gateway features

BEYOND THE NEED FOR A BUTTON

photo by Conrad Stenton

THORNS FROM THE ROSE

Most universities are vocational schools. What they produce are de-spiritualized wheels for the cultural machine.

STERILITY OR MATURITY

by Elan Galper

In the midst of these materialistic and unidealistic times, an element of revolt is heard. It is the voice of a few deep-thinking individuals, sick and disgusted with the old concept of education!—the famous inviolable tenents that the role of education is to develop one to be a well-adjusted, docile and unquestioning member of his society.

To get along with other people is the most important thing, therefore the system of education was geared to make a shallow but well-liked "good Joe" out of you. The unspoken creed of this system was "thou shalt not do better than thy neighbour, for if thou dost do better, thou puttest him to shame." Thus any performance of individual brilliance was resented hoi polloi, as those who saw it were by it just made more aware of their own inadequacies.

Since the level of intelligence of the average mind (to use the term "mind" most loosely) is exceedingly shallow, intellect was suppressed. The deeper side of life was seldom discussed—the average "good fellow" is not competent enough to discuss it, so why be a fink and expose his ignorance?

Because of this stress on conformity and equality of interests and achievement, life of the average person has degenerated into a stale cliché. The people who rebel against this fad-addicted, shallow crowd of "good sports" have to flaunt society's mores and sacred bans against brilliance and originality, and become Bohemians, Angry Young Men or beatniks. Although many beatniks are super-conformists themselves, the fact that such a movement exists is a witness to society's resentment of those who are "not like us," of those who are not docile and cowardly enough not to question its principles.

I maintain that if we are to advance rather than sink lower into our intellectual muck and mire, we should revise our concepts of education and actually force (this was seen by Rousseau) people to develop to their full potential and to experience the eternal thrill and joy of creation rather than succumb to the sterility of a "push-button" mind.

We must understand that our true leaders are thinkers and analysts, not the Einsenhower type of a "well-liked personality." Once we grasp this concept and cease to ridicule those among us who have the courage to be different, we shall be well on our way towards complete ideological maturity.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND LIBERAL TYPES

There are two broad categories into which most universities may be placed—the liberal and the technological. There is a tension between the apdproach to knowledge of these two types, including mutual condemnation. The following discussion will attempt to clarify the characteristics of both types, and the issues involved.

The technological university stresses, and has all its energies directed toward the utilization of knowledge for practical and utilitarian ends. Knowledge is not esteemed for its own sake but despised. The technological university asks: "What can I do with the knowledge that I possess? Where can I apply it, and what immediate ends can this knowledge attain?"

With this attitude, knowledge and training must produce immediate

HABITS, VALUES, VIRTUES

results—if not they are rejected. The technological university takes this stand failing to realize that learning for learning's sake, as stressed in the liberal university, has its virtues.

The simple acquisition of knowledge—regardless of its inapplicability and dialecticism—forms intellectual habits of problem solving, develops pattens of thought which prove to be of inestimable value in later pursuits of knowledge.

Technology is so concerned with the moment that it cannot see the n l good of knowledge for knowledge sake, it cannot wait for the virtues to manifest themselves, nor will it even bother to consider the issue; because even this is impractical.

by Ed Thiessen

An outstanding characteristic of the technological school is the high degree to which it is organized and regimented. This is necessary due to the nature of technology itself, the use of expensive instruments, the need for cooperative advance and the afore-mentioned stress upon immediate results.

Interests of the individual research worker are subordinated to those of

CONQUER DISEASE, DEATH?

the group or project, and a good case might be made from this for the subjugation of the human to the machine.

In a liberal university the situation is diametrically opposite. The research worker, or scholar, is allowed, or encouraged if not commanded, to do independent research free from restrictions of any kind.

Metaphorically speaking the technologist is a reporter while the liberal scholar is the freelance writer.

Another important aspect of the technological university is the tremendous feeling of self-confidence it possesses relative to man's betterment. The nineteenth century had similar ideas until the World Wars proved the lie.

Unfortunately for the technologist the advances which have sparked and fed this confidence have been largely in the realm of biological progress. The more rabid technologists maintain that disease can be conquered and maybe—although few dare go so far—even death. Once these sources are banished from human "eternity" all other obstacles

will crumble before the onslaught of marching technology.

Admirable and altruistic as these hopes may be, grave errors have been committed, in that comparable social advances have not been made.

Most of the difficulties facing the world are not biological scourges but are rather some of the factors making human nature what it is—desires, passions, failings, even stupidity. Modern man, possessing the longest life span in history is confronted with nuclear annhilation.

Secondly, technology does not take into account the repercussions of its immediate actions nor the outcome of the implementation of its dreams. With the banishment of disease and death a veritable Pandora's box is opened. With the survival of weak and disabled—a weakened human race. What human wishes to become a mute and inglorious struldbrug?

PERCEPTION AND PROGRESS

By reflection other examples will be found. The uncritical optimism is objectionable—not the idea per se.

Liberalism in the university does not pretend to have any absolute answers nor does it pretend to be the savior of the world, it merely observes and observes.

The liberal university stresses complete perception of all ramifications of a situation yet not emphasizing action. The technological institute stresses progress and action nevertheless based upon a restricted blindered view of existence. Could these be synthesized, progress and advancement would be the felicitous outcome.