggest that some better means might be found of improving muscular tone, and surely no one takes seriously the argument that football provides a new spiritual center and symbol for the modern college campus. Football rallies I have witnessed recently have had about them all the lugubrious, determined gaiety of the closing hours of a state fair or a religious revival that has exhausted the supply of available sinners before its schedule ran out.

If we grant then that the chief end served by the college football team is to provide income for the school—if it wins—by pleasing the appetites for amusing violence of largely off-campus spectators, can anyone seriously suggest that the faculty should also be thought of as a team as it goes about its tasks? Wherever this image is imposed on a faculty, it soon has to start playing to the crowd and adapting its vision of the truth to fit the pleasures of the spectators. If the assignment, let's say, of *Catcher in the Rye* brought protests from paying parents who felt their daughter's virginity threatened by her being exposed to four-letter words in print, then the good teamman member of the faculty in order to be a good teamman would want to choose another novel like a quarterback choosing a more successful (that is, crowd-pleasing) play. If fraternities and sororities were popular means of gaining students and attracting alumni support, then the good faculty teamman should no more question their moral efficacy in some situations than the right tackle should argue in front of the spectators that ten yards might not be the best measure of a first down. If education is ultimately all a game to please the paying customers, then what is liked is best, what has been done in the past is more or less automatically right, what is approved by the roars from the stands is moral, and any faculty member whose search for the truth leads him a lonely way is "unsafe," a sore-head—and worst of all—a bad member of the team. Build a faculty on these principles and you soon undo a college. Such a college may please a conformist and visionless society for a time but so does a country club or a good professional football team.

I contend that it will destroy a real faculty to think

of it as a team as far as its purposes are concerned since truth has had a way of coming to the "loners" and outsiders to the nonteammen. It also destroys a faculty to think of it as a team in the ways it goes about serving its purposes. There may be few limited ways in which a faculty does and should work together in searching for the truth, but again the metaphor of the team does not justify its lie. Teams have to cooperate to serve their purposes, but faculties have to disagree, to argue, fight, and generally shun cooperation to serve theirs. This may seem a shocking claim, especially in these days of the organization man and the Great Team Effort in everything from getting satellites into space to getting bright seniors through to Woodrow Wilson scholarships. All the same, it remains true that the great faculties now and in history are those faculties that have cooperated just enough to keep their uncooperative arguments going. Good faculties agree to disagree in the things that matter most and cooperate only in the largely irrelevant busy-work of class schedules, grades, and faculty committees.

It is only the pre-Renaissance kind of temperament—and indeed the pre-Greek mind and temperament—that is unaware that the finest means to pursue and serve truth is the open forum. And this kind of forum of ideas is basically contrary to team procedures. This forum is far more like a free courtroom than a playing

field. Who would want to be tried in a court of law in which the two opposing lawyers and the jury were in very many senses part of a team? We would call such a trial rigged. We would disbar any judge who asked contending lawyers to soften the rigor of their arguments in the interest of not offending the prejudices of the jury or the courtroom spectators. Yet this tyranny of teammanship is attempted in trying to rig the college faculty so that it may be certain to come up with a comfortable and safe verdict on all matters.

THE teammanship boys seem ignorant of the fact that the ancient origins of the university and college were open forums of debate, not smooth-running corporation-like teams. The medieval universities grew in strength and in truth only when they rejected the conformist, teamman principles of the society around them and protected their right to be cantankerous, "controversial," disloyal, and disunified in anything more than their devotion to the truth. It would be amusing if not awesome to imagine the reaction of an Oxford College faculty to its provost's suggestion that it think of itself as a Rugby team out to win the annual Truth Trophy. Yet today, men ignorant of such facts are in positions of great power to hire, advance, or fire faculty members in direct ratio to their teammanship. Such administrators build safe, efficient faculty teams of yes-men easy to manage and easy to make palatable to parents or state legislators or the occasional dinosaurs on church boards of education. But they fail to build faculties that seek the truth.

It might be well at this point to fling an anti-brickbat brickbat at the objection some readers may raise when they point to the truths that various research "teams" have found through good teammanly cooperation. Do not groups of surgeons working with nurses and other "team members" discover techniques that save lives in the operating room? Of course they do, but is the operating room or the ICBM lab really the kind of college or university that is defined above? Even if the doctors and physicists are college professors, I would say that the teammanship essential to the application of the truths they have found must speedily be abandoned when those truths themselves are examined. Isn't the authentic college more like the consultation among the surgeons which occurs after the operation rather than the mutual effort of the operation itself? In such a consultation, all the team cooperation necessary to the operation must give way to open controversy and free debate if a new technique or new insight into physical nature is to be gained. I have listened in on a few such arguments after operations, and I was rather grateful that neither the boards of trustees of the hospital nor most patients could hear the hubbub, but to a nonteamman like me it was the strong, discordant jazz of truth itself in the finding. On far too many a campus one hears instead the saccharine close harmony of an Andrews Sisters singing commercial with the cheerleader deans keeping time.

Undoubtedly those readers who have just completed orientation activities on their campuses have had adequate opportunities to see the antics and hear



the noise of this academic rah-rah. You may have even begun to hear all the favorite stories about the odd-ball, off-beat "controversial" prof who is reputed to shock and bewilder the "innocent." And if you haven't begun to see or hear these phenomena, watch out for you may be in for a good old middle-class wax-and-polish-job education which so many schools seem to specialize in.

SO much for the tyranny of teammanship among the faculty. Remember that at the outset I said I still had a spy's view of the student side of the campus. What about teammanship among the undergraduates? Well, it's obviously at work there and just as tyrannically. I think you are most likely to find the metaphor of the team misleadingly applied to the student's proper role on campus in three places: the dean's or advisor's office, the social organization, and the classroom.

I wish more deans and advisors had read James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*, or any of the long list of excellent novels that tell of young people's growing up and going through school. Or is it asking too much to expect deans nowadays to read anything other than texts in corporation management and pseudo-psychology? Education among the undergraduates would be vastly improved if deans could learn that most of the truly educated men in the world were not the great joiners—belongers—habitual team members they would have students be. How frightening to see students' file cards in the dean's office satisfactorily decorated with the colored tab that means the student is normal, unproblematical, and on the road to "success."

Education—much of the time—has to be a lonely, troublesome, and generally painfully process if it is really to pervade the mind and soul of the student. We hear far too much from deans, advisors, and some campus chaplains that suggests that becoming genuinely mixed up, "disturbed," and even unsocial is to be avoided by the good student like alcohol, dope, or sex. I have seen all the fire and zeal for truth in honest young students dampened into a soggy mess by too many deanly admonishments to "mix with the crowd more," "don't get carried away," "get on the ball with the rest of the gang," not to feel that echoes of teammanship are working much tyrannical damage here. I am not urging that students exchange the old conformities of their high school days for the new conformities of well-established and quite team-like "nonconformist" uniforms of beards and smelly sweatshirts. Beards and manners of dress shouldn't matter enough to be taken as more than expressions of taste one way or the other. But students—real students—should avoid being drafted or counseled into organizations and activities that serve no meaningful purpose other than to take the edge off whatever individual idiosyncrasies or interests might develop in the classroom, library or professor's office.

Campus social organizations—Greek or non-Greek—are powerful outposts of the surrounding social milieu. These organizations are usually given far too much importance on the college campus. Like the dean's office they can thwart what genuine individu-

ality the student develops by their not-too-subtle reminders that the "world outside" is a teamman's world, and "success" does not await the student who lets his mind carry him toward too many truths which that outside world is as yet unprepared to recognize. A short exploratory trip into the writings of Thorstein Veblen and more recently Paul Goodman will acquaint the reader with the degree to which authentic campuses must constantly struggle to maintain their intellectual independence from the mores of a surrounding society which is emphatically not dedicated to seeking or serving the truth. Again I am not recommending a hermit-like existence for young men and women on the campus. The fact that students are in their advanced teens makes it foolish to recommend such, even if it were feasible. I am, however, suggesting that the new student not let the fact that organization men on campus may make higher grades as the result of being members of Delta Upsilon Lambda convince him that genuine liberal education—the education that liberates the whole man—will be served by his being able to crowd the "Organizations Belonged To" section of his next year's registration form with scores of clubs, groups, and teams.

FINALLY, the tyranny of teammanship among students is that it frequently chains them to a stupid conspiracy of conformity and silence in the classroom. If you have attended classes as long as a single week, you have undoubtedly felt already the force of the hostility many members of a class can turn like invisible rays on the student who takes his teacher seriously when he asks if there are any questions or comments. There is no less-rewarding team in all the world to belong to than that nearly automatically organized team that takes the teacher as its opponent. Not that the teacher shouldn't be opposed. If I as a teacher ever feel that my whole class agrees pleasantly and enthusiastically with what I have been saying, then I know they have been asleep or I have been talking nonsense. The free-for-all roughhouse of ideas that should go on among faculty members should be an even more everyday experience in the classroom. I am speaking of the kind of teamly suppression of comment, the scornful chuckle at a "dumb" question the cynic squad in the back row of the classroom can always be counted on to give, the concerted refusal to become involved in what is going on that can kill the enthusiasm of the liveliest discussion leader, all these the class teammen can bring about as they skillfully evade confrontation. Every teacher is prone to rancor against group (team) cheating on exams, but given the false emphasis on grades in our colleges today, this is an evil to be expected. The teammanship of noninvolvement is harder to puzzle out since the more it wins, the less it benefits anyone. The successful cheating team may all get A's permanently inscribed in the records, but the groans and sighs and shufflings of feet that intimidate the responsive student into the silent vigils that sometimes follow requests for questions result only in a general waste of time for everyone. Where are the student teammen on your campus?

What metaphors, we might ask finally, more accurately fit the faculty and the students of a real aca-

demic community than figures of speech provided by the gymnasium? One would wish ideally that a faculty might simply be thought of as a faculty and students as students and in each word a clear, distinctive concept be conveyed. But if such a wish is to be

denied, then I would suggest that "community of scholars" and "forum of learning" better fit the facts. Both imply that healthy combination of maximum individuality and minimum cooperation inherent to the tradition of liberal education.

Photograph: Sturkey



Inquiry into Faith

COLLEGE life is a much more critical and intellectual climate than the atmosphere which students have encountered in most high schools. This new intellectual experience will have an impact—sometimes a radical one—upon the religious understanding of students. It is probable that few college freshmen have consistently encountered the intense questioning and challenges of a really sharp atheist or an agnostic before.

A freshman recently said to me, "For the first time in my life I have met people who said they did not believe in God." This was a new experience for him, as it will be for many others.

Though disturbing and anguishing—to both student and parent—a student whose faith has substance, validity and vitality will achieve a more meaningful understanding of his faith as a result of such experiences in college. However, if his faith is shallow or inadequate, he may lose it—at least for a time—because he is either unwilling to examine his own faith (and thus take the easy way out by showing indifference to religious matters) or he denies the validity of a former faith because it does not stand up under the light of new insights and knowledge.

Usually when the latter happens it is due, partly at least, to the fact that his religious understanding has not developed as rapidly as his accumulation of initial data in philosophy, psychology, science, literature, or political science. These experiences, combined with the seemingly detached and disinterested attitude of some of his professors, and the sheer size and diversity of the institution, can result in confusion, despair, and real or imagined crises.

Several areas of inquiry seem to challenge with special intensity the religious faith of college students, and threaten many of the traditional ideas about God, man, and the world.

Science

Almost every professor and student will assert that the scientific method is the best way of ascertaining knowledge. Hardly any department within a college or university escapes this allegiance; at least the spirit of science will permeate the atmosphere of the academic community. And so it should, because through science and the application of the scientific method man has been freed from many of his superstitions and fears; he has come to know more fully himself and the world in which he lives.

In overstressing science, we can make the false assumption that its methodology is the only approach to human life and experience. Such an exclusive approach tends to deify the method of scientific investigation and places greatest emphasis upon that which is measured and is subject to quantitative analysis. Also, such an approach can reduce experience to its component parts.

The perceptive student will be aware of these dangers, and though he will recognize and respect the method and spirit of science, he will be equally aware of its limitations and the assumptions upon which it is based.

We must realize that all problems cannot be solved by science, that facts may help us understand the nature of physical reality, but that facts in themselves do not tell us what we should do with our knowledge or to what ends we should work as hu-

man beings in a society that is becoming increasingly interdependent and complex.

There may be some questions which by their very nature are philosophic and religious in character and involve an intelligent and responsible act of faith leading ultimately to commitment. The alert student will be aware of the multidimensional character of human experience—the rich expressions in art, music, literature, philosophy, and religion. In other words, he will be sensitive to the contribution of all those experiences in the cumulative history of man which have made life rich and meaningful. He may also discover that these sources of insight are as important, or perhaps more important, than the discovery of knowledge about the physical world. If the student is aware of these distinctions, his religious faith will be enhanced by his knowledge of science rather than destroyed or threatened.

Moral Relativism

Most students are aware that people's moral standards differ and that all men do not agree on what is right and wrong. This is accentuated in anthropology, sociology, and psychology which emphasize that the customs and habits of men in various cultures differ widely. From such study a student may conclude that, in the final analysis, moral standards are entirely relative to the folkways and mores of a particular culture and that his religious tradition, which affirms some universal standard for morality, is no longer tenable. Of course, the student may not ponder the logic of such a position: if all values are totally relative to a society which adopts these standards there can be no real moral basis for the condemnation of any custom or act on the part of another society which differs from his own, even if it be the extremes of a Hitler or a Mussolini. Nevertheless, the relativist's position will be attractive. It is not a happenstance that many students use this newfound knowledge to rationalize a new behavior which may not be in keeping with their religious training.

From a certain standpoint all values are relative to time and place; but in another sense, if values are rooted in man's own nature and human capacities are distinguishable from the capabilities of all other creatures, then the concepts of good and bad, or right and wrong can be given a distinctively human meaning which in a sense transcends any particular society or social practice. Thus the alert student will be aware of the half-truths the moral relativist espouses; he will use his own mind, as well as the collective experience of his religious tradition, to judge those doctrines which would tend to entice him away from the conventional value and moral standards.

It is easy to assume that if morals are the product of human societies and the social needs of particular groups, then all beliefs in a deity as a source of moral law are no longer defensible. Few professors will openly teach atheism, but many times the implications of their approach and assumptions will imply, either directly or indirectly, that there is no God. The subtle effect of any discipline which looks at all problems from only a position of the action and reaction of physical phenomena leads many students to the denial of many religious convictions and beliefs earlier held.

College students are too quick to throw overboard their religious faith on too little evidence. The student seriously concerned and interested in the religious problem will not reject his faith easily, but will investigate the approaches of thoughtful men in our time to the questions he is facing. Campus pastors, priests, and rabbis, as well as university teachers of religion, and informed laymen can be of assistance. Some professors have a rather unsophisticated view of religion themselves, and too often they have a stereotyped conception of religion based upon some earlier childhood experience. It is at this point that the thoughtful student will investigate these matters for himself with the guidance of capable religious counselors.

Critical Challenges

One of the purposes of education is to penetrate behind the literary and historical sources to the intellectual, social, and cultural factors which have contributed to the development and emergence of ideas. Students soon become aware that such an approach is applicable to a study of religious history and literature as well as to the study of so-called secular material.

It is often a shock to a student to find that many of the ideas in his own tradition and heritage, which he thought arose Minerva-like as a result of a special act of revelation to a man or group in a particular time in history, have deep and rich historical roots, and that many of these ideas can be traced to the influence of one culture upon another. This fact, coupled with a critical examination of the internal consistency or inconsistency of the documents themselves, often challenges the uncritical faith of a religion that is centered in the unique validity of a historical event or a written record.

Students should be aware that the creative synthesis of certain ideas and insights in the mind of an individual or a group may give rise to something truly new, for it would be a mistake to assume that the new can be reduced to the sum of its parts. Nevertheless, an understanding of the origin of all ideas and a recognition that even religious ideas do not emerge in a cultural and historical vacuum are essential to the task of education. Such an approach may serve as an instrument in leading the student to a more sophisticated understanding of his religious tradition, rather than be a threat to his faith. Therefore, the challenge of new knowledge can lead him to a more profound understanding of his own heritage and need not be a destructive element.

Challenges to our faith may actually be instruments for the deeper understanding of religion. Half-truths are dangerous, and every discipline which tends to stress the unique validity of its own methodology is in danger of presenting to the student a distorted and inadequate picture of reality. Therefore, freshmen must be conscious of the "nothing-but" fallacy; that is, the tendency to reduce all experience to the elements which constitute it.

We can't reduce mind and consciousness to the central nervous system, or all creative movements of history to the events which have a bearing upon their development, or all moral judgments to the standards of particular culture in a given time. To inquire into faith is an important part of a student's total intellectual experience.

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CHALLENGE

LET
THAT MAN
WHO WOULD KNOW
THE TRUE SHAPE
OF
HIS GOD...
FIRST
BE BENT
BY THE WIND...
AND SCORCHED
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LET HIM ALSO
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RAIN...

YET
EVEN
ONE MORE THING...
HE MUST LOOK
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OF
HIS
FELLOW
MAN...!



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