

There is no escaping this pressure; many students do not even realize they are being influenced because they are so accustomed to it. An even more disturbing fact is that no one seems to want to oppose the situation. Pressure begets conformity, and with conformity comes a sense of security which, although false, is reassuring. And so it remains.

After conforming to group standards and social pressures throughout youth, the individual is unprepared to live independently. Suddenly there comes a time in his life when he must depend on setting his own standards, but he is incapable; he is too accustomed to having ideas and decisions established for him. Returning to the group, he patterns himself after business and civic leaders. He is pressured into associating with the "right" people, joining the "right" clubs, and working for the "right" causes. He pushes himself forward to become known to the public, to capitalize on his name by progressive repetition; this is the "right" thing to do. He may not even believe in what he is working for or respect the standards established in his society, but he is pressured socially to conform in order to be accepted.

We conform in high-school; we conform in college; we conform in adult life. Social pressures have fettered our minds; they have determined the degree of individualism which one attains.

## American Civilization

### The Meridian or the Morning Star?

Cynthia Barron

"CONSISTENCY," according to Ralph Waldo Emerson, "is the hobgoblin of little minds." Van Wyck Brooks defined little minds or lowbrows as those people whose sense of things has been formed by the give and take of life. Their ideas stem from inherited folk wisdom, folk art, or prejudice or from myths conveyed to them by the mass media, the club, the church or the union. The lowbrow lacks the ability to see, to utter truth and to create. He is a "mere thinker" rather than "Man Thinking."

Lately it has come to be believed that science has proved group thinking superior to Man Thinking. The group is superior to the individual. Yet, people very rarely think in groups. They talk together, exchange ideas and information, and make compromises. But they do not think together; they do not create together. No one was with Newton when the apple fell. Martin Luther's ninety-five theses may have been influenced by other men, but his ideas did not come out of a "togetherness" session with other churchmen. One may point to the fact that the atom bomb was brought into being by the teamwork of huge corporations of scientists and technicians. It is extremely important, however, to remember what an eccentric old

man named Einstein did in his study some forty years ago. A more tangible example of Man Thinking as opposed to group thinking is the jet engine. None of the five earliest turbo-jet developments of Germany, Britain, and the United States was initiated within an established aircraft firm. As Lancelot Law Whyte points out, "It is usually the relatively isolated outsider (in this case outside the aircraft firm) who produces the greatest novelties."

If it is the outsider who creates, what happens to the scientist in an organization such as the big corporation? Of the four billion dollars currently being spent on research and development by government, industry, and the universities, less than four per cent is used for creative research. Of the six hundred thousand people engaged in creative work, only five thousand are free to pick their own problems. William H. Whyte, Jr., author of *The Organization Man*, writes of what happens to scientists in the big corporations. For example:

1. Scientists are now concentrating on the practical application of previously discovered ideas rather than the discovery of new ones.

2. They rarely work by themselves but rather as units of scientific cells.

3. Organization loyalty, getting along with people, etc. is considered just as important as thinking.

4. Well-rounded team players are more valuable than brilliant men, and a very brilliant man would probably be disruptive.

The brilliant man who desires to do "free" work is displaying a symptom of maladjustment that demands a cure. Lowell Steele makes the point that, "Unless the firm wants to subsidize idle curiosity on the part of its scientists, it must aid them in becoming 'company-conscious.'" Company-consciousness, then, is not only more important than idle curiosity; it helps prevent idle curiosity. In a documentary film made for the Monsanto Chemical Company, three young men in white coats are shown in the laboratory. The sound track announces, "No geniuses here; just a bunch of average Americans working together." In a Socony-Vacuum Oil booklet on broad company policy, a passage reads:

#### No Room for Virtuosos

Except in certain research assignments, few specialists in a large company ever work alone. There is little room for virtuoso performances. Business is so complex, even in its non-technical aspects, that no one man can master all of it; to do his job, therefore, he must be able to work with other people.

The scientist who works with other people in a team combining



and recombining old discoveries may wonder if there is anything really left to discover. He may feel that they have reached the point where they know what there is left to discover. They feel, too, that there is not much left. (For instance, we do not know what matter is. Where do cosmic rays come from? What is memory? Is this universe a chance or a law?) The feeling that all was known in the field of physics was recalled by Alfred North Whitehead. "At Cambridge, in the 1880's, there were a few tremors, a slight shiver as of all not being quite secure, but no one sensed what was coming. By 1900 Newtonian physics was demolished. Done for! Still speaking personally, it had a profound effect on me: I have been fooled once, and I'll be damned if I'll be fooled again." No subject can be considered a closed subject.

Nevertheless, to know what is unknown presents a wonderful challenge to Man Thinking and to man in general. Without the quest for knowledge this world would be a most boring, futile place. What Emerson wrote more than a century ago still applies to our society and to Man Thinking. "We think our civilization is near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cockcrowing and the morning star."

## Our National Heritage

Shirley Martin

ON A HOT summer day in 1775 in the halls of the Continental Congress, Patrick Henry's voice cried out passionately, ". . . give me liberty or give me death." Such vibrant outbursts as this inflamed the hearts of the colonists and sent forth an untrained musket brigade of back woodsmen to defeat the mighty British army. The world watched and marveled as this hastily gathered, ill-clad army of patriots repelled the "Red Coats" and gave birth to a new way of life called the United States of America.

This infant, the United States, stood up on shaky legs, reared its head, and dared to swell and grow. As the United States grew, it slipped through the Cumberland Gap into the rich green grasslands of Kentucky; it stretched with pleasure in the warmth of the sunshine until one great arm reached across the Ohio and Missouri Rivers into the desolate plains of the Dakotas. With its other sinewy arm it crept forward through the white tufted cotton land of Alabama, across the wide, muddy Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers, and cooled its slender fingers in the Rio Grande. Its huge eyes inflamed with youth and vigor roved over the golden wheat of Kansas, across the roaring Colorado, above the snow-capped Rockies, and snorted, "I will have this land until I drink of the Pacific, and make tooth-picks of the mighty redwood!"

This majestic United States swatted off the French and the British armies, fed on the red man, and conquered the plague of