THE SELF AND SELF-ACCEPTANCE

BY HARRY A. GRACE

PROBLEMS OF HUMAN RELATIONS CONFRONT THE ADMINISTRATOR, layman, and social scientist with equal perplexity. A society such as ours, which lays strong emphasis upon individual behavior, is apt to be more concerned with these problems than with many others. As David Riesman says, "To put this another way, people have sufficiently mastered nature to become important forces in themselves . . . the emphasis is on integrating people, first with themselves, and then with ever-widening concentric circles of other people . . . "[1] The press stresses the interplay among people from diverse groups. The administrator finds intergroup harmony a necessity for satisfactory job completion. The social scientist is busily engaged in research and the construction of theory concerning techniques of interpersonal understanding.

In view of this great amount of activity, it seems important to examine the generalizations which have been made about human relations. We are concerned with the implications of these generalizations for the practice of human relations in a democracy. Toward that end, we shall demonstrate that the current theoretical foundations of human relations are in need of transvaluation[2] in order to be commensurate with practice and with the goals of democratic behavior.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF THOUGHT AND PRACTICE: THE FOUNDATIONS OF SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Membership in a particular group may be expressed verbally or non-verbally. It is conventional to refer to the verbal means of expression as *attitude*, and to the non-verbal as *role*. A person who says, "I like Ike," is expressing his group affiliation verbally. Whereas an automobile mechanic demonstrates his affiliation in that occupational group by the competence of his work on an engine. These are the definitions of attitude and role used throughout this paper. Since each is an expression of group membership, we may refer to either in citing examples of behavior. It seems unnecessary to repeat the argument for each case, and so we shall posite that these two dimensions of membership behavior are very similar.

HARRY A. GRACE is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan. *In this article he identifies the three traditional avenues to self-acceptance: individualism (acquisition of objects), groupism (belonging to the group), and situationism (conformity with ritual), and finds all three similar in that they impose external authority on the person. Democracy demands an individual capable of acting on internal authority. The person may respond to stimuli arising from his individuality, his group and his situation by mediating among various solutions of the problem without having to gain or lose self-acceptance in the process. The implications of this concept for education are clear and Professor Grace draws them adroitly.*

[1] Riesman, David. "Tensions, Optimism, and the Social Scientist," *Psychiatry*, 13, 1950, 518-522.

[2] Friedich Nietzsche introduces this term as a subtitle to his book *The Will to Power*, London, T. N. Foulis, 1910.

A change in group membership signifies a change in attitude. By a change in group membership we mean leaving one group for another, adding to one's membership character another group affiliation, dropping membership in a group, etc. By a change in attitude we mean the choice of a different target of attitude, or a different direction, or a shift in intensity, etc. Alteration in any one of these dimensions of attitude we accept as a change. Conversely, a change in attitude implies a change in group membership. A commentator ably demonstrated this phenomenon in the Chicago area recently. He asserted that if a famous football star should fail to renew his contract, people would no longer honor him as an insurance man. In effect, he said that a change in group membership would seriously affect the public's attitude toward him.

We have referred to "group membership" without having defined the term. By membership we mean that symbiotic relationship between an individual and a group which implies that the individual finds acceptance by the group, and reciprocates by accepting the group. He plays the roles condoned by the group and necessary to it, as well as roles bestowed upon him formally by the group. To the extent that he acts in a mutually expected manner we may speak of his having membership in a particular group. Ralph Linton, the noted cultural anthropologist, remarked that certainly one behavior is universally punished in all societies—bad manners. One must behave in Rome as the Romans do before being admitted to membership. Acceptance is the process of indicating that a role expectancy has been fulfilled. Membership requires that this acceptance be mutual.

Acceptance, attaining group membership, develops in the individual a *feeling of belonging*. The individual identifies himself with behavior shared more generally than that which he alone exemplifies. He is able to feel "grounded" or related to a cosmos greater than that which he has previously experienced. At a teacher's workshop in Springfield, Missouri, the following anecdote was reported. Jim and Ted were walking past the stockyards on the way home from school. They noticed men dehorning cattle. When Jim got home, he thought about this a while and decided that the class would be interested in the horns since they were to study the American West. The next day when he arrived at school he presented a set of horns to the class. The workmen at the yards had given them to him. The teacher who told this story emphasized that this was the normal thing for Jim to do. He *belonged* to the group and frequently demonstrated it in this manner. On the other hand, she went on, Ted had not shown a great deal of belonging and did not have the group in mind. This was typical of Ted. Belonging is characterized by elaborate systems of reinforcements: rewards for norm-like roles, punishments for anti-norm-like roles, and neutrality for non-norm-like roles.

In the process of accepting others the individual is also becoming accepted. This mutual process occurs simultaneously. Each individual "feels out" the other in order to judge his own behavior. Margaret Mead considers this a function of our "third generation" heritage. We may begin with the weather, but usually try to find out where a person comes from, and if we have either been there or have friends there, we find a basis for acceptance.[3]

The individual's acceptance by others is conditional upon his acceptance of himself. By *self* we mean (at this time) that portion of his behavior not shared

[3] *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, New York, W. Morrow and Co., 1943.

with others. That means that the individual must decide how much membership in the group means to him in order to make the changes necessary to gain and give acceptance. He is being so judged by other members of the prospective group. *In order to accept others, and to be accepted by them, he must accept himself.* The work of the non-directive therapist, Carl Rogers, attests to this behavior. He has ably demonstrated that clients who show strong antagonism toward others have similar dislikes of themselves. The Golden Rule seems to have gained further empirical support from these clinical studies. He must accept the roles he is to play in order to become accepted by the group. The group will offer him acceptance to the degree to which he indicates his acceptance of such roles. Conversely, the individual who is unable to accept himself is unable to accept others or be accepted by them.

The important consideration in this formulation is that the individual must find *unacceptable* areas in himself, or areas needing reinforcement by others, in order to seek group membership. He must feel that there are roles he should play which he is not playing, and which by playing will enable him to feel greater self-acceptance by being accepted by others. We may refer again to the story of Jim and Ted and this time ask ourselves if perhaps the teacher's interpretations were premature. It may well have been that Jim's constant outlook for peer acceptance was the stimulus of his playing helpful roles. Ted, on the other hand, may have needed less peer approval, having found another source of acceptance in his family or elsewhere.

The preceding paragraphs have sketched the outline of current thought regarding the basic assumptions of self-acceptance. It becomes important to examine the dynamics of group behavior which impinge upon self-acceptance.

THE DYNAMICS OF SELF-ACCEPTANCE

For analytical purposes we may consider a society as being comprised of two non-overlapping regions: the desirable and the undesirable. By desirable we mean having those values which receive societal reward; by undesirable we mean having those values which do not receive societal reward.[4]

A group within a society may be said to be similarly divided. Any club is apt to have some of its activities which are less socially desirable than others. The teaching profession is charged with educating the nation's youth, its membership is of greater than average intelligence and training, but teachers receive poor pay and are the butt of many jokes and special restrictions. The greater the area of a group which falls in the desirable societal region, the more *privileged* the group. The greater the area of a group falling in the undesirable societal region, the more *underprivileged* the group. Privilege and underprivilege, therefore, are not absolutes, but are relative to each other when applied to groups within a society at a particular moment of time.

Within a privileged group, members tend to be attracted toward its more central regions. That is, members attempt to come closer to the group's norms and ideals. Compare Mr. Scott, the banker, with Mr. Thomas, the tenant farmer. Mr. Scott will overtly demonstrate his affiliation with pins, newspaper references,

[4] This formulation has been modeled after the work of the late Kurt Lewin reported in *Resolving Social Conflicts*, New York: Harper and Bros., 1948.

attendance at bankers' functions, and so forth. Not so Mr. Thomas. He will minimize his tenant status, try to ignore it, or cover it up with other roles he may be able to play. In an underprivileged group, movement is toward the periphery and away from the central value regions. Individuals try to show less and less membership character in an underprivileged group.

A marginal person is one whose roles place him on the periphery of a group. The sociologists Robert E. Park and Gunnar Myrdal have identified many of these behaviors. Who cannot recall his awkward behavior upon entering adolescence? On the first day in a new school? For some persons these are very temporary difficulties, for others marginality may be relatively permanent: the mulatto, the moron, the displaced person. The periphery of one group may overlap with the regions of another, or two or more peripheries may coincide. In any case, the marginal individual retains some membership in a specific group while not moving toward that group's central regions.

Leadership from the central regions of a group is *power* leadership. By leadership we mean that person whose role it is to bestow reinforcements on behalf of the group. Power leadership exercises control over the entry and exit of individuals to the central regions of a group. In Lakeport, as reported by Norman Miller, the power leader is someone like, "James Singleton, because he has been on a lot of boards and committees . . . " The prestige leader is similar to, "Rabbi Hirsch, because he has done so much to make the others like us . . . "[5] *Prestige* leadership stems from the peripheral regions of the group. This leadership exercises control over the entry and exit of individuals to the periphery of the group.

To summarize, individuals within a privileged group move toward the central regions thereof and in so doing strengthen the power leadership, thereby preserving group norms. Individuals in an underprivileged group move toward the periphery and reinforce the prestige leadership, thus weakening group norms.

A privileged group attracts marginal persons from the periphery of underprivileged groups toward its own central regions. This process enhances the development of prestige leadership in both kinds of groups. However, movement is toward the periphery of the underprivileged groups. The prestige leadership of an underprivileged group becomes stronger and the group norms weaker by virtue of this process. The power leadership of the privileged group may be enhanced by such movement as well. Adverse criticism has come from youngsters in the slums of the program of the PAL and similar police-social welfare agencies. Some children claim that they are being cultivated to spy and give tip-offs on other members of their families. They are established as prestige leaders of both groups, slum and police, and are therefore quite vulnerable from either direction. In this manner, a society, or a privileged group may actively destroy an underprivileged group.

To recapitulate, one's acceptance of himself is commensurate with the group's acceptance of him. His group may be privileged or underprivileged, desirable or undesirable to the society. Therefore, his self-acceptance is affected by the degree to which his group is accepted in the society. In popular jargon, the scion of

[5] "The Jewish Leadership of Lakeport," in Alvin W. Gouldner, Ed., *Studies in Leadership*, New York: Harper and Bros., 1950, pp. 195-227.

industry can *afford* to be more tolerant of minorities than his less wealthy countrymen. He fears no one for there is no one who threatens his position. Self-acceptance is a function of the degree of privilege in the group.

Members of underprivileged groups have less self-acceptance, and so show less acceptance of others and other groups. Members of privileged groups have more self-acceptance, and accordingly show more acceptance of others. Recent research conducted by the author suggests that greater hostility is to be found among near-bright and near-dull persons in a particular group than among their average, bright, or dull counterparts. The near-brights are liable to be more self-hostile, the near-dulls more hostile toward others.

The process of leaving one group, moving toward its periphery, is one of changing one's attitudes, roles, and self-acceptance. At the point of marginality, self-acceptance is at its lowest. The Germans during the last war had a term for extreme Nazis, the *Hundertfünfziger*, the "150 percenters." This term was often applied to non-German Nazis in occupied territories. The infamous *milice* of France who took a heavy toll in French lives under the occupation were a notorious example of marginality. The process of joining a new group, moving toward its central regions, is one of changing one's attitudes, roles, and self-acceptance. At the point of marginality, self-acceptance is at its lowest ebb. A person at the margin of two or more groups, therefore, shows least self-acceptance, and least acceptance of others.

Prestige leadership exhibits less self-acceptance than does power leadership. The self-effacing behavior of Negro ministers has been elaborated upon by Gunnar Myrdal in *An American Dilemma*.[6]

This behavior is accentuated when prestige leadership occurs in an underprivileged group and power leadership occurs in a privileged group. This behavior is less apparent when power leadership occurs in an underprivileged group and prestige leadership occurs in a privileged group.

But individuals are not always able to enter and leave groups with equal ease. Geoffrey Gorer makes this point in regard to Americans of Asian ancestry who are stigmatized by both facial and cultural features. He suggests they will find acculturation in America most difficult because of their obvious marginality.[7] Although one may move toward its periphery, he may not be able to move beyond that point to another group. This phenomenon holds for both privileged and underprivileged groups.

The restriction of movement affects self-acceptance. Generally speaking, members of underprivileged groups who are unable to leave the group develop self-other-rejection (when rejection is taken as the opposite of acceptance) to a greater degree than is present among persons from similar groups whose borders may be more easily crossed. Initiations, such as confirmation and *barmitzvah*, secret signs and passwords, pins and rings, all serve to make outsiders aware of the group's exclusiveness. They also serve to reinforce the member's awareness of his affiliation. A friend of ours remarked that without her sorority pin she felt undressed; it gave her confidence and made her "feel like somebody" when she wore it. Greater self-acceptance is found among members of privileged groups the

[6] New York, Harper and Bros., 1944.
[7] *The American People*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1948.

entry into which is highly restricted, even though the individual may be in a peripheral region.

A SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

The argument which has been presented may be summarized in the following statements.

1. Group membership is reflected in attitudes and roles of individuals.
   a. A change in one is equivalent to a change in the other.
   b. Persons who seek change seek acceptance.
2. Acceptance is the process by which an individual is taken into group membership.
   a. Self-acceptance is equivalent to other-acceptance.
   b. Individuals seeking group membership reflect inadequate self-acceptance.
3. A society is comprised of non-overlapping desirable and undesirable regions.
   a. Groups may be described as privileged or underprivileged depending upon the degree to which they fall in one of these regions.
   b. The degree of privilege and underprivilege is relative.
4. A group may be said to have central and peripheral regions.
   a. Within a privileged group members are attracted toward its central regions.
   b. Members of an underprivileged group are repelled from the center toward the periphery.
   c. A marginal person is one whose roles place him on the periphery of a group.
5. Leadership from the central regions of a group is power leadership; leadership from the periphery is prestige leadership.
   a. Power leadership exercises influence over exit and entry to the central regions; peripheral entrance and exit are guarded by prestige leadership.
   b. The movement of people toward the central regions of a group strengthens the group and its norms; movement toward the periphery weakens both.
   c. An underprivileged group may be destroyed by a privileged group in this manner.
6. One's self-acceptance is related to the degree of privilege of his group, his position in it, and the strength of its borders.
   a. Power leadership reflects greater acceptance, prestige leadership less.
   b. At the point of marginality self-acceptance is least.
   c. Self-acceptance is greatest in privileged groups with borders more difficult to cross.
   d. Self-acceptance is least in underprivileged groups which are difficult to leave.

The foregoing section has presented a general synthesis of theories pertaining to self-acceptance and group behavior. This analysis has been drawn from a variety of sources in current social science literature with particular emphasis upon the imaginative work of the late Kurt Lewin. We should now like to examine the assumptions upon which rests the theoretical structure summarized above.

A TRANSVALUATION: THE ABSENCE OF JUDGMENT STANDARDS

A society is rarely a single entity. It is usually composed of many groups which tend to overlap. Robert M. MacIver elaborates upon the pattern of our multi-group society in the *Web of Government*.[8] He finds this form a major dimension of American life.

[8] New York: Macmillan, 1947.

The multiplicity of groups casts great doubt upon the efficacy of treating a society as a unit. Furthermore, this multiplicity contributes toward the difficulty of defining one region as clearly desirable or undesirable. Since there is no *societal* vantage point, each group must be seen from inside itself or from the point of view of another group.

Each group in a society appears to have a particular static position with regard to its degree of privilege or underprivilege. Some groups appear to be more societally acceptable than others. By *appear* we mean it seems so to the individual, whether or not he is a member of the group. No empirical scale may be developed which is available to the individual, and which will enable him to judge in an objective, reliable, and valid manner the position of each group in a society. Thus, whatever assessment he may make of the privilege character of a group is a matter of *appearance to him.* A professor of mine in New York who was forced to commute via the New Haven Railroad made this fact strikingly clear to us. He said that as he passed along 125th Street he noticed the number of beauticians who offered to take kinks *out* of one's hair. Turning south on Amsterdam Avenue the hairdressers advertised their ability to put kinks *into* the hair.

The inability to assess adequately the position of one's group affords a natural foundation for ethnocentrism, and its external projection in what is commonly called intergroup prejudice. An essay on "Misunderstanding in Human Relations" by Gustav Ichheiser[9] presents this paradox in a straight-forward manner. Among a list of suggested corrections regarding theories of prejudice he states (p. 44), "Prejudices are acts of defense by which people defend the integrity of their own personality, their own culture, their own group."

Individuals change their group memberships from time to time. Since groups appear to the individual to be more or less privileged, he attempts to change from one group to a more privileged one. Analogous changes occur between regions within one group. These two phenomena, intragroup and intergroup, add to the instability of any group rating procedure. This instability is not recent in American life, for it was noticed a century ago by the famous traveler Alexis de Tocqueville as he reports in *Democracy in America.*[10]

The individual attempts to change his group membership in the apparent direction of greater privilege. He attempts to change his membership to groups of apparently greater privilege because by so doing he will gain greater self-acceptance. Therefore, greater self-other-acceptance is expected to arise from the movement from one group to another of greater privilege. A recent cartoon portrays two college students packing their bags upon graduation. They are discussing their future plans and one remarks, "I think I'll join the *Party* for a while and then let the government support me for the rest of my life . . . "

A further example of this dilemma is presented in the story of a man who migrated to Israel because he felt he was being discriminated against here on account of his Jewish heritage. Imagine his shock when after living in Israel he faired no better! He began psychotherapy when friends were able to convince him that the antagonism he felt was directed toward his personality rather than his group affiliation.

[9] American Journal of Sociology, 1949, vol. LV, 2.
[10] New York: Century Co., 1898.

But a society is composed of a number of groups, it is a multi-group phenomenon. The degree of privilege is in constant flux. A great part of this fluctuation is brought about by the constant change in coalitions among members from various groups. I cannot forget the shock of a Negro college boy from southern Illinois who had just experienced his first contact with anti-Negroism. He had come from a predominantly Negro town and had never before been on the receiving end of intolerance. Of course there were "spics" in his town that were lower than dirt, but to pick on a Negro . . .

Another factor contributing to the change in status of privilege is the vacillating size of groups due to the constant process of movement from one to another. An allegory which treats this problem is *Faster! Faster!* by Patrick Bair.[11] The group is presented as a train with leaders in the forward cars and other personnel in descending order. As a person falls from power he is moved further toward the rear of the train. As he gains or regains status he moves forward. The train is headed no place but travels in a continuous circle. The story is a powerful one which centers about the shifts within the group, and the eventual revolution which changes personnel in the cars, but does not alter the group structure or the incessant circular movement of the train.

Therefore, groups which appear to be privileged at one time may not be so at another. In an article on multiple group behavior Eugene Hartley makes this assertion, (p. 379), "When I, a teacher, talk with a successful businessman about living comforts, I have, essentially, a low status. When I, a City College person, talk with a representative of another college, to achieve high status, I'll talk basketball."[12] But this was written in 1950 B.C.F., (Before City's Fix). Thus, the fortunes shift rapidly without the group member's being able to control them.

As a result of this inability to fix a standard of judgment we are faced with a sizeable population who exhibit free-floating anxiety in the forms of self-other-hostility.

Groups in a multi-group society tend to be impermanent, lasting but a short period of time. New groups are begun, and older groups come to an end constantly. The rapid turnover in small businesses is one reflection of this pattern of behavior. Groups end when they can no longer sustain the individual's self-acceptance; i.e. when they become distinctly underprivileged, and when their boundaries are fluid rather than fixed. Groups are formed by individuals as vehicles for self-acceptance. They are formed around attitude or role similarities and provide the formal function of reinforcement of mutual norms. We have veterans organizations for each war, for a variety of religious groups, even for sons and daughters and their progeny. A commonality may be found *somewhere* in the backgrounds of any two persons upon which they may form an association. Group norms are developed which support self-acceptance and the acceptance of others. When these reinforcements fail to function, the group is forced to desist.

The ideas we have presented serve to indicate the paradox of the current position on self-acceptance. The individual searches for group membership which will apparently add to his self-acceptance. If he chooses correctly he will receive

[11] New York: Viking Press, 1950.

[12] "Psychological Problems of Multiple Group Membership," in John H. Rohrer and Muzafer Sherif, *Social Psychology at the Crossroads,* New York: Harper and Bros., 1951.

some positive reinforcement; if he is wrong, he will become even less self-other-acceptant. His very entrance into a group increases its size and may decrease its privilege status. Thereby his self-acceptance is affected. This has been recently apparent in the PGA. Mr. Boros, winner of the National Open Golf Tourney, was extended an invitation by the PGA to compete in its tourney. The PGA waived its regular rules to allow for this special case. Whereupon Mr. Snead refused to play. Mr. Boros' polite refusal of the bid was followed by Mr. Snead's acceptance.

All of these considerations allow for one's choosing his group by rational means. Imagine the shock of being thrust by fortune or misfortune from one group to another with its concommitant effect on self-acceptance! Consider the young athlete, idol of his peers, who through misfortune is paralyzed, whether by accident, war, or disease. The traumatic effect of rapid locomotion from privilege to underprivilege is enough to severely complicate his recovery. Pierre Closter-mann[13] reports his heartbreak upon VE-Day when he realized that the camara-derie and excitement of his RAF experiences were at an end.

THE SELF CONCEPT

These comments are introductory to the main point at which a transvaluation seems necessary: the concept of self. The preceding are necessary remarks for they indicate the tenuous nature of current theory and the tension-producing character of intergroup behavior which rests upon such assumptions. The verbal problem is acute since we shall be using many of the same words with new mean-ings. This seems more desirable than coining a new vocabulary.

In the system we have described, where acceptance (as previously defined) is based upon the roles and attitudes held by an individual, no SELF acceptance actually exists. By SELF we mean the unique human individuality of the person, devoid of his behaviors whether verbal or non-verbal. Acceptance based upon anything short of this latter concept of self is insufficient for a healthy individual. By healthy we mean that condition which empowers the person to behave with optimum freedom and responsibility in his affairs.

Men may not behave freely and responsibly if their self-acceptance and other-acceptance is group-determined. Men, under such conditions may best be referred to as *citizens*.

I know of no more eloquent and dramatic expression of this tragedy than that presented by C. Virgil Gheorghiu in his novel, *The Twenty-fifth Hour*.[14] This work will live with Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. He says through a major character (Pp. 396-397), "Men must hide the fact that they are human. They have to behave according to technical laws, like machines. Man has been reduced to a single plane—the social plane. He has been transformed into a 'citizen,' which no longer has anything in common with the conception of a human being. Western civilization recognizes man only as an abstraction—as a 'citizen.' And not recogniz-ing him as a man, how can it make a revolution for his sake? The present revolu-tion, by virtue of its specifically Western character, is utterly foreign to all the

[13] *The Big Show*, New York: Random House, 1951.
[14] New York: A. A. Knopf, 1950.

interests of man as an individual human being." Earlier the author states, (p. 392-393), "Love, the supreme passion, can only exist in a world that believes in the unique value of the individual human being. Your society considers man replaceable. In your eyes the human being, and therefore the woman you claim to love, is not a unique specimen created by God or by nature; a unique copy, as it were. For you every individual is a unit in a series, and one woman is as good as another. This very conception of life precludes love . . . A man who really loves me will make me feel that I am the only woman who could make him happy, the only one in the world. He will prove to me that I am a unique being, having no counterpart anywhere on earth."

As citizens, men act in a SELF-less manner, incapable of really accepting themselves or others. They are only able to accept their own *ways*, *products*, or the *reinforcement* they receive, and these are all they are capable of giving others. This behavior is most evident in the process of overprotection of the child as it occurs in some families. The parents often try to live through the child a life which they have themselves been denied. They are enrapt in their child's success or failure, his achievements, rather than in him. Two films have presented this in recent years. "*That's My Boy*" parodies the problem in the setting of a college atmosphere. "*The Picture of Dorian Gray*," taken from the book by Oscar Wilde,[15] indicates how an older man may direct the life of a youth along channels which he, the elder, would himself be afraid to take. Overprotection is a form of rejection of the individual which stems from a fallacious concept of self.

The SELF of an individual is not to be confused with his personality, his roles, or any combination thereof. By personality we mean that overall quality possessed by an individual which enables him to control, regulate, and evaluate his intrapersonal and interpersonal behaviors.

As so defined, one's SELF is not liable to acceptance, or rejection, by others. Because one's SELF does not enter into such a barter. An individual's SELF is his unique human individuality. We value him because he is an integral part of the human community, a member of the human species. As a human he is unbounded by time (history) or space (geography). Any conception of the human community less than that which embraces man in all his periods, places, and stages of development is insufficient. This is his greatest value, and is all that is necessary for him to be SELF-acceptant and for us to accept him. This concept of acceptance is based upon the fact that the individual IS (the *Sein*, the fact of *being* a a human), and is not based upon what he BECOMES (the *Werden*, the fact of *becoming* something).

Roles and attitudes bear acceptance or rejection (in the traditional sense of these words). We may praise the benevolent *act* and punish the *act* of theft, but humans ought not to be judged as either donors or thieves. Personality may be subject to similar behavior. We may conduct therapy with a person in order to assist him in achieving a more healthful personality. But the unique human individuality, the SELF of the individual must remain apart from such a process.

The only place to break the chain of events described in the first part of this paper is at the beginning. Otherwise our criticisms are shallow and serve to per-

[15] New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918.

petuate parts of a system which is founded upon a misconception. We must insist upon a divorce of self, the given, from role, that which one has to prove, in theory as well as in practice. A theory of adjustment, therapy, or change, whether personal or social, which is predicated on the identity of self and role, attitude, or personality is destined to contribute toward greater sickness than it pretends to cure. The social scientist must not serve to perpetuate the very difficulties he sets out to change.

Ideas have consequences. The following paragraphs will demonstrate the results of these different concepts of self-acceptance in terms of personality and social behavior.

CONSEQUENCES OF DIFFERENT SELF-CONCEPTS

We have shown that our current concept of self-acceptance allows for grave consequences in view of the movement of persons within and between groups. There is great evidence to support the conclusion that this traditional consideration of self-acceptance lies at the heart of psycho-social-political developments anathema to democracy. And although threatening to democracy we find many persons and societies which are nominally democratic caught in the throes of these very developments. Modern writers are prone to explore and elaborate systems of antidemocratic behavior, authoritarian personality, or directedness which stems from ademocratic sources. We insist upon a formal positive consideration of democratic character. Let us briefly review these developments and see how they are related to present theory.

Traditional "individualism" offers "self-acceptance" to the individual who is able to grab it. His ability to secure it is based upon his biological heritage, his socio-economic birth status, and his state of health. He may, however, lose everything on the same gamble for which he attempts to gain more self-acceptance. This concept of self-acceptance is determined by material gain and acquisitive behavior. As long as the standards of gain remain constant, and his ability to acquire is constant, he may reflect a measure of self-acceptance. Self-acceptance in this system is a function of material gain and the control over the physical environment. The self becomes attached to objects, goods, things, ideas, tools; therefore, any challenge to these objects or materiel is a threat to one's self-acceptance. The self is lost in things. Machines govern men, for the trade of self-acceptance is one-way, man's self depends upon the machine. Ralph Waldo Emerson emphasizes this problem in his own way in the *Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing*, "The horseman serves the horse, the neatherd serves the neat, the merchant serves the purse, the eater serves his meat; 'tis the day of the chattel, web to weave, and corn to grind; things are in the saddle, and ride mankind." In *Self-Reliance* he has this to say, "Speak what you think now in hard words and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said today." In such a society people do not "keep up with the Joneses," but with the Jones' *things*. That is to say, other people are not considered as individuals, but as objects, performers, things. We might better refer to "owner-acceptance," for it is the fact that one *owns* which we accept. Leo Lowenthal[16] has

[16] "Biographies in Popular Magazines," in Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Alfred H. Stanton, ed., *Radio Research. 1942-43*, New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1944.

commented upon the shift from producing to consuming roles in American fiction. The important consideration should be that both of these roles are object-centered and not based upon the intrinsic worth of the individual.

Traditional "groupism," the essence of the majority of this paper, is an attempt to gain self-acceptance via other-acceptance. We may do better to refer to this phenomenon as "citizen-acceptance," for we do not accept the individual but rather his roles and attitudes which reflect his group affiliations. In fact, we have elevated the idea of "group" to the place of a super-human, super-organic construct which governs men. In such a system we classify men by the groups to which they do or do not belong. The managerial personality suggested by James Burnham[17] is such a characterization. A similar reflection of this conception may be seen in the idea of the "good group member" which is current in the writings of some of the Lewinian authors.

Traditional "situationism" allows the individual a measure of self-acceptance to the degree to which he behaves in accordance with prescribed ritual. The dimensions of time and place establish the individual's self-acceptance. When he performs in accord with the correct prescription in terms of the situation he gains self-acceptance. He is able to make a judgment of his self quite thoroughly without reference to the influence of others, for he is taught that which is correct in the situation and may evaluate his own behavior in light of the degree to which he approximates the correct manners. We might express this as "ritualist-acceptance" for it is by his being able to behave in terms of the prescribed behavior of the time-place situation that the individual finds reason to accept himself.

In Japan the stress laid upon performing the tea ceremony is to do it as it should be done, has been done, and will forever be done. No added flourishes are wanted, and if present are treated as errors. The ceremony has an existence apart from time. Other behaviors in Japan portray similar attitudes. The child learns body control early in life. His first language lessons concern respect language which enables him to "find his proper place" in the world. One is assured of security as long as he responds correctly to the situation.[18]

These three types have been touched upon earlier in the characterologies of Liu Shao[19] and David Riesman[20] (pp. 25-6). Of the individualists, Liu Shao may be interpreted as saying they are "men who have merit and boast of it, men who are worthy and like to over-top others, and men who are strict both toward themselves and others." The groupists might be said to be "men who have no merit and are proud, men who are foolish and like to be victorious, and men who are easy on themselves and strict toward others." "Men who have great merit and do not boast of it, men who are worthy and can yield, and men who are strict toward themselves and broad toward others" may be said to typify the situationists. Riesman would see the individualist as a person bothered by guilt, the groupist by anxiety, and the situationist by shame. Neither author suggests the character of the democratic person. However, both imply many of the ideas

[17] *The Managerial Revolution*, New York: John Day, 1941.

[18] Benedict, Ruth. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946.

[19] Shryock, J. K. *The Study of Human Abilities: The Jen wu chih of Liu Shao*, American Oriental Society, New Haven, Conn., 1937, pp. 93-94.

[20] *The Lonely Crowd*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950.

suggested here. They further imply that the democrat is free to behave without the stimulus of tension, and that his behavior is also non-tension productive.

These behaviors which have been described above have one common thread, the individual must act, or should act in a particular way in order to enhance his self-acceptance. How he "ought" to act is prescribed by forces external to himself. There is no internal "ought" established. Therefore, ethics and morality lie in the system of external acceptance of self and not within the individual. He is not moral or ethical, rather he *acts* morally or ethically. Morality and ethics lie in the process of becoming rather than in being. To quote Lao Tse,[21] "The way to do is to be."

The traditional individualism, groupism, and situationism which have been discussed impose external authority upon the person in the automaton response to which he receives a fleeting "shot" of self-acceptance (as it is defined in the particular system). Habituation to such external authority enslaves the individual to reliance thereon, and inhibits the possibility of developing authority within the individual. Furthermore, the absence, deterioration, or relaxation of external authority leaves an individual devoid of ethics, morals, and self. The relaxation of controls results in the expression of extreme tension. Sometimes in personal breakdown and sometimes in anti-social behavior. The inability of educators to answer this challenge has resulted first in the so-called "traditional" school based upon the "three R's"; second, the child-centered school; and third, the group-centered school. "Does authority rest in books, or in the child, or in the group of which he is a part?" is the question asked. Under any of these three conditions, *sans* book, *sans* internalization of norms (socialization), *sans* group, tension results. Each of these controls is externally oriented; the removal of that orientation, or its weakening, leaves us with a desocialized person. Under such conditions man goes from the immoral and unethical (since *man* is not ethical or moral for these lie in things, group, situation) to the amoral and aethical. Morality and ethics may not be bartered for self-acceptance!

Democracy demands an individual capable of acting upon internal authority, and therefore reflects a self-concept more stable than that which may be gained in other societal systems. Each man is an integral part of the human species, the human community, and as such has ample reason for acceptance of his unique human individuality, self, and the self of every other man. His judgments of his roles and his personality proceed without affecting his self-image. He may respond to stimuli arising from his individuality, from the group of which he is a member, and from the situation in a moral and ethical manner by mediating among the many possible solutions of the problem without having to gain or lose self-acceptance in the process. The internal authority which he expresses is that of the human community.

RECAPITULATION: SELF-ACCEPTANCE AND DEMOCRACY

Present considerations associate the individual's self with his role or personality. Role (or personality) has been demonstrated to be seriously affected by situational and group forces. Changes in group status or affiliation are equivalent to changes in role.

[21] Witter Bynner. *The Way of Life*, New York: John Day, 1944.

It has been shown that one's acceptance of himself is similar to his acceptance of others. His self-acceptance is conditional upon the acceptance of his role. As he changes in role or group affiliation his self-concept is altered.

Therefore, proposals for forming or reforming self-acceptance concern the development of the person's role behavior. In the individualist tradition this is effected by equating the acquisition of objects with acceptance. The groupist tradition demands belonging to the group in exchange for acceptance. The situationists offer conformity with ritual as self-acceptance. Any proposal which treats self and role as identical must offer one of these three traditions, or some combination thereof, as a cure for inadequate self-acceptance.

But no cure may be effected. Objects, groups, and situations vary and take on new meanings. As they change in value they affect self-acceptance. Internal movement and movement between classes seriously alter the status of a particular category. Moreover, no permanent criteria are available to the person by which he may adequately judge the value of objects, groups, or situations. Therefore, proposing another or a new affiliation is no way out of the dilemma. By this very act of reinforcement one may be taking a deeper step into the morass.

The identity of self with role or personality demands transvaluation. SELF is not role (or personality). SELF refers to the unique human individuality. It is the fact of being a human and therefore a member by birth of the infinite human community which is the basis for acceptance. One's acceptance of himself and of others is predicated upon their mutual membership in the community of human beings. Self-acceptance does not grow with age or with the ages, nor is it affected by geographical considerations. It is a constant, a *given*. Since it is unalterable, it is also unable to be bartered and exchanged. The picture drawn of acceptance in the first part of this paper and in the earlier paragraphs in this section holds for *role*-acceptance, but is meaningless in the discussion of the SELF in democratic society.

It is to the discussion of democracy that we now turn. If self were to equal role, then the individual must accept authority imposed upon him by external sources: objects, groups, situations. Morality and ethics must reside in forms external to him. He may not be held accountable should these external forces be removed, he would only become aethical and amoral. Under such a system the task is considered to be that of developing ever more efficient techniques for ensuring the performance of outside pressure. The ultimate is taken as having been reached when these outside forces are "internalized." The word itself implies that these are not *internal* patterns but are internalizations of external forms.

When self is not equated with role, the individual may develop internal authority. At the level of the individual this is the essence of democracy. By birth the individual is an accepted member of the human community. Likewise, he accepts others on this basis. He is able to behave with independence and with responsibility. His SELF-acceptance permits him the freedom to behave in a manner responsible to the human community of which he is an integral part. His acceptance of himself is given, not to be proved, and is evidenced in the independent and responsible management of his affairs. The individualist, on the other hand, while stressing independence will behave irresponsibly. Groupist behavior

(Continued on page 271)

Individualism currently rejoices—this *is* "The Century of the Common Man." And, incidentally, so was the 19th Century and so will be the 21st. This is his century, and he is competent to enjoy it: only the clutching tentacles of a grasping government can endanger the common good—and this can be avoided by emphasizing the "three R's" in the schools.

Pragmatic Liberalism proposes to make this, even more so, "The Century of the Common Man." Through progressive education, these modern liberals seek not any set of given social institutions existing in the past, in the present, or in the future, but a quality of living together at any time and at any place which progressively improves everyone's competence in cooperative self-direction.

To achieve these ends, Pragmatists offer a type of education which makes learning a product of interaction between a problem-solving human nature and a problem-presenting environment.

Fascism and Communism—the totalitarianisms of Right and Left—justify any means by the end, and offer the common man a century of slavery.

Individualism justifies any ends created by (their concept of) democratic means, and offers the common man a century of status quo.

Pragmatic Liberalism, by cutting ends and means from the same social cloth, offers the common man a century of his own: a century of steady progress toward increasing social competence.

Educational engineers would do well to inspect their drawing boards—and close the gap between ends and means. □

THE SELF AND SELF-ACCEPTANCE

(Continued from page 233)

is characterized by irresponsibility and dependence upon the group. Situationism demands dependence and responsibility. Only in democracy are independence and responsibility coordinate. Thus, ethics and morality are part and parcel of the concept of SELF in a democratic society.

The implications for education are clear. Pedagogically we must avoid the book-centered, child-centered, or group-centered trap in our classroom, in our administration, and in our counseling procedures. We must avoid trying to "make the child *feel* wanted" and rather *want* him! If he *is* liked, if we do accept him, we need not worry about his "feeling" liked—he *will* feel liked. Dean Ernest O. Melby, of New York University, put it this way, "I begin by *liking* people, then I come to *understand* them." The implication from understanding to liking does not hold. We should not feel hesitant to direct our education toward changing a person's roles, attitudes, or even personality, because we begin by accepting *him* and by his very presence we have entered into an agreement with him to initiate and effect some change.

Our goal is a healthy individual and thereby a healthy society. The goals of health and democracy are the same—independent and responsible behavior. Both are predicated upon the same assumption—the acceptance of the person as a unique human being. Further study will demonstrate that health, as democracy, is a process of development. As such, the nature of specific goals will vary as we proceed toward greater independence and responsibility. □